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Natur am Byth!

Trainee Scheme

Adfer rhywogaethau dan
fygythiad yng Nghymru
Saving Wales'
threatened species

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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

the Natur am Byth partnership



Summary

The impetus to act

Natur am Byth is Wales’ flagship species recovery programme uniting nine environmental charities with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in the largest ever partnership of its kind in Wales. With a little over half of plants and animals remaining and 17% of species in Wales threatened with extinction, Wales is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. In recognition of this severe biodiversity loss the Natur am Byth partnership was formed to deliver action in response to the nature emergency in Wales.

Natur am Byth targets interventions for species facing the greatest threat of extinction with focused support for people who can benefit most from engaging with natural heritage. With the ground-breaking legislative drivers of the Well Being of Future Generations Act and Environment Act (Wales) we have an opportunity in Wales to harness the powerful benefit of nature connectedness to people’s lives.

The partnership

Natur am Byth is a collaboration co-ordinated by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation; Bat Conservation Trust; Buglife; Bumblebee Conservation Trust; Butterfly Conservation; Plantlife; Marine Conservation Society; RSPB Cymru; and Vincent Wildlife Trust.

Taking the first steps towards recovery

We have set out an ambitious but vital **20-year vision** to guide our work as a partnership. Learning from the success of Back from the Brink in England, our partnership in Wales is an exciting step on a journey to mobilise public support, intervene for species on the edge of survival, test solutions and strengthen the Welsh environment sector.

We are clearer than ever that we must join forces to act now and that Natur Am Byth is the catalyst we need to kick-start species recovery. We designed our programme to ensure that people of Wales – and the colleagues, volunteers, and future supporters of our partnership organisations – are central to our mission.

We are:

- Empowering communities across Welsh society to record, care for and improve their neighborhoods and green/blue spaces – targeting deprived communities and those hyperlocal to heritage at risk
- Uniting all walks of life to feel belonging and benefit from nature; targeting low well-being and diverse lesser-seen audiences to creatively tell the stories of our most precious wildlife
- Halting the extinction of 42 species in Wales and reversing the decline of a further 25 species, restoring the natural heritage these depend on
- Uniting businesses, landowners, and communities to embed sustainable management of habitats
- Bolstering local economies through sustainable farming, leisure, marine fisheries, and greater employability
- Improving environment and land management sector resilience to make a bigger difference for species as part of healthy ecosystems

Our heritage will be better recorded, understood and rare species celebrated as part of resilient ecosystems.

A people-centred solution

We know our natural environment is under significant pressures and threats, not least the climate emergency. The actions of individuals, businesses and entire sectors can have a negative effect on nature. It is therefore **business critical** that strong and targeted **people engagement** is intrinsic to any solution that works to reverse this decline for

some of our most endangered species. Furthermore, Wales’ world leading legal framework provides an **ideal platform** from which we can contribute towards a **fundamental shift** in the relationship that residents, businesses, landowners, and Government have with nature and the essential role it plays in our future well-being.

For the first time in Wales, Natur Am Byth brings together a partnership of nine leading conservation organisations with Natural Resources Wales to create a joined-up solution which will act for both species and people.

Our most endangered species have the incredible potential to inspire our nation, foster pride within communities about the special plants, fungi, lichens, and animals on their doorstep and bring them together as guardians for the natural heritage around them.

Training conservation professionals

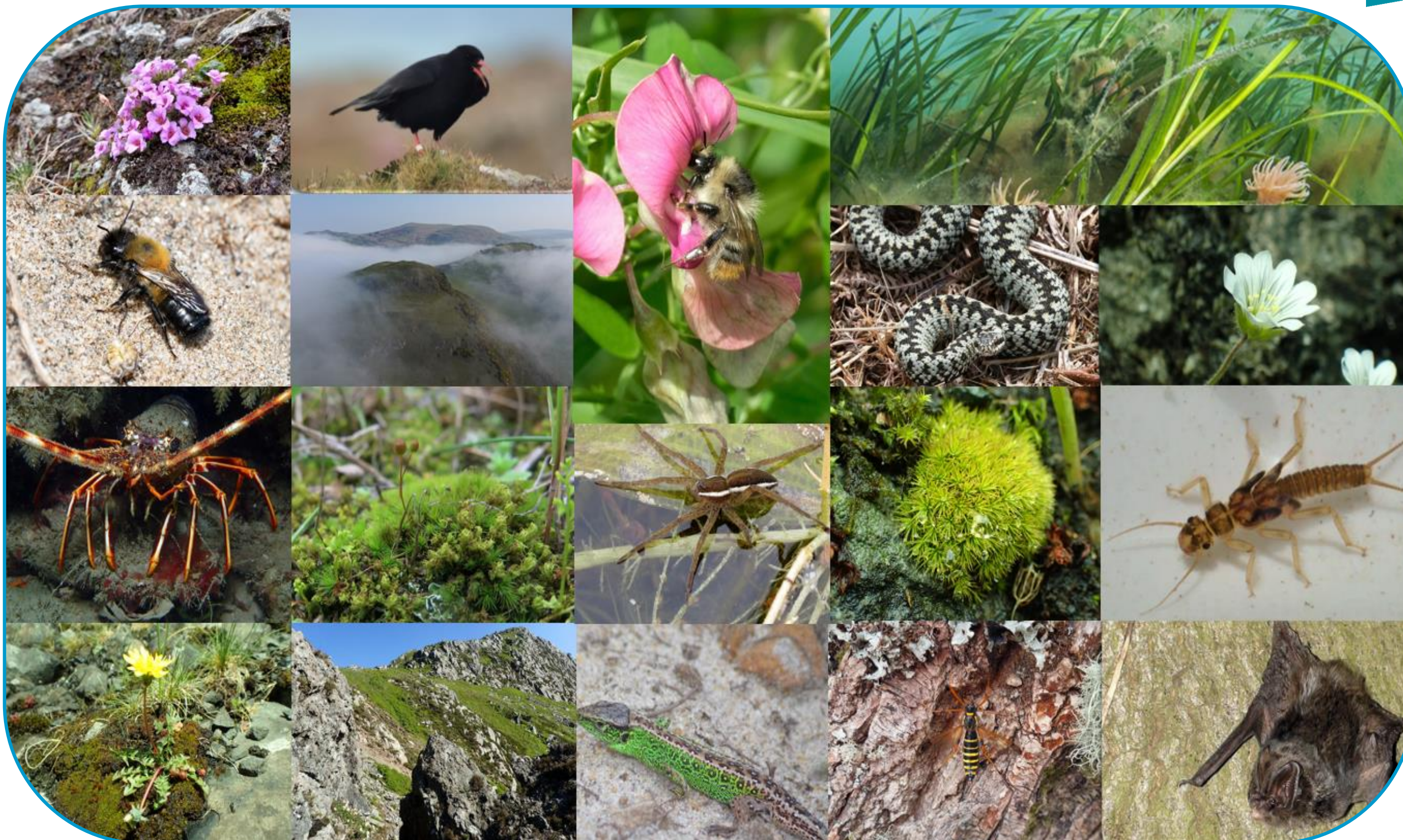
The Natur am Byth trainee placements are aimed at providing people from any background with little or no experience the opportunity to experience working in the environmental sector, with skills training and support to enter a career in nature conservation. In designing each of our three trainee placements we consulted experts from within the partnership, and externally with the wider sector. This was to understand how we could make our offer as inclusive as possible. As a result, our traineeships have the follow features:

- ✓ Paid within real living wage hourly rate
- ✓ Entry level with no previous experience required
- ✓ Training in habitat recognition and species identification
- ✓ Travel and subsistence costs provided
- ✓ Digital equipment provided
- ✓ Mentoring from conservation professionals to pave the way for a future in conservation

Potential candidates are invited to discuss the roles prior to application to explore potential barriers to any of the items listed under the competencies and requirements for the role, and to consider how these could be mitigated.



Buglife Cymru team, monitoring wetland on Gower



Natur am Byth target species and associated habitats. Images credits to Plantlife, NRW, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Robbie Blackhall-Miles, Vincent Wildlife Trust, Marine Conservation Society, RSPB, Bumblebee Conservation Trust (Sinead Lynch).

Place-based project delivery

Over 75% of programme activity is delivered at the place-level within 11 project boundaries, each one led by one of the ten organisations in the Natur am Byth partnership. Three trainees will be hosted in 2025. One in northwest Wales hosted by RSPB Cymru, one in Swansea hosted by Buglife, and one in Carmarthenshire hosted by Bumblebee Conservation. Each trainee will work across the multiple projects delivering in their geographic area, but their host will be responsible for line management and the majority of day-to-day work will focus on the host organisation's project. To ensure accessibility, these placements will be at entry level with no previous experience required.

Project summaries

Five of the Natur am Byth projects are termed 'multi-taxa', meaning that in a specific area we have selected a range of species spanning across taxonomic groups (e.g., plants to invertebrates) based upon a shared challenge or opportunity. The other six projects are termed 'single species projects'. These were selected based upon an urgent need to address the survival of a particularly vulnerable species in Wales. Some of our single species' projects span multiple locations to reflect the distribution of that target species (e.g., shrill carder bee).

1. Swansea Bay Coast, Commons & Communities (Buglife & ARC): in Gower and the urban communities of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot we are working with lesser seen audiences on 13 rare species on their doorstep to enable participation in recovery – both for people and nature.

2. Tlysau Mynydd Eryri (Plantlife): the birthplace of modern botany, the slopes, and crags of Eryri are a haven for exceptionally rare arctic alpine plants and invertebrates – we are working with volunteers, mountain guides and botanic gardens to revive 11 species on the edge of existence.

3. Pen Llŷn ac Ynys Môn (RSPB Cymru): a peninsula and an island supporting a stunning suite of habitats – we're building on strong existing networks of heritage groups to bring partners together on fine-scale adaptive management for 17 endangered species.

4. Welsh Marine Treasures (MCS): 60% of people in Wales live or work on the coast, providing Natur am Byth with a superb engagement opportunity to involve communities in the progressive management and behaviour change required to save three threatened marine species – seagrass, pink sea fan and native oyster.

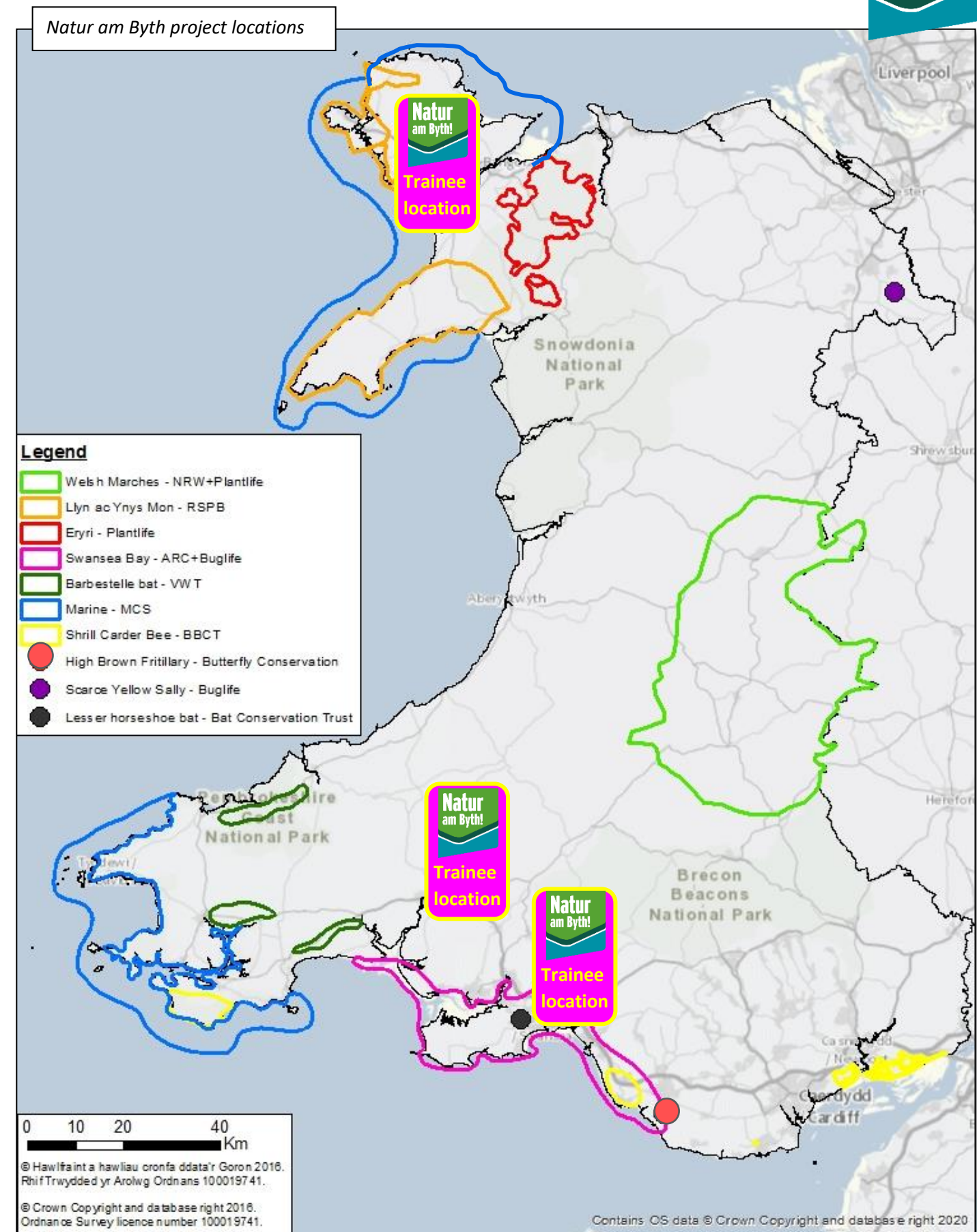
5. Welsh Marches (NRW & Plantlife): our Welsh borders host some of the rarest lichens and mosses on the edge of Europe. We're working with farmers, policy makers, planners, and the local community to raise awareness of threats of airborne pollution from agriculture and demonstrate practical ways to improve resilience.

A further six projects that are 'single species' focused, either targeting critically threatened isolated populations, or trialling novel management approaches to halt decline.

6. Saving the Shrill Carder Bee in Wales (Bumblebee Conservation Trust): with a south Wales stronghold in the UK (Wales has 3 of only 5 remaining populations), we're targeting three shrill carder bee population centres in Newport/Cardiff, Bridgend, and Pembrokeshire to train landowners and volunteers to manage and monitor in the long term.

7. Swansea Bay Stars of the Night (Bat Conservation Trust): Wales holds 61% of the UK Lesser Horseshoe Bat population. We're working with local communities to use citizen science to understand how the species' follow unlit corridors, so we can address and mitigate the effects of urban light spill in Swansea on this species.

8. Barbastelle Bat Project (Vincent Wildlife Trust): one of the UK's rarest bats, we're reconnecting isolated populations between north and south Pembrokeshire with habitat corridor mapping, mobilising volunteer recorders and building a network of woodland owners who are managing their sites for this rare bat.



9. Scarce Yellow Sally (Buglife): the river Dee near Wrexham hosts the only known UK population of this startling large yellow stonefly. Innovative surveys, community engagement and synergy with river restoration will save this species from UK extinction.

10. Adder Action (ARC): the UK's only venomous snake is sharply declining across Europe. We're training volunteers to collect DNA samples from shed skins, working with Bangor University on a student placement to assess genetic fitness and distribution of the species.

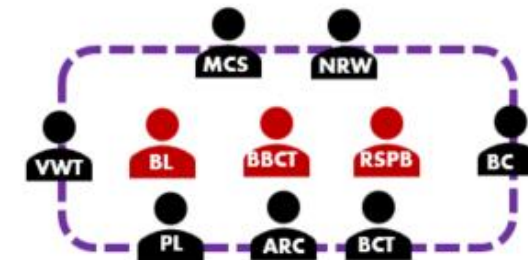
11. High Brown Fritillary (Butterfly Conservation): the UK's most threatened butterfly with a single colony left in Wales. We are working with farmers and volunteers to open up areas of woodland to increase optimal habitat and upskill community members to monitor and manage habitat for the long term.



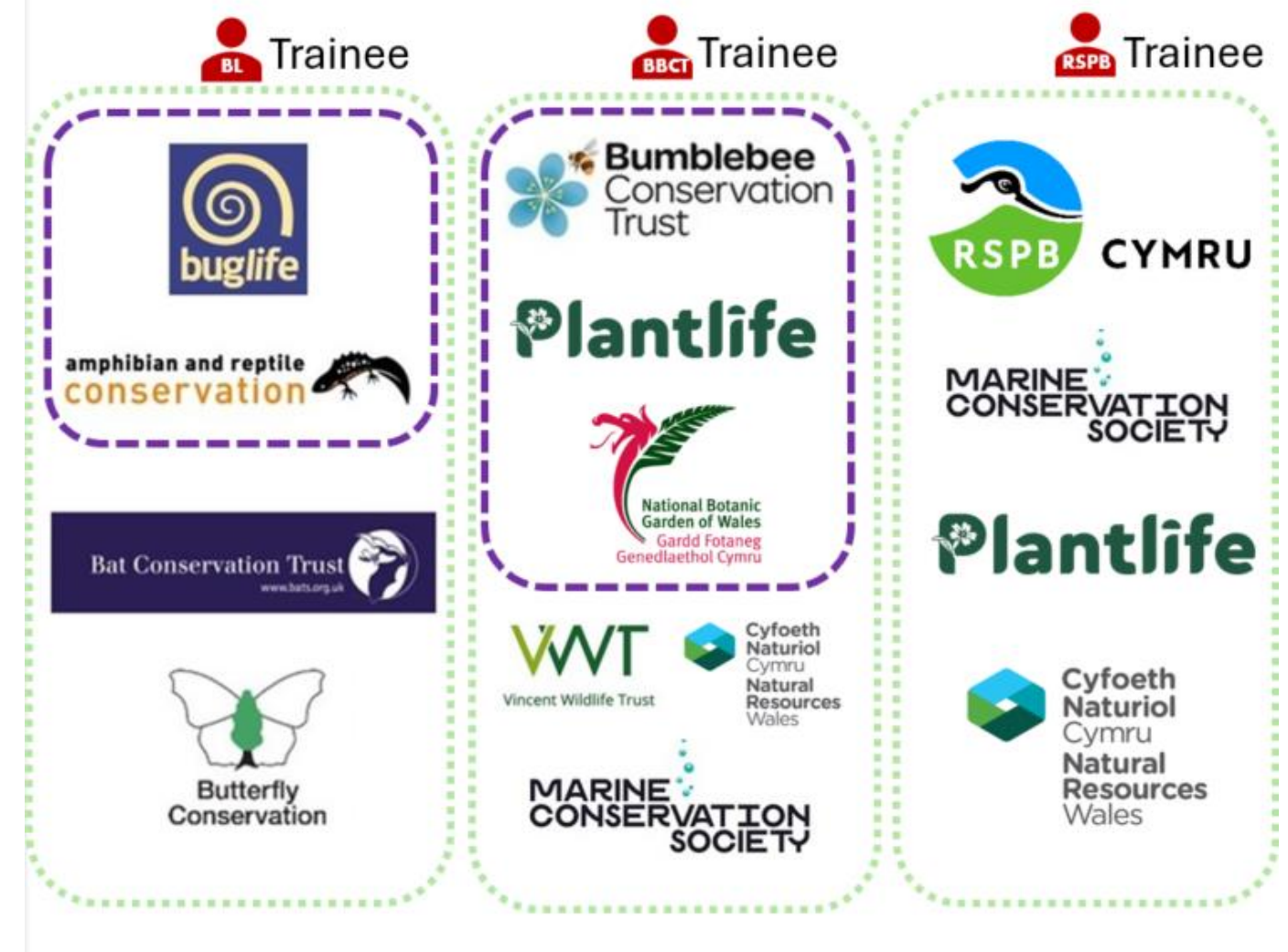
Natur am Byth NRW central team surveying for strandline beetles in South Wales

Trainee specific learning

Each trainee will be employed by one host organisation, plus receiving additional support and 'on the job' experience from colleagues in other organisations in the Natur am Byth partnership. This will ensure a well-rounded placement with many opportunities to learn about a range of species, habitats and ways of working.



Partnership support to all trainees





Buglife (BL) Hosted Trainee

Location – Sites in Swansea, Gower, [Buglife Cymru office in Bridgend town centre](#) and NRW office in Llandarcy

The trainee will be supported to play a key role in monitoring a diverse range of target species and their habitats across the Swansea Bay project area. They'll join the team to monitor target invertebrates including strandline beetle and fen raft spider - with a potential opportunity to join kayak-based surveys and DNA collection; monitor sand lizard populations with licenced surveyors and collect adder sloughs; and assist with surveying for target plants, including Goldilocks aster, Fen orchid and Three-lobed water crowfoot.

The focus of surveying will be based on the trainees key interests, their location, and available transport options. The trainee will be encouraged to log survey experience to support career development - notably for protected species. They'll be given training on species ID, survey techniques, and the use of field recording apps. Where possible, the intern will gain practical conservation experience by joining local delivery partners, such as the NRW Lifequake team at Crymlyn Bog, Wildlife Trust volunteer work parties at Overton, National Trust at Rhossili and Gower commons, National Nature Reserve team at Whiteford and Oxwich, and Gower National Landscape team.

The trainee will attend a wide range of local volunteer, learning, and citizen science events. They'll have opportunities to connect with, and support other interns, including visiting the Goldilocks aster work at the National Botanic Gardens, and hosting other interns on visits to our local project sites. They'll have opportunities to support neighbouring projects and travel further afield to explore conservation in action on other NaB projects.

Buglife trainee collaboration with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC)

- For the project 'Adder Action', the trainee will receive opportunities to increase their skills and experience in reptile surveys and scientific public engagement/attitude gathering. More specifically, there will be opportunities to assist project staff on reptile survey workshops in key adder areas such as Oxwich National Nature Reserve and Broughton Burrows.
- The trainee can also gain experience in gathering adder attitudes around Swansea by completing survey questionnaires in public spaces or at local nature events, and assist project staff at local nature events to educate the public regarding adders in an effort to reduce the persecution of the species in Wales.

Buglife trainee collaboration with Bat Conservation Trust

- The Swansea Bay Stars of the Night project, led by the Bat Conservation Trust, has opportunities for the trainee to assist with both field-work and desk-based tasks such as; undertaking walked bat transect

surveys, assisting the Project Officer with bat walks for members of the public, collating records of lesser horseshoe bats from local planning authority portals and assisting with bat sound analysis.

- Training can be provided where necessary on how to use bat detectors, lesser horseshoe bat ecology and introduction to bat sound analysis.

Buglife trainee collaboration Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) and Butterfly Conservation (BC)

- Survey support for short-necked oil beetle and greater streaked shield bug in Pembrokeshire.
- Joining Butterfly Conservation staff and volunteer survey for the last colony of high brown fritillary butterflies in Wales, at locations in the Vale of Glamorgan, south of Bridgend.



Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) Hosted Trainee

Location – main duties based at the [National Botanic Garden of Wales](#), plus site visits in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire

The trainee will be based at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and will play a key role in the conservation of Goldilocks aster in Wales, which is one of the key nectar plants for the shrill carder bee. Propagation of plants from the 3 remaining populations in Wales (out of 6 populations left in the UK) is underway, which will be followed by cross-pollination experiments to see if greater genetic diversity produces more viable seed. The trainee will learn about the care and propagation of the Goldilocks aster samples collected; and the skills required to undertake cross pollination experiments (perhaps via other plant species), with the hope that some Goldilocks aster will flower by August 2025 for them to be involved in those experiments. The trainee will also help BBCT to undertake botanical monitoring for the Shrill carder bee project.

The trainee will attend a wide range of local volunteer, learning, and citizen science events. They'll have opportunities to connect with, and support other teams, and host other trainees on visits to our local project sites. They'll have opportunities to support neighbouring projects and travel further afield to explore conservation in action on other NaB projects.

BBCT trainee collaboration with Plantlife (PL)

- Plantlife's Vascular Plant Lead for Natur am Byth will be providing support and mentorship throughout the trainees work with the Goldilocks Aster. This will include advising on the pollination experiment creation, enabling delivery, and actively supporting the trainee in writing up the results. Plantlife, alongside the National Botanic Garden of Wales, will advise on best horticultural practice for the species. We (Plantlife and the trainee) will interrogate the results of the experiment in order to understand whether there is need for translocation of the species to be undertaken to enable seed production in the wild. Plantlife will facilitate additional plant material collection should it be needed for translocation.

- Additionally, Plantlife will host a visit to the Great Orme wild site for Goldilocks aster so that the trainee will have the opportunity to see the species in its wild situation and understand the species in the context of it being a steppe grassland species. This visit will allow the trainee to understand the ecology of Goldilocks aster and the species with which it associates. This field trip will also allow the trainee to visit Cwm Idwal NNR where the historical connection will be made between the relict Arctic Alpine species of the high mountain environment and the steppe grassland species of the Great Orme, Gower, Stanner rocks and Pembrokeshire in the context of time, glaciation and human impacts.

BBCT trainee collaboration with Natural Resource Wales (NRW)

- NRW project officer for the Welsh Marches project in Mid Wales will offer support to the trainee via a 'buddy' relationship, with allocated days working alongside the trainee at the National Botanic Garden for Wales.
- In agreement with the trainee host (BBCT), some site visits will be arranged by the NRW project officer in association with the other project officer working on the Welsh Marches who is hosted by Plantlife. These will enable the trainee to learn about some of the Welsh Marches target species, namely lichens and bryophytes.

BBCT trainee collaboration with Marine Conservation Society (MCS)

- Natur am Byth's Môr project staff and partners in Marine Conservation Society and the Pembs SAC will provide opportunities for learning about the conservation, restoration and management of marine ecosystems. NaB Môr team works closely with various partners and stakeholders across Wales, with specific focus on water quality issues linking these to seagrass restoration, native oyster recovery and pink sea fan conservation.
- The trainee will be offered opportunities to attend volunteer, learning and citizen science events within the project area, specifically in the Milford Haven Waterway and surrounding areas. Specifically, the trainee will have opportunities to learn about the native oyster restoration and management project and the water quality sampling citizen science initiative. In addition, they will have access to online training and learning through the Marine Conservation Society. This includes (but is not limited to) training for organising beach cleans, marine life identification skills, and learning about sustainable fishing and aquaculture.



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Hosted Trainee

Location – Pen Llŷn and Ynys Môn. Including RSPB office at [M-Sparc](#) science park and [Cors Ddyga nature reserve](#)

The trainee will be supported to play a key role in monitoring a diverse range of target species and their habitats on Pen Llŷn and Ynys Môn. This will include identifying curlew breeding territories, locating nests and helping to install temporary electric fencing to protect nests in the Cefni Valley; Monitoring chough numbers and nests

along the coast; Assessing numbers of spotted rock rose and assessing habitat; Monitoring large mason bee numbers, distance from nests and its host plant; or monitoring for signs water vole and mink along waterways.

The trainee will help the team to manage habitats and to showcase the special species in North Wales at events and walks. Training will be provided and there will be some flexibility in the target species monitoring according to the location of the candidate, available transport, and their particular interests.

The trainee will attend a wide range of local volunteer, learning, and citizen science events. They'll have opportunities to connect with, and support other teams, and host other trainees on visits to our local project sites. They'll have opportunities to support neighbouring projects and travel further afield to explore conservation in action on other NaB projects.

RSPB trainee collaboration with Marine Conservation Society (MCS)

- Natur am Byth's Môr project staff and partners in Marine Conservation Society and the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC will provide opportunities for learning about the conservation, restoration and management of marine ecosystems. NaB Môr team works closely with various partners and stakeholders across Wales, with specific focus on water quality issues linking these to seagrass restoration, native oyster recovery and pink sea fan conservation.
- The trainee will be offered opportunities to attend volunteer, learning and citizen science events within the project area, specifically in the Llŷn Peninsula, across the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau conservation area and Ynys Môn. Specifically, the trainee will have opportunities to learn about the Porthdinllaen seagrass restoration and management project and the water quality sampling citizen science initiative. In addition, they will have access to online training and learning through the Marine Conservation Society. This includes (but is not limited to) training for organising beach cleans, marine life identification skills, and learning about sustainable fishing and aquaculture.
- Wet day working bespoke session wrt working in the third sector can be offered if this of interest.

RSPB trainee collaboration with Plantlife (PL)

- Plantlife's Vascular Plant Lead for Natur am Byth will be providing support and mentorship throughout the trainees work with any of the vascular plant species within this project. This will include advising on any areas where the trainee will be directly involved in delivery of work for vascular plant species, and actively supporting the trainee in their role.
- Specifically, Plantlife will host a range of field visits to the Great Orme, the Glyderau, Cwm Bychan and the Clwydian Mountain Range to enable the trainee to understand Juniper as a species. These visits will allow the trainee to understand the ecology of Juniper and the species with which it associates. This field work will also engage the trainee with the cultural and historical connection of Juniper to Wales putting it in the context of its two waves of colonisation of the British landscape as a relict Arctic Alpine species of the high mountain environment and a coloniser from Western Europe.

RSPB trainee collaboration with Natural Resource Wales (NRW)

- The trainee will have the opportunity to spend time with members of the NRW Terrestrial Species Team to get experience of the work of technical specialists in NRW. This may include red squirrel conservation and monitoring, bat monitoring and rare invertebrates site visits.
- From these activities the trainee will get a flavour of the types of issues that NRW staff deal with.



RSPB Natur am Byth team at Cors Ddyga RSPB nature reserve, Ynys Môn. A key site for the RSPB hosted trainee.

Nationally Coordinated Trainee schedule

As a cohort of three trainees the successful candidates will undertake collective training, site visits and professional development.

Sharing your journey

Each trainee will document their journey during through the placement. This will include regular posting of updates on social media including some ‘take overs’ of the partner’s respective social media channels. There is an opportunity to write relevant blog posts, vlogs, and create a ‘promotional’ video to showcase the types of activities they are each involved in. The Natur am Byth central team communications officer and the host organisation’s team will support each trainee to develop a series of informative ‘bite-size’ online videos to

showcase our wonderful local species, habitats and local communities. These will hopefully create lasting memories, and provide supporting evidence for potential employers, whilst also contributing to Natur am Byth’s digital legacy.

What you will learn:

- Training in how to use a smartphone to create short videos and vlogs
- Experience in using social media for outreach
- Team building and collaboration with a wide range of colleagues, across multiple organisations
- Experience in monitoring and evaluation of new learning. A key skill for any career.

Broadscale habitat training and species identification – site visit series

A series of five all day site visits will be scheduled at intervals through the 8-month placements. Transport and accommodation costs will be paid for by the programme, with all three trainees attending these learning days at the same time accompanied by Natur am Byth staff. Each session will be led by a habitat expert who will explain the key features of the broadscale habitat in question, with a focus on key species identification and management requirements.

The following broadscale habitats will be featured in five separate site visits.

1. Intertidal rocky shore and estuarine
2. Species rich grassland (meadow) & sand dunes.
3. Lowland heath
4. Ancient broadleaf woodland
5. Peatbog and acid grassland

What you will learn:

- Identification of typical species found within each broadscale habitat
- An understanding of the key features of these habitats
- Essential knowledge on management requirements and landowner action to maintain habitats in good condition
- An understanding of the legislation underpinning protected sites (e.g. sites of special scientific interest)
- Site access and permissions when working on protected areas.

“Learning From Legends” - mentoring sessions

Welsh nature conservation hosts an array of inspirational naturalists, writers, practitioners, and public figures. Our trainees will be paired with a ‘living legend’ to undertake an oral history project documenting the changes each personality has seen in their lifetime protecting and promoting Welsh nature.

Each trainee will be paired with an experienced nature conservation professional, with decades of experience from working in the environment sector in Wales. Trainees will learn skills in oral history and interview methods and be provided with a digital archive from the Peoples Collection for Wales at the National Library in Aberystwyth. Trainees will be responsible for recording, editing, and publishing the stories from their living legend.

There will be a series of structured sessions between the trainee and mentor. These may include site visits to nature reserves and protected sites, or meetings indoors. The emphasis will be on knowledge transfer culminating in an oral history interview to capture on record the experience of the mentor from their time working in Welsh nature conservation.

What you will learn:

- A rare insight into life as a nature conservation practitioner
- Guidance on career paths and options
- An understanding of the environment sector in Wales and the UK at large
- Insight into the culture of working in different organisations
- Formal training on interview techniques and video editing



Barbara Jones, national expert on upland ecosystems in the UK. Sharing her knowledge of alpine plants with the main funder for Natur am Byth, the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)

Essential data management skills

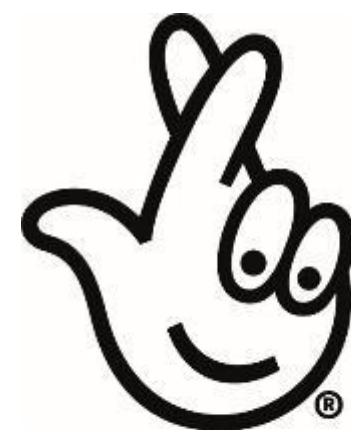
Any role in the environment sector requires some level of data processing. This requires a basic understanding of Microsoft Excel (spreadsheet software) and the importance of record keeping. Each trainee will attend entry level training in using Microsoft Excel, and will participate in a workshop with Natur am Byth staff to explain the role of species recording in the UK. This will explain the roles of different organisations in the collection, storage and processing of species records and habitat condition assessments. It will provide a sound understanding of data process that underpins biodiversity management in Wales and the UK at large.

What you will learn:

- How to use excel to enter species records and manage data
- An understanding of the roles of local records centres and national biodiversity recording schemes and organisations (e.g. National Biodiversity Network)
- An introduction to the methods used by statutory agencies to assess species and protected site condition.



Marine Conservation Society, NRW and communications specialist Dani Harries (Golly Slater Ltd) at a Natur am Byth native oyster release site in Pembrokeshire (credit Dani Harries)



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