



## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Animal Care Placement - Living Collection Assistant**

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### **Why do we need you?**

At WWT we shape unforgettable experiences. We believe the best way for people to understand and connect to wetlands is to experience them, so we bring awe-inspiring nature up close and let it do the talking.

We are looking to recruit volunteers for a 6 to 12 month period for 4 / 5 days a week. These placements will help the Living Collections team. These are great opportunities for people looking to gain or build animal care experience, or willing to get stuck in to outdoor work with animals.

We are involved in maintaining and developing exhibits within the site at Castle Espie in order to enhance the visitor experience. This involves caring for our large collection of rare and endangered species of waterfowl from around the world.

We have the largest collection of native and exotic waterbirds in Northern Ireland, situated on Strangford Lough with 29 captive species. Previous volunteers have gone on to work in animal conservation work around the world.

With a wealth of experience and proven track record in scientific research, we create and conserve wetlands and save species. We provide wetland conservation solutions that work in today's society, sustaining both wildlife and people.

### **Who will be responsible for your role?**

Aviculture & Grounds Assistant (overseen by the Grounds and Facilities Manager)

### **Where will you be based?**

Castle Espie grounds

### **How much time will it take?**

4-5 days per week 9.00am – 4.00/5.00pm (Seasonal) with a commitment to a minimum of a 6 month period in order to get the most benefit from your placement. This can be done as part of a course between years.

### **What will you be doing?**

- Daily feed preparation, routines and creating animal enrichment
- Cleaning animal rearing facilities, equipment, ponds and exhibits and ensuring they are in good repair
- Undertaking animal census and recording of daily routines
- Weeding in exhibits and cutting back vegetation in and around exhibits.

- Pond maintenance
- Working as part of the centre opening/closing team undertaking tasks to ensure the site is ready for visitors on opening and cleared of visitors on closing (electric fence maintenance)
- Conducting public feed alongside occasional guided tours/ daily visitor engagement.
- Maintaining and improving exhibit fence lines
- Assisting with animal handling and annual health checks
- During breeding season; checking nest boxes, incubators and assisting in the animal rearing facilities
- Occasional tasks may include: building nest boxes, feeders and animal shelters, constructing enclosures and ponds, or assisting with large grounds team projects
- A variety of seasonal duties including putting out and bringing in nest boxes, winter shelter preparation and bedding changing
- Record keeping and animal health and welfare reporting
- Assisting with pest management protocols and camera trap data

### Who are we looking for?

- Some practical experience in animal care would be desirable
- Able to follow instructions and safely complete activities alone or as part of a team
- Good people skills
- Ideally someone who has studied or is studying a relevant subject.
- Public speaking skills desirable
- Physical fitness and the ability to lift heavy loads
- Ability to work outdoors in all weather
- Driving licence is essential
- You need to be over 18 years to carry out this role.

### How will you benefit?

- This is an excellent opportunity to work within an internationally important wetland site.
- Gaining invaluable animal husbandry knowledge and hands on experience
- Working in the fresh air with friendly, like-minded people
- Exercise and all-round fitness
- You will be able to become part of the small but friendly grounds team
- Training in use of tools, maintenance vehicles, animal care/handling and safe working practices on site
- You will be involved in the workings of this centre and will therefore be able to take up any opportunities that become available
- Discount is available in the cafe and shop for all volunteers on the day they volunteer
- Free entry to all WWT wetland centres throughout the UK on presentation of your WWT name badge

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### General Notes:

This position may require helping out on other days in addition to rota days but this will be infrequent and will be agreed with your head of department. We will mutually agree the hours that you can contribute and it would be helpful if you could try to give us as much notice as possible on the occasions when you are not able to contribute those hours.

It will be important to present a smart, welcoming and professional image to all Castle Espie visitors and to be sensitive to the needs of our visitors.

You will be required to regularly check the volunteer notice board and emails and to respond to the information contained.

The centre is signposted from nearby towns <https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/castle-espie/plan-your-visit/>

We regret that we are not in a position to reimburse expenses incurred for travel to the site. We also regret that we are not able to offer accommodation for this role.

This position is entirely voluntary and is therefore unpaid. Any offer of a volunteer placement is not intended to create a legally binding contract between us and any agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

### How to Apply:

**Please go to**

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/join-and-support/volunteering/volunteering-opportunities?>

Please email [amy.hannan@wwt.org.uk](mailto:amy.hannan@wwt.org.uk) if you have any problems completing the application form.

### Closing Date:

Please return all completed application forms by **March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020**. After this date successful applicants will be asked to come to the Castle Espie Wetlands Centre for an informal interview (date to be confirmed), to find out more about the role and discuss availability after which suitable candidates will be offered placements.

Jan 2020