

ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Marine Conservation Scientist

TEAM: Conservation and Fisheries

REPORTS TO: Director of Conservation and Fisheries

JOB PURPOSE:

To work with the Marine Conservation Team to deliver the objectives of the Ascension Island Marine Protected Area. In particular:

1. Deliver Marine Protected Area (MPA) workplan
2. Deliver the MPA Monitoring and Research Strategy
3. Support Inshore Fisheries Advisory Committee to make management recommendations
4. Monitor compliance and effectiveness of inshore fisheries management measures
5. Monitor compliance with Pollution Control and Biosecurity Strategies
6. Support project development and delivery with external collaborators
7. Deliver MPA Public Engagement Strategy
8. Lead on health and safety for the Marine Conservation Team

MAIN DUTIES:

1. Conduct abundance, age, growth, reproductive and diet studies on marine species around Ascension Island, in particular for commercial or recreationally fished species
2. Monitor Ascension Island's marine environment using research methods set out in the MPA Monitoring and Research Strategy
3. Input data into databases and carry out quality assurance of data holdings
4. Analyse data collected from the inshore fishery to identify trends in abundance, catch effort and life history parameters
5. Supply Inshore Fisheries Advisory Committee with results of monitoring and data analysis to inform management recommendations
6. Enforce regulations relating to fishing activity, pollution control and biosecurity.
7. Identify potential research and management projects, collaborators and funding sources that deliver the objectives of the MPA Management Plan
8. Collaborate with external researchers and assist in other marine projects that deliver the objectives of the MPA Management Plan

9. Assist with preparing detailed reports of work conducted for donors, project partners and non-specialist audiences and to produce peer reviewed publications and presentations
10. Produce and review risk assessments for marine team activities and assist with health and safety compliance requirements
11. Shared management of the Marine/Fisheries Laboratory at the Conservation Centre in Georgetown; ensuring that it is clean, well-stocked and services the project efficiently
12. Assist with the management and maintenance of scientific equipment, dive equipment and facilities; this includes a compressor, cylinders, regulators and BCDs, and also the maintenance of the survey vessel (RIB)
13. Initiate and take part in awareness raising activities with the island community and school to build awareness of, and support for, marine conservation and responsible resource use
14. Publicise the MPA and the work of the AIG Marine Team through delivery of the MPA Public Engagement Strategy

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To undertake the main duties of the post (detailed above) to the highest possible standard
2. Work closely with other on-Island team members, and other stakeholders to complete the main duties of the post and towards a sustainable programme for marine research and conservation on Ascension Island
3. To report regularly to the Director of Conservation & Fisheries, to ensure that all parties are meeting their targets and goals
4. Write regular articles for local, overseas and peer-reviewed publications.
5. Comply with Health and Safety at Work procedures
6. To abide by the AIGCFD data management policy with regards to responsible archiving and documentation of scientific datasets

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

1. A BSc (Hons) in marine biology or a related subject, or significant relevant experience in this field
2. A sound knowledge of marine conservation and fisheries biology
3. An advanced SCUBA qualification (PADI Advanced Open Water or equivalent), with significant diving experience (ideally 200+ logged dives) and an excellent awareness of dive safety (Note: Ascension Island has no re-compression chamber so responsible and conservative diving is of paramount importance)
4. A full driving license
5. A good level of physical fitness and be able to work for short periods at sea, in sometimes challenging conditions

6. Must be numerate and computer literate, with a sound knowledge of Microsoft Office applications (Access, Excel, Word) and statistical procedures (ideally in R).
7. Good interpersonal skills with a proven ability to work effectively in a small team
8. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, happy working both independently and in a team setting, and willing to sometimes work extended hours (often at weekends) and on projects outside of core duties if required. Flexi-time is available. A 2 year minimum commitment to the post is expected

Desirable

1. An MSc/PhD in Marine and Fisheries Science
2. Experience in conducting underwater surveys (fish and invertebrates), and/or tagging of marine species
3. Prior experience in processing and reading otoliths for age in a fisheries laboratory and/or of processing tissue samples for histology and/or of processing of plankton samples
4. Experience using GIS software (preferably QGIS)
5. Rescue Diver or Divemaster qualification or equivalent
6. A powerboat handling qualification and experience of handling RIBs at sea
7. Experience of living and working on conservation issues in small and remote communities and/or on small islands

This Job Description indicates only the main duties and responsibilities of the post. It is not intended as an exhaustive list.

The Ascension Island Government (AIG) reserves the right to amend this Job Description from time to time, according to operational needs. Any changes will be confirmed in writing. Please note that you share with AIG the responsibility for making suggestions to alter the scope of your duties and improve the effectiveness of your post.