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## Practical Reserve Management Placements: Site Summaries

Please look over the role summaries below carefully when considering which reserve placement roles you would like to apply for. Your experience will vary according to local conditions – the size of the reserve, the type of habitat it supports, the size of the visitor centre, staff and volunteer teams and the local area. The training and certificates available at each site also vary depending on the local landscape.

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### Arundel Wetland Centre, West Sussex

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The ancient castle, steeply wooded cliffs of the Offham Hangar and the rolling chalk hills of the South Downs, provide a beautiful setting for WWT Arundel. The centre is made extra special by the natural presence of clear spring water and large, internationally important, reedbeds of local importance.

The reed beds welcome warblers in the spring, and Arundel is one of the best places in Sussex to see lapwings. Arundel has the largest roosting population of marsh harriers in Sussex, with pied wagtails and little egrets also regularly roosting on site. Water rail and snipe enjoy the reedbeds in Autumn. Kingfishers breed in site throughout the spring and summer but can be seen all year round.

Visitors can explore the reedbeds, including a new willow sphere installation, daily pelican and diving duck talks, and a wetland discovery boat safari.

The placement roles for this centre will include much strimming and vegetation clearance, mainly of wet grasslands and reedbed throughout autumn and winter. You'll undertake hedgerow work, and the daily morning set up of grounds before public come in. You will also participate in surveys: water vole, dormouse, reptile, bat, breeding birds and breeding waders, moth, butterfly and dragonfly.

Training and certificates include brushcutter and tractor training.

There is one Practical Reserve placement position available at Arundel.

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### Caerlaverock Wetland Centre, Dumfriesshire, Scotland

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The focus at Caerlaverock is on the huge wetland reserve on the banks of the Solway. In spring and summer, wild flower meadows are alive with orchids, butterflies and dragonflies. Skylarks, ospreys, chiffchaffs, sedge and willow warblers are all regular visitors, and you may well spot an elusive otter.

You will be a key member of the team and get involved with everything we do running a huge reserve. Practical habitat management is an important part of the role this includes mowing the fields in the tractor, strimming the islands, cutting scrub along the hedgelines and fencing. We provide lots of training both certified and on the job - certified includes Brushcutter, First aid at Work, Water safety, 4x4 and Tractor. On the job training includes carpentry, species identification, small tools, health and safety, and leading guided walks and talks.

We have a lovely herd of Hebridean Sheep and the role involves assisting managing them looking for injuries, shearing, treatments, moving and daily checks. We do lots of surveys throughout the year which includes Natterjack Toads, Barnacle Geese, WeBS, BBS, butterfly, dragonflies and plant surveys. Public engagement is really important at Caerlaverock you'll be giving commentated swan feeds, leading guided walks and organising volunteer work parties .

You'll be helping on the admissions desk and get training on how to welcome our visitors. The site is absolutely beautiful and if you are interested on working on a really wild site with gorgeous views of the Lake District, then we are looking for people who are keen, practical and happy to work as part of our small team where we all help each other and do a bit of everything.

Onsite accommodation is available at reasonable rental rates.

There are two Practical Reserve placement positions available at Caerlaverock.

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### **Castle Espie Wetland Centre, Co Down, Northern Ireland**

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Watched over by the Londonderry Monument on Scrabo Hill and lying close to where the Comber and Graffen rivers converge with the sea, Castle Espie is a door to another world. Human activity from Mesolithic times through to the lime kilns and brickworks of our more recent industrial past can be seen in this ancient place. Over 75% of the world's brent geese return from the high arctic to over winter at Castle Espie every year.

The placement includes getting involved in all aspects of the reserve management plan including all the habitat management and species monitoring work. In addition the placement would specifically contribute to CMSi administration, GIS data, species database, hide maintenance and zoonotics, managing bird feeding stations, Brent goose monitoring, Black-headed gull monitoring and predator monitoring.

There is one Practical Reserve placement position available at Castle Espie.

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### **Llanelli Wetland Centre, Carmarthenshire, Wales**

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WWT Llanelli is located on an area regarded as the most important estuary for waders and wildfowl in all of Wales. Alongside a special collection, a 456 acre mosaic of lakes, scrapes, pools, reedbeds, streams, lagoons and saltmarshes form our wild side. These precious habitats make our site a refuge for many species of wetlands wildlife. From rare wild orchids, insects, amphibians and other animals, to thousands of migratory birds who visit us seasonally every year.

The placement involves a very wide range of tasks including: Surveys including: Breeding birds (CBC methods), wetland birds (WeBS), nestbox survey, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies, reptiles, water voles, field condition monitoring, water quality, otters, invasive species, optional bird ringing. Habitat management including: wild flower meadow management, reedbed management, scrub control, willow coppicing, hedge laying, path maintenance, fencing, pond management, livestock checks and care (sheep/cattle/ponies). Reporting on wildlife sightings, upkeep of reserve databases. Helping with occasional guided walks on the reserve and other visitor events.

Training and certificates include brushcutter, ATV, water safety, face fitting and first aid at work.

There are two Practical Reserve placement positions available at Llanelli.

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### **London Wetland Centre, London**

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One of our biggest visitor centres, WWT London brings the countryside to London. Although close to the heart of the capital, it is a haven of tranquillity and realises Sir Peter Scott's vision of urban wetlands. The lakes, pools and gardens are home to a variety of wildlife including kingfishers, sand martins, wading birds and more. Bitterns visit in the winter and there are yellow wagtails in the grazing marsh in summer.

The placement involves the day-to-day running of the SSSI nature reserve at WWT London. In particular there will be tasks involved with the best management of dry and wet grasslands, reedbed, wader scrape, woodland/scrub parcels and grazing marsh. You will take part in bird identification and recording, assisting with the upkeep of nature reserve infrastructure as well as water level control and management.

Training and certificates include first aid at work, brushcutter use, tractor driving (driving licence required), and species identification.

There are two Practical Reserve Management placement positions available at London.

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### **Martin Mere Wetland Centre, Lancashire**

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One of WWT's largest visitor centres, Martin Mere is an internationally important nature reserve. Every year it plays host to two of the best wildlife spectacles in the UK, as up to 40,000 pink footed geese fly in to roost on the mere, and 2000 whooper swans are fed in front of the hides throughout winter.

A year at Martin Mere Wetland Centre as a Practical Reserve Placement is really varied, no two days are the same. We survey everything which includes WeBS, BBS, nest surveys, butterflies, dragonflies and NVC surveys. We do lots of bird ringing at Martin Mere including wildfowl, gulls, waders, terns, owls and passerine pulli which is great experience to learn a new skill and improve bird handling. Most of the placement involves practical habitat management which includes cutting scrub regrowth in the reedbed, reed cutting, balsam pulling, ragwort pulling.

We provide lots of training both certified and on the job, certified includes Brushcutter, First aid at Work, Water safety, 4x4 and ATV. On the job training includes carpentry, species identification, small tools, Health and safety, and leading guided walks and talks. We have a captive collection at Martin Mere and we help out with bird catches which is great experience handling larger birds including storks and flamingos.

Public engagement is a really important part of the role you'll be doing swan feeds with a commentated talks, dawn goose events, bat and barn owl walks, North West bird watching festival and there are opportunities to help the education team with school events and national events like pumpkin carving, sail to santa etc.

We have a herd of 30-60 English Longhorn Cattle which you get to help with this involves calving, ear tagging, handling them in the pen and crush during vet treatments, foot trimming, moving between fields and daily checks and feeds.

Onsite accommodation is available at reasonable rental rate.

There are 3 Practical Reserve placement positions available at Martin Mere.

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## **Slimbridge Wetland Centre, Gloucestershire**

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Slimbridge is the birthplace of WWT and, according to Sir David Attenborough, the birthplace of modern conservation. One of our largest visitor centres, the reserve runs along the banks of the Severn. The huge tidal range of the river creates amazing habitats for wildlife and the reserve provides refuge for a wide range of species. Including breeding cranes, and the famous Bewick's swans who return every winter.

Placements will mainly support our work around the reserve management plan working in a variety of habitats including reedbeds, coppice woodland, species-rich grassland, wader scrapes and nesting islands. Placements are trained to use a variety of tools and machinery to undertake the work, and develop an understanding as to why tasks are done and when.

There are also a wide variety of other tasks undertaken by placement students too, including water level monitoring, surveys for birds, water voles, rare plants and amphibians, and routine day-to-day site management tasks. If placements are interested there is also the

opportunity to get involved with our extensive visitor engagement and events schedule to gain skills in public speaking and delivering events.

Local accommodation is available at reasonable rental rate.

There are 2 Practical Reserve placement positions available at Slimbridge.

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### **Stear Marshes, Somerset**

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Stear Marshes is the first of WWT's working wetlands. A wild, wetland landscape for the future that helps people and wildlife adapt to climate change. Hundreds of acres of saltmarsh and freshwater wetlands buffer homes and businesses from rising sea levels and provide habitat for wetland wildlife including otters, owls and waders.

The development of new saltmarsh is a rare opportunity so WWT is supporting academic research to measure how much carbon is absorbed.

Placements engage with practical tasks around the site with the site wardens. You will do this increasingly independently as you gain the necessary confidence and skills. You'll support the team with hide management, volunteer group management, tractor work, species monitoring, risk assessments and public engagement with visitors at this important site.

There is one Practical Reserves placement position at Steart Marshes.

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### **Washington Wetland Centre, Tyne and Wear**

On the bank of the river Wear, WWT Washington hosts a range of wetland habitats. The spectacular saline lagoon is an example of one of the rarest and most unique habitats in the UK. Washington is home to a nationally important breeding colony of grey herons, the most northerly breeding colony of avocet, and the UK's largest freshwater inland curlew roost.

The visitor centre is very important to the people of the region, an urban oasis where people can get close to nature.

The placements support with the practical side of the Reserve Management plan and will be working in the many different habitats at Washington such as grassland management, pruning, coppicing & pollarding, reed bed management, woodland & woodland glade management. You'll support water level management as well as assisting with the construction and maintenance of ponds, scrapes, ditches and reed beds, and develop an understanding as to why tasks are done and when.

You will work with volunteers during habitat management activities as well as the routine day-to-day site duty tasks. Research and monitoring activities may include surveys for species such as breeding and wintering birds, mammals, amphibians, invertebrates, trees &

plants and contributing to the upkeep of the nature reserve's databases. There will be the opportunity to take part in some visitor engagement and events.

Training includes such as brushcutter, hedgetrimmer, tractor and attachments, RTV.

Local accommodation is available at a reasonable rental rate.

There are two Practical Reserve placement positions available at Washington.

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