



Assistant Biologist

Job Description & Specification

1. Background

The River Dee in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, is an internationally designated Special Area of Conservation. The River Dee Trust conservation charity has an established track record of innovative conservation and restoration programmes and through its science and research supports fisheries management on the River Dee.

The Trust's award-winning nature restoration is actively developing into a landscape scale response to the clear threats to biodiversity. Ahead of schedule for planting its initial target of a million native trees on riverbanks, the Trust is also delivering projects to minimise harm to wildlife from floods and droughts and removing invasive non-native species that are the one of the greatest threats to biodiversity.

The Trust provides scientific services for the fisheries, conservation, and education to the wider community of the Dee catchment. Together with its close partner the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board, these organisations deliver a Fisheries Management Plan with a focus on the Dee's population of Atlantic salmon. The Assistant Biologist will support the delivery of catchment monitoring and research, to guide restoration work and species conservation and will be part of a diverse team of 18 staff who are based in the River Office on Deeside.

2. Reporting

The Assistant Biologist will report to the Biologist. The Biologist reports to the River Director who has overall responsibility for the activities of The River Dee Trust and reports to its Trustees.

3. Key Purpose

The role will be a combination of field-based data collection and office-based activities to support the scientific understanding of the health of the River Dee and its wildlife, particularly its salmonid fish stocks. The Assistant Biologist will support the Trust Biologist and have a shared responsibility for providing robust data to make informed conservation decisions; they will also take the lead on tasks working autonomously. Key responsibilities are outlined below and will be built on over time.

Key Responsibilities

a) Fieldwork

- Electrofishing
 - Organise and participate in electrofishing monitoring surveys across the Dee District
 - Liaison with landowners and arrangement of permissions to allow electrofishing
- Smolt trapping
 - Organise and participate in smolt trapping
- Temperature datalogger downloads
 - Maintain the River Dee's river temperature monitoring programme within the SRTMN (Scotland River Temperature Monitoring Network) programme.
- Any other field duties, as reasonably requested, including but not exclusive to invertebrate surveys, redd counting, tree planting, and bird surveys.
- Support the development, improvement, and implementation of robust data collection, data management and data analysis protocols.

b) Lab based activities

- Data entry with appropriate quality control
- Maintaining and developing data records on GIS
- Provision of data and creation of maps as requested
- Scale reading to age fish
- Lab and equipment management and maintenance
- Maintain own professional development through reading of publications, attending conferences, networking with other biologists and organisations working in fisheries research and management

c) Communications

- Contribute to content creation for social media, web, and printed materials that effectively communicates the work of the River Dee Trust to a non-technical audience
- Face to face engagement as required to provide insight into the work of the Trust

d) Other

- Positively engage with colleagues to share knowledge and expertise
- Observe all health and safety requirements
- Help maintain the scientific and associated safety equipment
- Manage seasonal staff, volunteers and work placements to carry out duties in a safe, efficient, and timely manner
- Act as an ambassador for the river and its partners
- Undertake any additional functions as required to help colleagues deliver the Trust's wide aims, occasionally outside of standard work hours



4. Skills and Background

The candidate for this role should have the following person specifications:

a) Qualifications

- Training qualification or demonstrable experience in using GIS
- Desirable - Undergraduate degree in a relevant science discipline
- Desirable - Electrofishing and habitat surveying

b) Knowledge

- Detailed understanding of ecology and freshwater biology
- Awareness of scientific principles and their importance for robust data collection
- Desirable - Understanding of rivers and Scottish countryside issues
- Desirable - An awareness of the governance of freshwater and fisheries in Scotland

c) Experience

- Experienced in undertaking fieldwork to collect environmental or ecological data
- Using GIS to store, manage and display data
- Managing large volumes of data
- Recognise and apply health and safety principles
- Demonstrable continual professional development
- Desirable - Risk assessments

d) Skills

- Effective communicator – oral and written
- Attention to detail and evidence of careful data curation
- Demonstrable excellent organisational skills and ability to plan work
- Evidence of successful team working and ability to work effectively alone
- Willingness to work outdoors on a daily basis
- Competence in the use of Microsoft Office products, particularly Excel and Word

e) Other

- Full driving licence

5. Equipment

All staff will be adequately equipped to perform their duties in a safe and efficient manner and should ensure equipment is kept in good working order. Any deficiencies in the equipment or its condition should be reported in the first instance to the Administrator.



6. Hours and Place of Work

The River Dee Trust operates a 40-hour working week. The place of work will be the River Office, Mill of Dinnet, with hybrid working, and the postholder will be required to travel as required to undertake their duties. Some of the work undertaken will require the working of weekends or evenings.

7. Remuneration and Benefits

The post will attract a salary of £25,000 – £30,000 per annum. A vehicle will be provided in connection with undertaking work duties. A pension scheme is offered, and 6% contributions are matched by the employer.

8. Terms of Employment

The terms of employment will be specified in an accompanying contract and staff handbook. Please note that as this position may involve working with children and vulnerable adults any job offer will be subject to meeting the requirements of the Disclosure Scotland Act.