

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Job Description



Title	Conservation Officer (Tayside) <i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels</i>
Part-time or Full-time	Full-time until 31 March 2024
Based	Blairgowrie, Tayside – home-working possible; anticipated office relocation
Dept/Region	Conservation
Line Manager	<i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels</i> - Project Manager

Our Mission

For over 50 years, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has worked with its members, partners and supporters in pursuit of its vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems across Scotland's land and seas. We are proud to have the support of over 42,000 members, 1,000 volunteers and 23 local (volunteer led) groups.

The Trust successfully champions the cause of wildlife through policy and campaigning work, demonstrates best practice through practical conservation and innovative partnerships, and inspires people to take positive action through its education and engagement activities. The Trust manages a network of 120 wildlife reserves across Scotland and is a member of the UK-wide Wildlife Trusts movement.

Our Values

- We are pioneers
- We are always learning
- We act with integrity
- We are evidence-based
- We are impact focused
- We are collaborative

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - Transition

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) is a project to deliver the essential protection measures required to secure the long-term future of red squirrels in Scotland and to ensure that systems are put in place to continue the delivery of these measures over the long term by working with other agencies with a stake in native species conservation and invasive non-native species management.

SSRS focuses upon one of our most charismatic and well-loved mammals – the red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). Once widespread, red squirrels have undergone a catastrophic population decline primarily due to competition from the non-native invasive, American grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). SSRS was formed to reverse this decline and create the conditions for this mammal to thrive in future, working with communities of volunteers and land managers, empowering them to take ownership of their role in its conservation.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

Conservation Officer - Tayside

Overall Purpose of the Role

Lead on the implementation in Tayside of the *Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - Transition Project* in accordance with the SSRS project plan to:

- Protect red squirrels within, and to the north of, the Highland Line priority landscape across Tayside and Scottish landscapes to the north from replacement by grey squirrels and from squirrelpox disease.
- To inspire people to value their local red squirrels and the wider natural heritage.

Main Tasks

Strategic planning and partnerships

1. Plan and lead the delivery of strategic grey squirrel control work within and above the Highland Line within Tayside, the project's priority area, to create an integrated grey squirrel control network as outlined in the SSRS project plan.
2. Maintain strong partnership working with project partners and local stakeholders to deliver the priorities outlined in the SSRS project plan and the *Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation*.

Operational Implementation

Grey Squirrel Control

1. Line manage and support four seasonal Grey Squirrel Control Officers to carry out effective grey squirrel control in the project's priority area and carry out the annual recruitment of the seasonal grey squirrel control staff.
2. Co-ordinate a project trap-loan scheme for land managers and volunteers to carry out grey squirrel control in a co-ordinated network in the Tayside priority area and support recipients to report control effort and catch.
3. Organise and deliver grey squirrel control training for individual landowners and volunteers, including via grey squirrel control workshops and individual training.

Public Engagement

4. Implement and further develop engagement to encourage and support a network of land managers and communities to engage actively in red squirrel protection and monitoring work in strategic areas of Tayside.
5. Encourage landowners in target areas to carry out grey squirrel control on their own land, including encouraging them to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding or to renew existing contracts, where applicable. (advice toolkit on the SSRS website)
6. Provide engagement activities (e.g. talks, guided walks, training workshops) to support active involvement of volunteers and members of the public working to carry out red squirrel conservation.
7. Undertake publicity to promote understanding of red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel control among the wider community and to encourage the recording and reporting of squirrel sightings.

Surveying and Monitoring

8. Coordinate blood sampling of grey squirrels across Tayside and Fife to monitor the spread of SQPV.
9. Support volunteers with appropriate training for (e.g. feeder box and camera trap surveying, hair sample identification), standardisation, and verification of records.
10. Promote the recording of squirrel distribution records in Tayside; check and verify records reported on the SSRS online squirrel reporting page or oversee volunteer checking and verification of the sightings records.

Reporting

11. Ensure collection and submission of high-quality records on trapping effort and catch and other key information.
12. Encourage and promote the use of the online SSRS Community Hub by staff, landowners, and volunteers to submit their records on trapping effort and captures, squirrel sightings, voluntary activity and training.

13. Help to collect, maintain, and report the information required for reporting on project performance to the Trust, funders and partners.

Key Contacts

- SSRS Project staff, especially SSRS Grey Squirrel Officers, SSRS Conservation Officers for Argyll and the Trossachs and for North East Scotland
- Land owners/managers, volunteers, local community interest groups, wider stakeholders

Qualifications, Experience (essential/desirable)

Essential Qualifications (or matched experience) :

- Degree in ecology, biology, countryside management or related discipline

Essential Experience:

- Minimum two years' experience in a relevant field and proven experience of wildlife ecology and conservation, especially mammal population management or invasive non-native mammal control.
- Leadership and staff management experience
- Experience of project development and implementation
- Experience of collecting, maintaining and reporting standardised ecological data.
- Experience of standardised surveys and understanding of scientific method.
- Experience in recruiting, motivating, training and supporting volunteer groups and individuals to undertake active conservation work.
- Experience of working with countryside rangers, landowners, estate staff and gamekeepers or similar

Desirable Experience:

- Knowledge of the Tayside area
- Experience in engaging the wider public in conservation issues
- Knowledge of forestry/woodland management
- Knowledge of current legislation relating to mammals

Key competencies	Essential	Desirable
Technology and knowledge (IT)	Competent and experienced with the range of Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Outlook, Word, Teams). Competent in using online reporting platforms to record standard data and able to enter data accurately.	Awareness and knowledge of General Data Protection Regulations.
Organisation and planning	Strategic thinking coupled with excellent organisation	
Communication (writing/spoken)	Excellent communication skills (both written and verbal); comfortable talking to a wide range of people including landowners and volunteers.	
Teamwork	Motivation to work on own initiative, remotely and to motivate others.	
Problem Solving	X	
Judgement	X	
Commitment to organisational culture, values and vision	X	A strong personal commitment to wildlife conservation

Additional Requirements	Essential	Desirable	Not applicable
Right to work in the UK	X		
Full Driving Licence	X		
Protection of Vulnerable Groups membership			X
First Aid Certificate		X	

Author	Lucy Lush	Position	SSRS Assistant Project Manager	Date	09/12/2021 (updated 28/06/2022)
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