

# Habitats and Species Officer – Protecting the River Irfon catchment’s freshwater biodiversity

## Job description

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**Contract:** Fixed-term contract to March 2026. 1.0 FTE.

**Location:** Mid Wales (centred on Llanwrtyd Wells or Builth Wells).

**Responsible to:** Project Manager, R. Irfon Nature Networks Project.

**Responsible for:** delivery of habitats and species conservation work, including delivery by volunteer groups, landowners and professional partners, in the Nature Networks Fund project ‘River Irfon catchment: Helping communities develop nature networks to protect and restore freshwater biodiversity’.

## Background

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Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) is a friendly, experienced, evidence-based conservation charity that works to protect UK and European freshwater wildlife through practical, evidence-based and innovative nature conservation projects.

Our organisation is well respected nationally and internationally, and we work with a network of statutory and NGO partners both in the UK and Europe.

This post is part of a new strategic programme to demonstrate and practically apply the Freshwater Network concept, a new approach to freshwater biodiversity conservation developed by Freshwater Habitats Trust, which considers all freshwater and wetland types as an interdependent network, linking Important Freshwater Areas, floodplains and Wetland Opportunity Areas. Following demonstrations of the concept in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the New Forest we now have an opportunity to extend this concept in the upland environment of the catchment of the R. Irfon in Mid Wales, placing a special emphasis on the critical role of small waters and wetlands which research demonstrates are essential for maintaining freshwater biodiversity.

## Role

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The successful candidate will be responsible for **practical freshwater and wetland conservation work with both professional and volunteer groups** undertaking habitat creation, restoration and management work (e.g. pond creation, fen and bog management, river and floodplain restoration work, in-situ rare species habitat management work, especially involving the endangered freshwater pearl mussel), including working with other Freshwater Habitats Trust colleagues. This work is also helping to build a new practical conservation volunteer audiences and will require co-ordinating work and maintaining relationships with local site owners, especially private farming landowners.

## Job description

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### Habitat creation and management

- Develop, organise and undertake habitat creation projects including pond creation and river floodplains restoration
- Implement practical river habitat management for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, including woody debris management, tree management and some riverside fencing to enhance buffer strip width. This work will include co-operative working with the Freshwater Biological Association and Natural Resources Wales who have captive breeding populations for the species
- Identify high quality river or stream locations which could be suitable for freshwater pearl mussel reintroduction and assess sites for reintroduction programmes at a later stage
- Develop and organise habitat management programmes on private land and in SSSIs for Priority freshwater wetland habitats including purple moorgrass rush pasture, fen and lowland bog, including building a new audience of local conservation volunteers.
- Manage grazing regimes with partner farmers and landowners who are using electronic GPS 'NoFence' cattle collars, to enable, control or manage stock grazing on Priority wetland habitats.

### Species conservation work

- Develop and implement a programme of endangered plant cultivation with partners to provide plants for the public engagement GroWet programme where local, working closely with the project's Engagement Officer
- Identify and manage locations where endangered water and wetland plants grown on by the public in the GroWet programme can be planted out into appropriate high quality freshwater habitats, bolstering populations of the species
- Working with FHT colleagues in the main Oxford office, develop and maintain a register a sites where wetland plants are introduced
- Report the results of project, working closely with colleagues, and potentially contributing to reporting results in scientific papers.
- Identify and develop other species conservation programmes if possible (eg for uncommon freshwater invertebrates such as Fairy Shrimp, Eurasian Curlew which occurs on catchment Priority wetland habitats)

### Other work

- Support, in association with the Community Engagement Officer, a programme of training for the project's Trainees (2 posts, each of 12 months duration, running sequentially over the course of the project) that builds and extends your management skills, develops the skills of the Trainees and fits FHT project requirements

### Administration

- Follow FHT standard information management systems for projects and finances
- Ensure that you are familiar with FHT H&S and HR policies and implement as needed
- Provide information on request and in good time to your line manager, your colleagues and the Senior Management Team, in line with FHT policies

## General

- Ensure that you understand the Freshwater Habitats Trust strategy for freshwater biodiversity conservation and that you represent the views of the organisation in your work
- Seek to improve your knowledge and understanding of freshwater invertebrate conservation and best practice, and evidence on relevant conservation issues, with a focus on freshwaters and associated habitats
- Ensure that high quality technical delivery is achieved by drawing on both external and internal scientific knowledge and evidence
- Ensure that you are able to work safely in accordance with the Trust's H&S policy
- Contribute positively at internal and external meetings and to the maintenance of a constructive working environment
- Undertake other duties your line manager or other members of the Senior Management Team may from time to time require

## Person specifications

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### Experience/skills

- Proven experience of freshwater habitat and/or species conservation management
- Evidence of ability to work with partners involved in land or species management
- Degree, preferably in a relevant subject (ideally at least 2:1);
- A working knowledge of freshwater natural history and ecology which may be focused on either standing or running waters
- Good project and budget management skills
- An ability to work as a friendly and constructive member of a team, working toward common goals to deliver high quality freshwater conservation projects
- Good IT skills including MS Office; ability to work with GIS would be helpful but not critical as we can provide training and support
- Full current driving licence
- Knowledge of the Welsh Language (preferable)

### Personal qualities

- Ability to work and manage time independently
- Team orientated and comfortable working with a wide range of partners
- Attention to detail and able to delivery on time
- Reasonably flexible attitude to working hours (we aim to be generously flexible for those with childcare commitments)
- Excellent time management and other organisational skills
- Good interpersonal skills, approachable and professional