

Job Description

Job Title	Rural Hedgehog Officer
Job purpose	Lead hedgehog conservation work focused on the rural landscape
Contract	2.5 years
Salary	£30,000
Responsible to	Conservation Research Manager
Hours	Full time, 35 hours per week
Annual leave	23 days a year +3 days taken between Christmas & New Year
Location	Home-based with some travel throughout England, Wales & Scotland
Other	Flexitime office hours
To apply	Submit a CV and cover letter to jobs@ptes.org
Closing date	23.59pm Sunday 20 October 2024

Background

Hedgehogs are a widespread but rapidly declining species in the UK, and while the more urban populations in towns and villages seem to have stabilised or increased recently, rural hedgehog populations appear to still be declining. The exact reasons for this are unclear but likely stem from the wider impacts of agricultural intensification, with reduced food and habitat quality for hedgehogs. This post was created as a response and in an effort to help reverse this trend for hedgehogs.

People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) have been leading on hedgehog conservation in Britain for several decades and began their partnership work on the species in 2011. The two organisations work together to produce the *State of Britain's Hedgehogs* reports, run Hedgehog Street, a public engagement campaign, and fund research into the threats facing the species. BHPS and PTES recognised a need for a comprehensive conservation strategy for hedgehogs with more quantitative objectives, and stakeholder engagement and support. With support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) and stakeholders from a diverse range of backgrounds, including NGOs, government agencies, the animal rehabilitation sector, the farming community, national infrastructure bodies, and academics, a new strategy has been developed. This role is funded by BHPS and PTES.

Responsibilities

National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy

- Liaise with PTES and BHPS staff, stakeholders and volunteers to help launch and implement the new National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy.
- Help formulate an action plan and develop examples of local case studies for implementing elements of the strategy pertaining to the rural and farmed landscapes with the aim of implementing and demonstrating how specific environmental stewardship options could lead to better outcomes for hedgehog conservation.
- Manage strategy working groups relating to farming/rural land management; organising meetings, liaising with the group and delegating tasks where appropriate to address relevant strategic points.
- Report to strategy steering group and attend meetings, providing updates on progress of relevant strategy points, with reports produced as needed.

Working with farmers

- Engage with farmers and rural land managers to raise the profile and awareness of hedgehogs and their habitat requirement as important parts of native biodiversity in farmland; attending relevant events, delivering talks and collaborating with other PTES and BHPS staff as required.
- Create and disseminate information and resources for rural land managers using up to date research and available best practice for hedgehog conservation.

Research support

- Provide support for research associates undertaking projects pertaining to hedgehogs and farmed landscapes, and other relevant topics including the creation of best practice case studies.
- Facilitate collaborative work and partnerships between research contacts and landowners in line with the priorities identified in the national strategy, and facilitate inclusion of farmland sites in the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme.

Wider partnerships and engagement

- Help to represent the conservation of hedgehogs and their habitat in discussions and consultations around new and ongoing legislation and land management schemes e.g. ELMs, BNG, LNRS.
- Regular liaison and meetings with the urban-focused Hedgehog Officer to discuss progress, delegate tasks and share updates.
- Maintain positive, collaborative working relationships with relevant groups and organisations including farmer clusters, Nature Friendly Farming Network (NFFN), Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), National Farmers Union (NFU).

- Respond to enquiries relating to relevant areas of the hedgehog strategy and rural habitat, from stakeholders, statutory agencies, researchers, members of the public and other interested parties.
- Collaborate on press releases and facilitate interviews relating to new research, partnerships, projects etc., to build profile of rural hedgehog work.

Other tasks

- Represent the team at appropriate public events to promote hedgehog conservation
- Maximise relationships with external communities and stakeholders, involving other staff and PR team where suitable
- Liaise with colleagues to produce the biennial *State of Britain's Hedgehogs* reports
- Helping with other tasks as advised by the Chief Executive Officer

Relationships

PTES & BHPS:

- Report to the PTES Conservation Research Manager and CEO
- Work in a team with the urban-focused Hedgehog Officer, Assistant Hedgehog Officer and National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme Co-ordinator
- Work with all colleagues in PTES & BHPS to agree objectives, set targets and promote relevant aspects of our work to external audiences.

External:

- The campaign working groups, farmers, farmer clusters
- Staff in other wildlife NGOs, groups such as NFU and Nature Friendly Farming Network
- PR/communications agency

Person Specification

Essential knowledge and experience

- Background in/strong knowledge of farming and agriculture sector, and experience of effective communication with varied stakeholders, particularly different types of farmers and land managers.
- A good understanding of British wildlife and the challenges faced across the rural landscape.
- A passion and commitment for nature conservation and the environment.
- Understanding of the challenges faced by farming and other rural land management communities, and the need to balance/meet the needs of people and nature.
- Full UK driving license.

Essential skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills adaptable to relate and converse confidently with a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds face to face and remotely
- Excellent organisational skills with ability to work on own initiative and without close supervision, and to manage several projects at the same time, often with conflicting priorities
- Ability to manage a large volume of tasks, and judging priorities in responding
- Self-motivation, a general 'can do' cooperative manner, and the ability to work both independently and as part of a close-knit team with a passion for conservation
- Proven ability to manage projects and events, meeting objectives on time and on budget
- Ability to think strategically, prioritise tasks and influence strategy
- Ability to work with consistent accuracy and attention to detail
- Flexibility to be able to work out of hours on occasion when travelling to and attending external events.

Desirable selection criteria

- Good knowledge and understanding of hedgehog ecology and conservation issues
- Experience of productive interaction with the media
- Commitment to our goals and values as an evidence-based conservation charity
- Full UK driving licence