



## ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

### JOB DESCRIPTION

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>   | <b>Marine Research Officer (eDNA)</b>   |
| <b>TEAM:</b>        | Conservation and Fisheries  |
| <b>REPORTS TO:</b>  | Marine Conservation Team Leader   |
| <b>JOB PURPOSE:</b> | To primarily work with the Marine Conservation Team to implement a collaborative Darwin Initiative funded project with Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the University of Plymouth to map and monitor important mesophotic (30m-500m) species, habitats and oceanographic conditions within the Ascension Island Marine Protected Area (MPA). Emphasis of this position will be using molecular techniques to identify deep water species and to use this information to help form the basis of evidence-based management recommendations for the marine protected area. Other areas of work include supporting the ongoing monitoring and management of the MPA as required. |

---

#### MAIN DUTIES:

1. Develop best practice protocols for surveying mesophotic communities using a deep water eDNA sampler and train other members of the team in survey methods and data analysis.
2. Conduct metabarcoding on mixed environmental samples and analyses on sequencing data using bioinformatic tools and pipelines
3. Work with the Deep-Sea Research Coordinator to map and characterise mesophotic ecosystems around Ascension Island using drift cameras and eDNA metabarcoding.
4. Incorporate data into MPA stock assessments and threat assessments.
5. Raise on-island community awareness of mesophotic marine ecosystems through the development of outreach resources, school visits and stakeholder meetings.
6. Develop a citizen science project with the MPA Youth Committee.
7. Host knowledge exchange events with other UKOTs.
8. Assist with the ongoing MPA management and research work of the Marine Conservation Team including routine eDNA biodiversity surveys and biosecurity surveillance.

#### 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 management and conservation on Ascension Island.
3. To report regularly to the Marine Team Leader, to ensure that all parties are meeting their targets and goals.
4. Comply with Health and Safety at Work procedures.
5. Comply with AIG Child Safeguarding Policy.

#### PERSON SPECIFICATION:

**Essential**

1. A degree level qualification in relevant subject, or significant relevant experience in this field.
2. Knowledge and understanding of marine conservation science, in particular relating to survey design and habitat mapping.
3. A sound knowledge of molecular techniques including conducting DNA extraction and PCR.
4. Experience in conducting eDNA metabarcoding workflow.
5. Experience in bioinformatics and analysis for biological monitoring applications.
6. A high level of computer literacy with a sound knowledge of statistical techniques (ideally using R), GIS experience (preferably QGIS) and database management.
7. Ability to effectively build and develop relationships with a wide range of cross-sectoral people and representatives.
8. Excellent written and communication skills, especially the ability to communicate complex ideas in an articulate and confident way and to adapt language to varied audiences.
9. Highly self-motivated and able to initiate and deliver projects independently and as part of a team.
10. A good level of physical fitness and be able to work outside for long periods of time
11. Good interpersonal skills with a proven ability to work effectively in a small team.
12. Willing to sometimes work extended hours (often at weekends) and on projects outside of core duties if required.
13. A powerboat handling qualification, or willingness to obtain one, and experience of operating RIBs at sea
14. A full, clean driving licence.

### **Desirable**

1. A proven track record in delivering public engagement events and activities
2. Experience of producing content for outreach and social media platforms.
3. A track record of publishing in peer-reviewed literature
4. Experience of living and working on conservation issues in small and remote communities and/or on small islands.

This Job Description indicates 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 discussed with you and 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.

Updated: October 2024