



Somerset
Wildlife Trust



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Consultancy

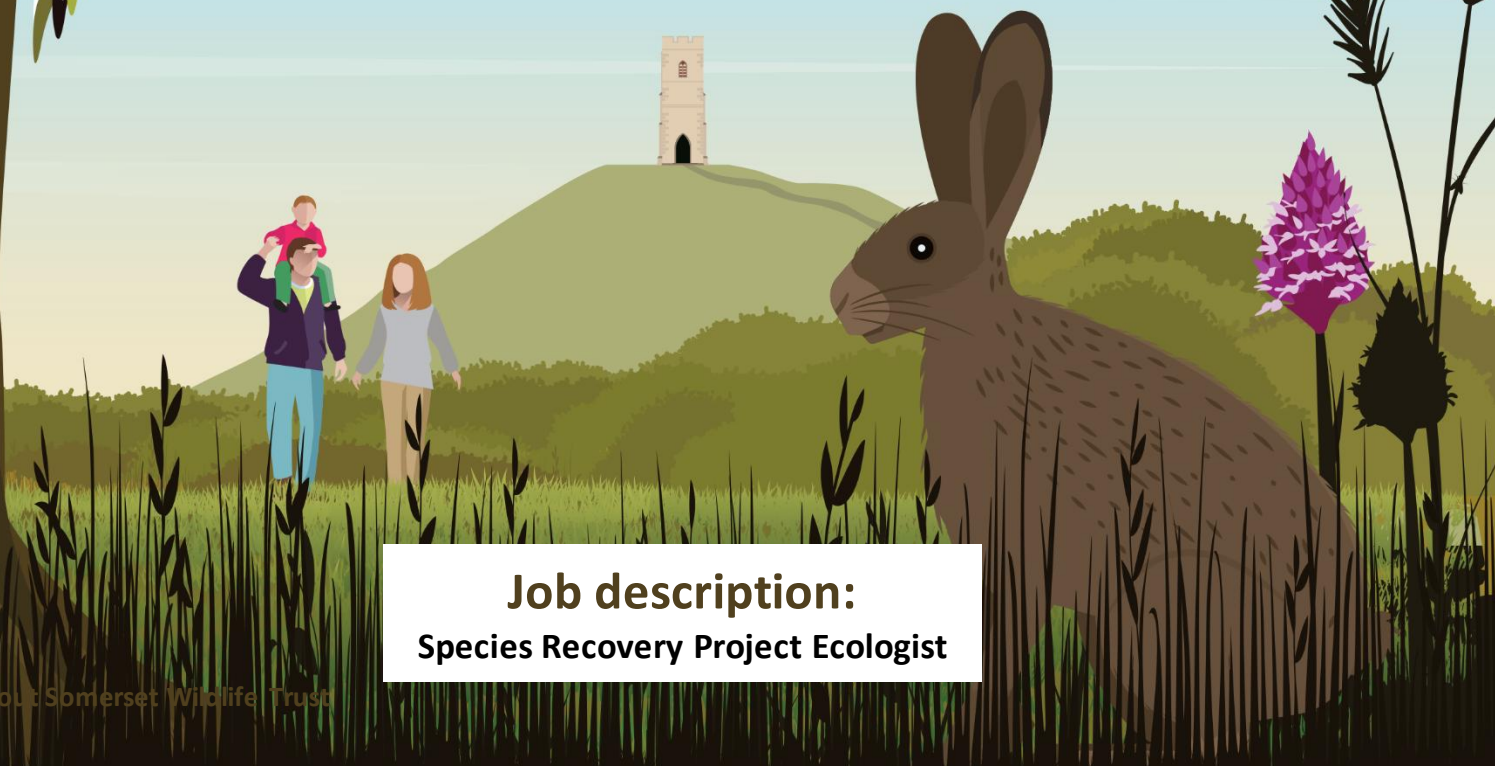


Wilder Somerset

2030



More space for nature where wildlife thrives
with more people on nature's side



Job description:
Species Recovery Project Ecologist

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a local independent charity and the only organisation uniquely focused on improving the natural environment of Somerset for the benefit of wildlife and people. We champion Somerset's stunning, diverse, and important natural environment, making the case for nature to the public and politicians. We protect wildlife and lead the recovery of the environment by example, including on our nature reserves.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts across Britain which together with the *Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts* collectively form *The Wildlife Trusts*. We are the biggest charity movement in the UK working solely for nature and we believe that restoring nature on a landscape scale is essential for tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

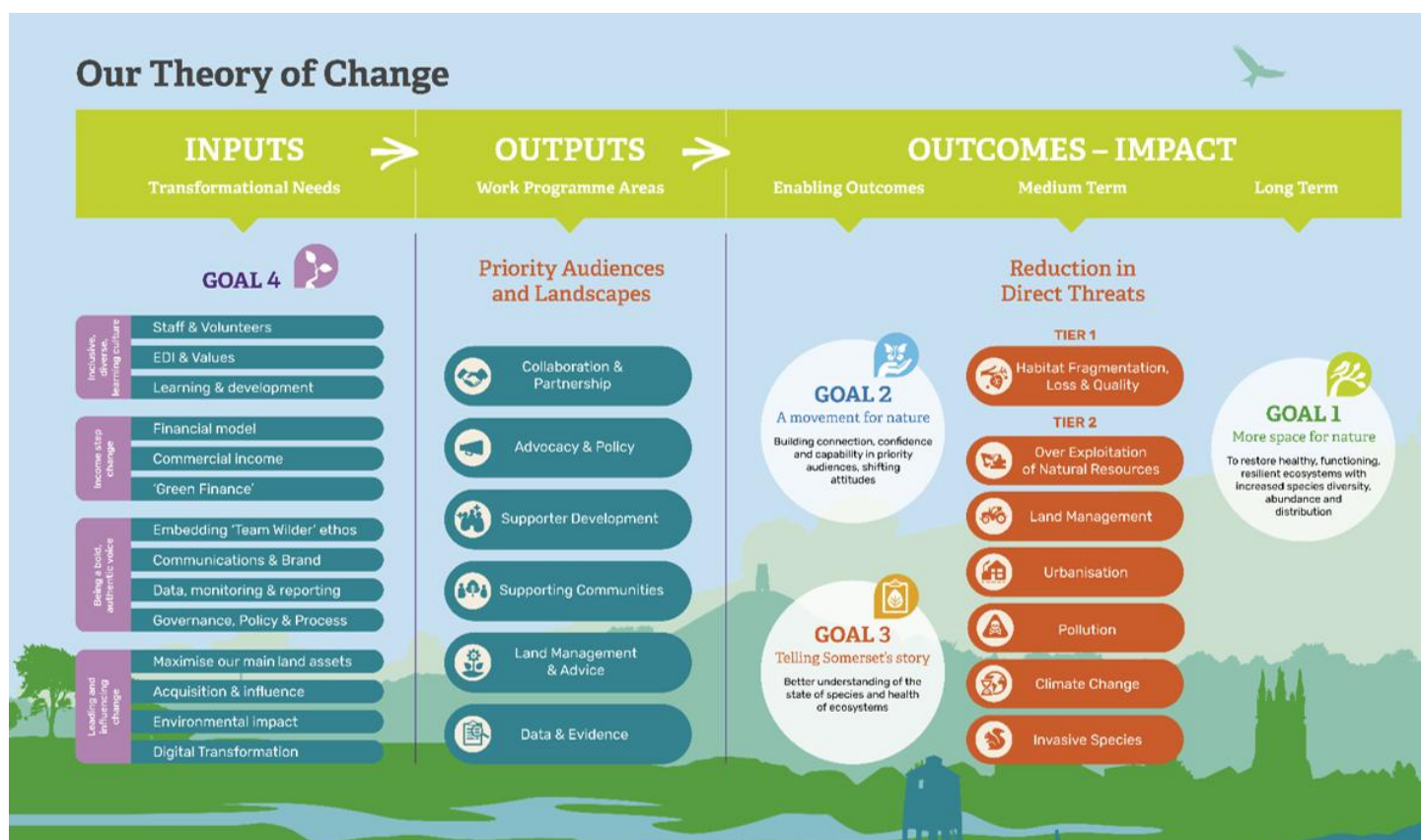
The climate and ecological crises require comprehensive, ambitious solutions and urgent action across all sections of society. The crises are also inexorably linked so it is vital that our strategy, ['Wilder Somerset 2030'](#) is delivered with both at its core. We recognise that people are part of the solution and everyone has a role to play in restoring nature and averting the worst of the climate change. Research suggests that if 1 in 4 people in society take action then social tipping points can be achieved and widespread positive change can happen. This underpins one of our key strategic goals and Team Wilder is our delivery approach to inspiring and empowering others to help nature recover.

Our Vision

To deliver a Somerset wide nature recovery network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone, and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

Our Mission

To champion the change needed to rebalance our relationship with wildlife and the natural world.



About the project

As part of Natural England's Species Recovery Programme, Somerset Wildlife Trust are excited to lead the Bolstering the Somerset Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) population project. This programme is a part of the government's "Wild Again: Restoring England's Wildlife" initiative, aiming to enhance threatened species populations across the UK.

With project delivery lasting from July 2026 to March 2029, we have a great opportunity to work with Natural England, RSPB, and local landowners to make habitat improvements and survey the species across the Somerset Levels and Moors. Through assessing food assemblages and trialing new survey techniques, this project will work toward the wider aim of enhancing bittern populations.

About the post

The Species Recovery Ecologist will be responsible for delivering habitat and bittern species surveys across the Somerset Levels and Moors project area. This will include assessing a range of reedbed and wetland mosaic types to assess suitability for bittern, as well as engaging and advising landowners on habitat enhancement.

Supported by Somerset Wildlife Trust staff, landowner engagement will involve the identification of improvement works funded by the project. The survey work will be completed with the support of a new, dedicated volunteer group led by the Species Recovery Project Ecologist.

Job Title	Species Recovery Project Ecologist
Band	Level 3
Reports To	Project Manager (for Species Recovery)
Team	Nature Recovery Projects
Responsible for	No direct line management but will be leading a new volunteer group in ecological surveys.
Job Purpose	▪ Provide specialist advice to landowners on reedbed and wetland mosaic habitat enhancement. ▪ Conduct bittern and habitat surveys, ensuring correct data management procedures with Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC). ▪ Support the recruiting of and lead a new volunteer group in bittern and habitat surveys across the project area. ▪ Report on project progress to the Project Manager for the 'Bolstering the Somerset Bittern (<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>) population' (BSB) project.
Position	Fixed-term: Full-time until the end of March 2029. 37.5 hours per week.
Notice period	3 months
Location	Hybrid working based at our office in the Avalon Marshes Centre with opportunities for home working and at our Callow office.
Working relationships	Internal: Project Manager, Head of Nature Recovery projects, Brue Valley Reserves Team, SERC and all Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) staff and trustees, with a focus on the SWT BSB project team.

	External: Natural England (funder, as well as the local team as a project partner), RSPB (project partner), landowners, volunteers, general public, and contractors.
Benefits of working for Somerset Wildlife Trust	We offer some fantastic benefits including: • 7% employer pension contribution • Life assurance • An annual professional institution subscription if applicable • Flexible and agile working • Wellbeing support – EAP, wellbeing champions • Diversity networks through RSWT/TWT • Paid volunteer days • Continuous Professional Development opportunities • 33 days of holiday (25 + bank holidays) • Staff social calendar and events The opportunity to make a real and positive difference to nature, communities and the climate

Job Description – Key Responsibilities and Tasks

Responsibility 1: Lead Ecological Surveys

Ensure correct data reporting by:

- Leading bittern, reedbed, and wetland mosaic habitat surveys across the project area (Somerset Levels and Moors). This work includes surveying on private land, as well as National Nature Reserves owned by SWT, RSPB, and Natural England.
- Keeping up to date with SWT data handling & reporting standards, particularly in close collaboration with Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC).
- Working closely with the Project Manager for the BSB project, sharing specialist species knowledge, reporting project progress, being involved in project meetings, and recording volunteer hours.

Responsibility 2: Enhance Habitat Conditions

Improve reedbed and wetland mosaic sites by:

- Identifying key sites for restoration and/or enhancement, supported by specialist habitat knowledge and SERC.
- Collaborating with SWT's Honeygar Land Management and Monitoring Manager to engage local landowners and organisations around the Avalon Marshes area with the aim of habitat restoration and/or enhancement for bittern recovery.
- Advising landowners across the Somerset Levels project area on habitat enhancement and restoration, identifying and allocating use of project funding to support work on private land. Ensure best communication practices that are in line with SWT standards.

Responsibility 3: Manage Volunteers

Provide leadership and support by:

- Providing leadership and mentoring to volunteers so that they can conduct species and habitat surveys without direct supervision.
- Working with SWT's Volunteering & Community Support Officer to ensure best practice when engaging and recruiting volunteers, including following SWT safety procedures and capturing issues raised by volunteers.
- Contributing to the recruitment & promotion of volunteers for the new bittern survey group, which involves working closely with the Project Manager and SWT Marketing & Communications team

General

- The job holder is required to follow and comply with all policies and procedures of Somerset Wildlife Trust which includes our health and safety and safeguarding procedures, ensuring the personal safety of all staff, volunteers, young people and vulnerable adults involved in the project.
- To carry out other duties relevant to your post as reasonably required by your line manager.
- To reflect the Somerset Wildlife Trust Values all areas of work.
- To work collaboratively with other Wildlife Trusts to share learning and achieve greater impact collectively.
- Somerset Wildlife Trust is committed to creating a more digital culture across the organisation. We aim to become more collaborative, agile and efficient through the use of digital technology. A basic level of digital skills is expected of all staff with the opportunity to improve these skills with career progression.
- Somerset Wildlife Trust has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan and is committed to continuing to improve the equality, diversity and inclusion of every aspect of our work; we know we need to engage with everyone to live our Values and achieve our goals. We welcome applications from everyone and are happy to discuss any accommodations or arrangements that would make the recruitment process better for you, and the working environment should you be employed.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

To succeed in this role you will need to demonstrate:

	<i>Essentials</i>	<i>Desirables</i>
Qualifications	Educated to degree level or with an equivalent level of training and professional experience. Full driving license and ownership of a personal vehicle. 'Right to Work'	
Experience/Knowledge	A minimum of 2 years of professional experience in ecological surveying, including bird surveys. Specialist habitat knowledge, particularly around reedbed, wet grassland, bog, fen ditch and other wetland mosaic habitat types. Demonstrable communication/advisory experience. Experience working with and coordinating volunteers. Knowledge around health and safety, such as risk assessment and lone working practices, in outdoor environments. Detailed understanding of current best practice survey guidance for habitats (including BNG) and/or species.	Specialist knowledge of the Somerset Levels landscape. Experience leading volunteers in survey work. Knowledge of bittern and other wetland bird species and their survey techniques.
Skills	Excellent communication skills with a proven track record in developing strong relationships with key individuals/stakeholders (volunteers community organisations and/or statutory agencies). Enthusiasm for outdoor work as the surveys will be outside in all weathers, particularly in wet environments. Competent in using GIS software.	(Outdoor) First Aid trained

	Highly competent in the use of Microsoft Office programs such as Word and Excel. Excellent organisational skills; able to prioritise & manage a varied workload to tight & competing deadlines.	
Attributes	Passion and enthusiastic in working with teams, for inclusion & for wildlife/nature recovery. Positive and creative; open to new ideas and learning, e.g., with exploring new species surveying techniques. Integrity and commitment; honest, with a strong work ethic and a real commitment to the values and aspirations of the Somerset Wildlife Trust.	

Document Control			
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Date of review			
	Name	Designation	Date
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Version history			
Date	Paragraph amended	Reason	New Issue no.
		1 st issue for use	1.0



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Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust

To deliver our Wilder Somerset 2030 plan we, Somerset Wildlife Trust, will need to build our charity, be clear in our priorities and ensure our own actions support our aims. We have a new set of Values that will inform all our decision-making and actions to bring about nature's recovery across Somerset.

- We are passionate about nature.
- We believe everyone can contribute to nature's recovery.
- We love Somerset - its amazing wildlife and its communities.
- We are confident and brave in standing up for nature.
- We encourage innovative thinking and action for nature's recovery.

To deliver our strategy we will:

- Support, inspire and enable others to act while leading by example.
- Develop a Climate and Environment Strategy that delivers on our own environmental commitments within the Trust covering all areas of our operation and land use including procurement, utilities, facilities, and transport to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Use our resources efficiently and effectively, harnessing the diversity, talent and commitment of our staff and supporters.
- Expand our supporter base and sources of income, including through embracing new opportunities to generate income streams that are compatible with our strategic goals and maintain financial stability.
- Embrace new ways to grow our impact and reach, with a particular focus on expanding our digital knowledge and experience.

