

Stockwatchers

Location: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire

Stock-watchers play a vital role in monitoring our livestock.

Purpose of the role:

To help ensure the health and welfare of BBOWT's cattle, horses and/or sheep as they graze nature reserves in your locality.

Type of work you will be involved in:

You will help keep an eye on the Trust's livestock, visiting sites on which they are grazing to count numbers, check they are healthy and have water. You will also need to check fences are in good repair. If there are any signs of poor condition, illness or damage, you will report this to the Reserves Manager. These checks are in addition to those carried out by staff.

Our stock watchers are invaluable, without them we would be unable to carry out the essential grazing management on our nature reserves.

We graze our reserves with cattle, sheep and ponies, all traditional hardy breeds which do well in the traditional habitats which we manage. Our livestock move around between the sites to provide the right amount of grazing at the right times for each habitat. Some reserves are grazed almost throughout the year, whereas others may be grazed for less than a month.

A stock watcher's main aim is to make sure the animals are all there, looking well, and are secure within the reserve with sufficient water; we also stockwatch at least once a week so that there is no pressure put on our stockwatchers.

Experience and/or qualifications needed:

No previous experience necessary as full training will be provided. You'll need to be comfortable around livestock, reliable and a good communicator.

How it works

Having agreed to become a volunteer Stock Watcher we will provide you with appropriate training and information to carry out your role. This will include essential information relating to your health and safety whilst on site.

You will then be ready to begin your role with us as set out below:

- A reserve officer/manager will contact you to discuss the arrival of livestock on your allocated reserve,

- They will inform you of the number and type of stock, and also the predicted length of the grazing period (although this can alter slightly due to local factors such as amount of grass of site),
- They will discuss any specific issues relating to stock health and welfare as appropriate,
- This will be the time to agree on the number of visits per week during the grazing period that you are available to carry out your stock watching duties,
- Staff will liaise with the other stock watchers for the site (if available) and draw up a stock watching timetable,
- It will then be assumed that you will carry out your stock watching duties as agreed with staff unless we are notified otherwise,
- Staff will carry out additional checks during the grazing period and be on hand to provide assistance and guidance as required.

Times/days we would like you to be available (flexibility is often possible):

Stockwatchers generally commit to one day a week as part of a rota. Checks need to be carried out in daylight with at least 2 hours daylight remaining in order for us to respond to a livestock emergency.

Benefits to volunteer & possible training opportunities:

- Full training for role provided.
- Free attendance at BBOWT training courses.
- Volunteer newsletter.

You will be responsible to:

Berks, Bucks or Oxon County Reserve Manager

Expenses payable:

No

References or CRB check required:

No

