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Volunteer role description

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| Role title: | Volunteer Sheep Checker |
| Team/Group: | Reserve Management/ People and Wildlife |
| Your volunteer leader: | Michael Walker Reserves management and monitoring |
| Based from: | The Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre. North Rd Retford |

Why we need this role

The Flying Flock of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is a project which was started in 1999 with the purchase of 35 Hebridean sheep and the employment of a shepherd. The project was in response to the lack of grazing animals in the county, and the futility of going back to sites year on year to remove scrub and grass growth to enable the diversity of flowering plants to be retained on grassland sites. The flock now numbers approximately 300 sheep grazing about 25 sites. These sheep, along with the NWT cattle, help keep some of the most important conservation sites in the county in good condition.

Looking after a large number of sheep across the county is very challenging. It can sometimes be a struggle to keep up with how the stock are getting on as well as monitoring the effects of their grazing. Consequently, the volunteer sheep checking group was formed to help with this. This group travels around the county and records the number and condition of the sheep present, as well as other issues such as fencing, grass condition monitoring and fly tipping.

This volunteer group has been a wonderful help to the shepherd and has proved extremely helpful to the Trust in looking after the nature reserves.

What this role involves

The sheep checking involves visiting a number of nature reserves across the county using a NWT car and undertaking visual checks on arrival. You need to be physically fit and happy to work outside.

All sheep checking days start at 9am and finish later that day at the Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre, near Retford, every Tuesday. Volunteers sign in at the Idle Valley reception each day, leaving their contact phone number. They also sign out at the end of each day. No direct handling of livestock is permitted. If handling is required, then the volunteers are asked to contact staff member for help. No handling of dead animals is permitted either. The sheep checkers do not work alone.

Monitoring the sward height monitoring is done when the stock enters the site or soon after. This can be undertaken using a simple gauge provided by the Trust.

A completed report is supplied to the Trust at the end of the checks.

Experience and skills needed

Some experience of livestock is desirable but not essential. A UK driving licence is essential.

Benefits and training opportunities

- Help protect your local environment
- Gain valuable experience
- Meet new people
- Learn new skills

You will receive full relevant “on the job” instruction

20% reduction for all training courses, shop products and café food.

Commitment

You can help each Tuesday or occasionally – it is up to you.

Duration of role

Ongoing.

References required?

No

All volunteers are asked to agree to our [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

Click her to complete an online [application form](#)

www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/get-involved