



Recruitment pack: Director, Central Team



www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk



About Freshwater Habitats Trust

Freshwater Habitats Trust is the UK's leading charity for all freshwaters. We are a friendly, evidence-based conservation charity that works to protect UK and European freshwater wildlife through practical and innovative nature conservation projects.

Our organisation is well respected nationally and internationally, and we work with a network of statutory, NGO and private partners both in the UK and Europe. Freshwater Habitats Trust was originally founded in 1988 (as Pond Action) and has a substantial track record of originating new ideas through research in freshwater biodiversity conservation to inform and drive our practical conservation and policy work.

With 44 people based across the UK, we have regional hubs in Oxford covering the central area, the New Forest and Wales. However, we work nationally with practical projects throughout England and Wales. We also work with partners on research and policy projects in the UK and internationally. Since 2017 we have seconded staff to the Newt Conservation Partnership (NCP), a new community benefit society established by NatureSpace, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and Freshwater Habitats Trust, to create and manage habitats for the NatureSpace District Licensing scheme for Great Crested Newts.

Freshwater Habitats Trust operates mainly by running projects of variable size, length and duration to protect and enhance freshwater biodiversity. The income generated maintains core activities including fundraising and communications. Individual project budgets vary from a few thousand pounds to £1-2 million, the latter typically running on one- to three-year cycles, although some of our most important projects have been running for over 10 years.



Job description

The Director will develop and oversee the effective delivery of several programmes for the Central Team based in Oxford (including research, policy, practical and communication, organisational, finance) to realise the organisation's strategic goals.

The postholder will use their skills and experience to lead and contribute to strategic plans for growth, focusing on stakeholder relationships, collaboration, and staff development. They will lead, manage, and mentor staff to align the team with Freshwater Habitats Trust's objectives.

A key feature of this role will include the ability to generate opportunities and initiate new project opportunities that support our strategy, with project management experience (from enquiry to completion), and the confidence to develop relationships with outside agencies and partners.

They will lead on one or more technical specialisms, reinforcing Freshwater Habitats Trust's reputation as a centre of excellence for freshwater science in the UK and abroad.

The Director will have the ability to think on their feet, steer the direction of the programme teams and inform them about the long-term goals of organisation. This is a great opportunity for someone with vision and ambition.



Membership of the Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is a collective decision-making body. It focuses on the following areas of activity:

- Setting and driving organisational vision and strategy – including lead roles on strategic groups reporting back to SMT monthly (Research, Fundraising, Operations, Policy, Communications and Finance).
- Decision-making on organisational structure.
- Defining, authorising and driving financial strategy, budget and annual plan
- Oversight and decision-making on recruitment.
- Decision-making on fundraising opportunities.
- Decision-making on external communication and reputational considerations
- Identification and management of risk.
- Organisational Operations – oversight and approval of activity in the following areas:
 - policies and procedures
 - culture and values
 - communication.

As a member of the Senior Management Team this role will:

- Collaborate with the SMT in setting a clear vision and strategy for the organisation.
- Be responsible for organisational policies, procedures, budgets and annual plans, with particular emphasis on the Central Team
- Be responsible for change management and strategic initiatives for Freshwater Habitats Trust.
- Manage a process of regular and effective communication and reporting across Freshwater Habitats Trust where lessons are learned, analysed and applied.
- Represent Freshwater Habitats Trust in external meetings, technical meetings, and with partner networks.
- Foster a positive and resilient team culture that embraces and adapts to change, promoting innovation and continuous improvement.
- Attend Board of Trustee meetings and report as requested by the CEO.

Strategic Project Development

- Direct, scope and position for opportunities across our pipeline in line with our thematic, client and geographic priorities.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to oversee technical design, recruitment, partnerships, and compliance in line with best practice.
- Deepen existing relationships with funders, agencies, and stakeholders to enhance programme sustainability.
- Identify and pursue new partnerships and funding opportunities to expand the programme portfolio of projects.
- Engage with key stakeholders to understand their needs and align programme offerings accordingly.
- Implement strategies to enhance Freshwater Habitat Trust's reputation and visibility in conservation sector, attracting new partners and funders.



Project delivery

- Oversight of all projects in the programme ensuring they are delivering to time, budget and technical quality.
- Oversight of project performance to ensure all targets for income generation are met, a surplus is delivered (where appropriate), and reserves grow.
- Ensure the provision of a high and consistent standard of delivery across the various activities that are delivered as part of our programmes of work.
- Collaboration with key partners, funders and stakeholders
- Work with Programme Manager to problem solve and trouble-shoot project challenges to ensure a resolution is realised.

Partnership development

- Maintain a good knowledge of local, regional and national external partners, stakeholders and statutory agencies and their relevant strategies.
- Build, develop and maintain productive partnerships with all external stakeholders at all levels including key funding partners.
- Act as the spokesperson for Freshwater Habitats Trust with local, regional and national media as required.
- Reinforce Freshwater Habitats Trust's reputation as a centre for excellence in the protection and recovery of freshwater wildlife in the UK and abroad.



Technical expertise

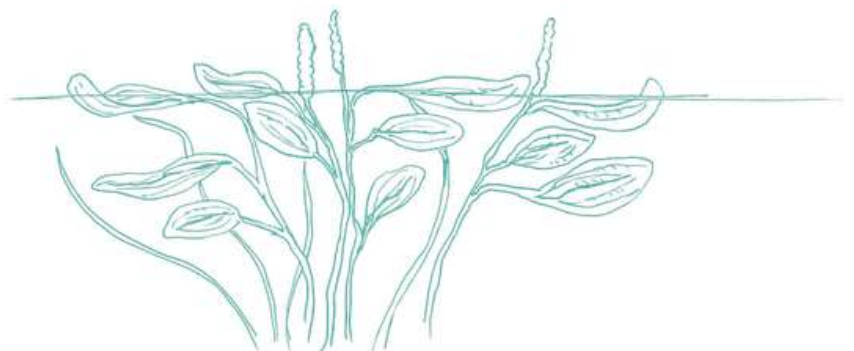
Technical specialism could be in one or more of the following areas: freshwater ecology or taxonomy, analytics, practical programme delivery, policy.

Knowledge in one or more of these areas will be beneficial to complement skills across the SMT and to provide oversight and advice to your team on the following areas:

- Provide technical advice and on-site supervision where necessary.
- Input into the design, development and management of applied research projects.
- Supervise data analysis.
- Keep up to date with current issues, challenges and developments in the sector to ensure Freshwater Habitats Trust has a clear understanding of sector capacity building needs.
- Review and contribute to technical reports.
- In line with funding lead the publication of peer reviewed papers on research results.
- Review and contribute to non-technical public-facing documents.

Staff leadership and management

- Provide effective leadership to your team promoting a culture of staff wellbeing, professionalism and teamwork.
- Support and mentor staff to build organisational technical capability.
- Lead high performing programme and project teams who work on both organisational development and project delivery across their geographical area.
- Oversight of programme resourcing, enshrining best practice HR processes including in recruitment, onboarding, professional development and performance management.
- Ensure that team members have clear links to strategic objectives, operational plans and targets and have a clear sense of their place within Freshwater Habitats Trust.



Financial Management

- Maintain a comprehensive and up to date oversight of the financial position of your team's programme of work.
- In collaboration with the Senior Management Team, compile the annual organisational budget and targets in line with strategic objectives.
- Ensure effective budget monitoring, review and adjustment procedures are in place reporting to SMT in line with requirements.
- Ensure full compliance with financial reporting requirements.
- Foster a culture of cost consciousness and efficiency to optimise project budgets and resources.



Person specification

Experience, skills and personal qualities

Essential

- At least 10 years' experience of conservation including habitat creation and management, especially in freshwaters.
- Experience of business strategy development.
- Experience of income generation, funding bids and tendering.
- Experience of project planning, development and implementation.
- High levels of initiative and problem-solving capabilities.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Strong leadership skills.
- Extensive experience of stakeholder engagement.

Desirable

- Experience of green financing or nature markets.
- Knowledge of ecological surveys (incl. plant, invertebrate, amphibian, physio-chemical, eDNA).
- Understanding of legal, financial, and regulatory requirements for a charity.
- Experience of developing organisational policies and procedures.
- Confident to engage with the media and represent the organisation through a range of channels.
- Good understanding of policy - current and development including spp, land use, farming etc.



What we have to offer

Salary: £52,500

Contract: permanent, full-time, hybrid working (two days in our office in Oxford)

We offer the following benefits:

- The option to work flexibly
- FTE 25 days of annual leave plus bank holidays
- Pension with 6% employer contribution
- Mobile phone allowance
- Free eye tests
- Free Employee Assistance Programme.



How to apply

**Please complete submit the following to
info@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk:**

- Application form (available to [download on our website](#))
- CV
- Covering letter

Closing date: 17.00 Friday 17th July 2026.

First interviews (on Microsoft Teams): Monday 27th July 2026.

Second interviews (in person in Oxford): Tuesday 11th August 2026.

