

Site Manager

Grade: 11

Directorate: Operations

Location: WWT Castle Espie – the hub for Wetland nature conservation on Strangford Lough

Reporting to: Head of Operations for Wetland Reserves

Main functions of post: To lead a small multi-functional team of staff and volunteers to maximise the wildlife and habitat potential of WWT's 26 ha Castle Espie site and the 400 ha of Lough foreshore that WWT manages on behalf of the Crown Estate. To deliver against the Trust's financial, conservation and visitation targets for the Castle Espie site. To fulfil all the duties of Reserve Manager for the Castle Espie site. To ensure adherence with the Trust's policies, procedures & operational frameworks.

Supervisory responsibilities: All employees, casual workers, volunteers, placements and students. Six direct reports taking care of Grounds and Facilities, Trading, Reserve, Visitor Engagement & Comms and site Administration.

Hours worked: Normally working hours will be 37.5 hours a week including Bank Holidays, ensuring cover on opening days Thursday to Monday.

Working pattern: This role is required to work those hours necessary to fulfil the requirements of the position to the satisfaction of the Trust. 5 days in 7, skewed to Thursday to Monday.

Responsibilities of the post

1. To lead, inspire and manage WWT's Castle Espie team to meet performance objectives through clear communications, setting expected standards of work and ensuring all staff and volunteers are engaged in developing the site to further success and recognition.
2. To work alongside WWT's Head of UK Wetlands and the Head of Reserves Management to raise the profile of WWT's wetland reserve at Castle Espie for conservation and establish links and collaboration with key stakeholders through local networks and groups that can further our strategic objectives within and outside our site boundaries, with a particular focus on Strangford Lough.
3. To manage and enhance the wetland habitats and the biodiversity of the 26ha reserve at WWT's Castle Espie site. To work to enhance the wetlands habitats on the 400 ha of Strangford Lough that belong to the Crown Estate but are in the care of WWT.

4. To be responsible for the production and implementation of the Castle Espie site's Reserve Management Plan including routine recording, annual reporting and 5-yearly full review.
5. To make sure the site, its structures, buildings and infrastructure are managed and maintained to a high standard including all visitor facilities, event spaces, offices and outbuildings.
6. To deliver the Trust's visitation goals for the site (reviewed annually). To make sure that your team engage and interact with our visitors and supporters in a positive way, shaping unforgettable experiences and helping them understand and connect to wetlands.
7. To ensure the Castle Espie site is delivering in line with WWT's agreed corporate strategic plan, associated annual objectives and key performance indicators, taking necessary corrective action if failings are identified. This includes delivery against an annual review of the Castle Espie Site Business Plan.
8. To be accountable for the Castle Espie site's annual operating budget, thoroughly assessing the proposed levels of income and expenditure, ensuring the effective management of the budget throughout the year, including the control of expenditure.
9. To make sure the site maximises its commercial revenue from visitation, retail, catering, events and membership recruitment, and delivers against associated key performance indicators.
10. To manage and engage a team of volunteers, delivering against WWT's volunteer management framework, and ensuring that volunteers have a positive experience of WWT and are empowered to support our work and carry out their role.
11. To ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in your team is an integral part of how they work, creating a safe environment for staff, volunteers and visitors by implementing WWT's health and safety policies and guidelines.
12. To achieve the highest standards of presentation and maintenance with regards to WWT Infrastructure/Reserves/Buildings and create solutions where problems are identified or standards fall below those expected.
13. To ensure good relationships are developed and maintained with local communities and other points of influence/importance both with regards to the Castle Espie site and also to WWT's profile and standing.
14. To assist the Head of Operations, Wetland Reserves in overseeing land and property leases and purchase matters in respect of the centre.
15. As an environmental charity, we expect all members of staff to seek ways, wherever possible, to work in environmentally responsible ways and to minimise environmental impacts associated with their role and influence.
16. To ensure that everyone in your team adheres to WWT's Data Protection Policy and GDPR standards as an integral part of how they work.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed, the post holder is required to perform any other reasonable duties that may be assigned by the supervisor shown above, from time to time.

Date raised: February 2019

Amended: July 2026

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential

- Educated to degree standard or equivalent
- Spraying, brushcutter and tractor qualifications
- Current driving licence

Desirable:

- Professional qualification in a relevant area e.g. Conservation, Business Management
- Chainsaw qualification
- Licensed to work with protected species

2. Experience

Essential:

- Demonstrable experience of managing large areas of land under conservation objectives
- Proven experience of general management, ideally with a visitor centre and trading operation, including staff and budgets over £500,000
- Demonstrable experience of developing and implementing conservation management plans
- Demonstrable experience of planning work programmes
- Demonstrable and successful people management experience in recruitment, training, motivation and performance management.
- Demonstrable ability to deal with the public
- Ability to identify a range of species groups including birds to a high degree of accuracy

Desirable:

- Empathy and support for our conservation messages
- Experience at networking with the public/private sector at a high level

3. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Ability to lead, direct and motivate staff and volunteers
- Ability to manage the complexity of demands posed by both a commercial and conservation environment
- Ability to prioritise workload of self and others

Type of team member	Number managed (No. of direct reports)	Number supervised
Employed staff	6	
Volunteers	0	Up to 30
Casual Workers	0	2-4

4. Responsibility

Essential:

Ultimate responsibility for:

- the development of the wetland habitats at WWT's Castle Espie site and Strangford Lough foreshore under our care
- all staff and volunteers and their performance
- performance against financial, visitor experience and conservation targets
- the presentation and safety of the site and all visitors to the site
- the experience and engagement of all visitors

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Expenditure (excl payroll)	£250,000
Income	£410,000
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	£15,000
Visitors (number per annum)	30,000

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Ability to understand the dynamics of the organisation as a whole
- Ability to develop the conservation and visitor engagement opportunities on and around WWT's Castle Espie site.
- Have an eye for detail and presentation
- Evidence of finding innovative solutions to operational problems
- Determination to finish the job
- Effective time management and IT skills

6. Contact

Essential:

- Contact with a wide range of groups including visitors, volunteers, local and regional groups, general public, local authorities and statutory bodies.
- Experience and confidence at handling verbal and written communication at these levels is essential

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