Job Description – Species Recovery Officer (PB5)

Job Summary

Forestry England's Biodiversity Plan sets out a bold ambition for 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.

Forestry England's Biodiversity Programme is a multi-year work stream to accelerate nature recovery at scale in England. With a multi-million-pound budget, supported by Defra and a growing portfolio of external funders, the programme makes a significant investment in nature recovery, alongside Forestry England's parallel ambitions for sustainable timber production and connecting people with our forests.

Forestry England's Yorkshire District covers an area from Hartlepool to Spurn Head, stretching to the Yorkshire Dales and Huddersfield in the west, with work focused around the North York Moors National Park. Species Recovery Officers support the delivery of species recovery through conservation translocation projects in our districts and across England, from planning and feasibility through to delivery and post-release monitoring. Translocations enable species restoration where natural recovery is not possible, or unlikely within a reasonable timeframe. International and national guidance (e.g. IUCN, Defra) informs best practice and evidence-based decision-making to optimise project success.

You will be responsible for leading on the Pine Marten Recovery project in Yorkshire Forest District, taking it through feasibility, planning and development stages, and supporting delivery and monitoring. Successful species recovery depends as much on people as it does on ecology. Alongside a sound understanding of species ecology and conservation translocation techniques, you will need to understand the social dimensions of conservation, including stakeholder attitudes, community engagement, partnership working, and the factors that influence public acceptance of species recovery projects.

In addition to the pine marten project, you will be responsible for developing other species recovery projects that are priorities for Forestry England, including the translocation of hairy wood ants and fungi, and will work alongside the Nature Recovery Team to identify future opportunities for species recovery projects. A significant part of the role will involve engaging with landowners, local communities, interest groups, regulators and delivery partners to understand differing perspectives and facilitate constructive dialogue, build trust and develop support for nature recovery projects. You will be expected to apply social science evidence and stakeholder engagement approaches alongside ecological evidence to help shape project design and delivery.

You will develop and manage partnerships, project boards, steering and stakeholder groups as required to ensure that projects are delivered effectively, utilising your excellent communication and relationship management skills. You will lead the development of project documentation including management plans, budgets, feasibility reports, risk assessments and translocation plans. You will have or develop a sound understanding of relevant legislative and licensing requirements for species reintroductions. You will ensure excellent project governance is in place, as appropriate for projects, whether Forestry England are a lead or supporting partner.

Our species recovery projects are often delivered with other organisations, so to succeed in this role you will need to be experienced in working with internal and external stakeholders, including partners, landowners and funders. Effective communication will be a key part of this role, alongside the successful implementation of a robust communications plan. You will be

willing to challenge established norms on management for nature and help drive nature recovery at scale and pace.

This is an exciting role, at the forefront of nature recovery in Forestry England. Reporting to the Nature Recovery Manager in Yorkshire Forest District, the post holder will work alongside the national Forest Wilding Programme team, as well as other district-based staff, including ecologists, planners and foresters. The post holder will be part of a network of colleagues across the country delivering similar nature recovery projects, sharing expertise and experience.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

1) Project Management

- Lead on the development of the vision and the project plan for the pine marten recovery project, and other priority species where required.
- Apply appropriate project management principles to ensure effective and timely project implementation, in accordance with Forest Wilding Programme guidance and frameworks.
- Ensure relevant project documentation is produced and maintained throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Develop annual and long-term work programmes and budgets for the project(s), supported by relevant project boards and sub-groups and the Forest Wilding Programme Team.
- Manage a delegated budget to ensure the project(s) are managed within budgetary limits and fiscal guidelines.
- Support funding bids for external funding and ensure that commitments to funders for the projects are appropriately met through project delivery.
- Fulfil necessary corporate and funder reporting.

2) Species Recovery

- Lead on progressing one or more species recovery projects, at feasibility, planning and development stages, and where projects progress support delivery of release, post-release monitoring and management stages; working with district colleagues and the Forest Wilding Programme Team to recover influential species to our landscapes.
- Follow and adhere to conservation translocation best practice to ensure an evidence-informed approach is applied throughout, whether we are a lead or supporting partner.
- Ensure biological, ecological and socio-economic factors are considered and addressed throughout the project's lifecycle, including end-of-project review.
- Procure and manage contracts and contractors, including ecological and social science consultants, and academic institutions.
- Support the investigation of the (re)introduction of influential species to wild areas, which help restore natural processes.
- Ensure Forestry England procurement and contract management regulations are followed throughout the project.

3) Knowledge and Monitoring

- Ensure best practice and evidence-informed release strategies and post-release monitoring and management are implemented.
- Work with the national Forest Wilding programme team, colleagues from Forest Research and wider academia to learn from and share best practice from the projects.
- Ensure appropriate licensing requirements are understood and met, in addition to considerations around forestry operations.
- Lead or feed into the design, commission and interpretation of ecological, biological and socio economic feasibility studies to guide new species reintroduction projects.

4) Communications and public engagement

• Support the development of partnerships with other organisations to increase the scale and effectiveness of species recovery outcomes.

• Lead on the delivery of a stakeholder engagement plan(s) alongside district and national colleagues, building and managing relationships with relevant stakeholders.

• Work with district and national communications colleagues to maintain and update a communications plan(s) for the project(s).

• Showcase the project to internal and external stakeholders to gain support for forest wilding, nature recovery and further delivery within the nation's forests.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Location-Specific Information

The post is based at our Pickering office, North Yorkshire, until early 2028 when the offices will move to Dalby Forest. There are blended working opportunities including home working and the use of DEFRA offices in York.

The duties of this post will require the applicant to sometimes travel to remote locations that are not accessible by public transport. You will therefore need to hold a full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK and be willing to stay away from home. We are willing to consider any proposals put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the job by other means.

Skills, Knowledge & Experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- A track record of successfully developing, managing and coordinating species recovery projects.
- Demonstrable skills in stakeholder management, with a track record of developing constructive collaborative relationships with a wide range of stakeholder groups, including public sector, private sector, and non-governmental organisations, volunteers and community groups.
- An experienced project manager, able to manage and prioritise workloads, meet deadlines, solve problems, and manage budgets.
- Strong knowledge of social science and/or human-wildlife coexistence, ecology, and biology, with applied experience in species recovery initiatives, particularly conservation translocations.
- Experience of working on the recovery of one or more of our current priority influential species: beaver, white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, wildcat, wood ants, soil fungi and in particular pine marten.
- Experience of procurement and contract management, particularly in relation to species recovery, land management, and ecological survey and monitoring projects.
- A great team worker, adept at working under your own initiative and as part of a multi-disciplinary team, taking ownership of the responsibilities of the role, building collaborative working relationships with colleagues, and being adaptable in the face of changing situations.
- An excellent communicator, both written and verbally, able to adapt to a range of audiences.
- Competent using information technology, and sound knowledge of Microsoft Office suite, especially Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Sound experience in the forestry sector. A working knowledge of environmental legislation and regulation designations, including their practical application, with relevance to species reintroductions

Qualifications

Essential

- Ecology, zoology or environmental degree, or equivalent professional experience in nature focussed species recovery and reintroductions.
- A full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK.

Desirable

- A recognised project management qualification
- A member of a relevant professional body, e.g. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Institute of Chartered Foresters

Success Profiles: Behaviours

- Seeing the big picture
- Delivering at pace
- Working together
- Making effective decisions