

Description - Assistant Species Recovery Officer (PB6a)

Job summary

Forestry England manages England's beautiful, diverse and productive publicly owned woods and forests. We are the largest provider of home-grown sustainably produced timber in England, shaping the land we manage and building the future for wildlife, for people and for the climate. As part of our national Growing the Future strategy and Biodiversity Plan we are looking to restore fully-functioning ecosystems.

Forestry England's Biodiversity Plan sets out a bold ambition of nature recovery in the Nation's Forests. Working across five principal focus areas, Forestry England aims to restore resilient biodiversity in the nation's forests, delivering our vision to ensure that these forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

Established in 2022, Forestry England's Forest Wilding Programme brings together two of these focus areas as part of a coordinated effort to deliver a step-change in nature recovery. Our species recovery work focuses on the reintroduction of key influential species, with more than 30 projects nationwide to re-establish populations of beaver, wildcat, pine marten, white-tailed eagle, golden eagle and wood ants. Alongside this nationwide effort, we have established Wild Areas on over 14,000ha of the nation's forests, bringing innovative approaches together with a sound evidence base to recover and enhance nature through restoring natural processes.

The North District includes Wild Ennerdale, an established nature recovery project for over 20-years. Conservation translocations of wood ants and water voles took place in 2025. Water vole releases are supported by a growing mink eradication network across Cumbria. Forestry England has been invited to submit a licence application to release beavers into the wild into Ennerdale and the Ehen-Calder catchment.

The Assistant Species Recovery Officer will work across the western North District and will assist the Species Recovery Officer in all areas of their work, including public and stakeholder engagement, ecological monitoring, habitat improvements and development of translocation plans.

The Assistant Species Recovery Officer role will be based in Cumbria from our office in Peil Wyke, Bassenthwaite, Cockermouth, CA13 9YG. Travel across England and some evening, weekend and on-call working will be required.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Key work areas

The post holder may be expected to focus on the following key work areas.

- Assist with the development, feasibility, and, where appropriate, licence application, delivery and monitoring of species recovery initially focused on Eurasian beaver, wood ants and water voles.
- Help to plan and undertake ecological surveys to inform decision-making, including coordinating volunteers and contractors,
- Work with academic partners to enable applied research which supports the potential for peer reviewed publication.
- Support the Species Recovery Officer to share and gather information through engagement events and activities.
- Liaise with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.
- And any other tasks, reasonably requested by their line manager.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- A good understanding of ecology.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Strong organisational skills and ability to plan own time efficiently.
- Ability to work independently while maintaining good relationships and knowledge exchange with wider teams.
- Competent in IT including core Microsoft Office applications.
- A good understanding of Health & Safety in the workplace.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Experience working on development and/or delivery of a nature conservation project, and an understanding of the barriers and opportunities to species recovery.
- Direct experience working in similar species reintroduction projects and or undertaking surveys in the field.
- Experience with stakeholder and community engagement.
- Experience of working with volunteers.
- Experience in the agricultural sector.
- Experience with geographical information systems (GIS).

Behaviours

Seeing the Big Picture

- Focus on the overall goal and intent of what you are trying to achieve, not just the task.
- Ability to communicate the wider context of the project to others.

Communicating and influencing

- Actively listens, allowing others to fully express their opinion.
- Be an effective representative of the team

Working Together

- Build, maintain and improve relationships with different stakeholders at the relevant level to understand differing views and issues.

Technical

- Demonstrate specific professional skills, knowledge or qualifications.

Qualifications

Essential

- Qualification in ecology or similar discipline and/or experience in conservation and/or land management
- A full driving licence