



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

Invitation to tender for

External Evaluation of Species Survival Fund Bogs and Bittern: Wetland
Restoration Somerset Project.

The deadline for responses to this tender is 5pm 30th April 2025.

The final output from the work must be completed by 31st December 2026.

Tenders should be e-mailed to Finlay Clothier at finlay.clothier@somersetwildlife.org.

**SPECIES
SURVIVAL
FUND**



Funded by
UK Government

Heritage
Fund

We are seeking an evaluation partner to produce a summative, process and impact evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bogs and Bittern: Species Survival Fund project being delivered by Somerset Wildlife Trust. The evaluation should contribute actionable insights and recommendations to inform design and delivery of comparable funded Nature Recovery projects which combine both restoration/conservation works and engagement activities.

Background

About Somerset Wildlife Trust

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a local independent charity and the only organisation uniquely focused on improving the natural environment of Somerset for the benefit of wildlife and people. We champion Somerset's stunning, diverse, and important natural environment, making the case for nature to the public and politicians. We protect wildlife and lead the recovery of the environment by example, including on our nature reserves.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts across Britain which together with the *Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts* collectively form *The Wildlife Trusts*. We are the biggest charity movement in the UK working solely for nature and we believe that restoring nature on a landscape scale is essential for tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

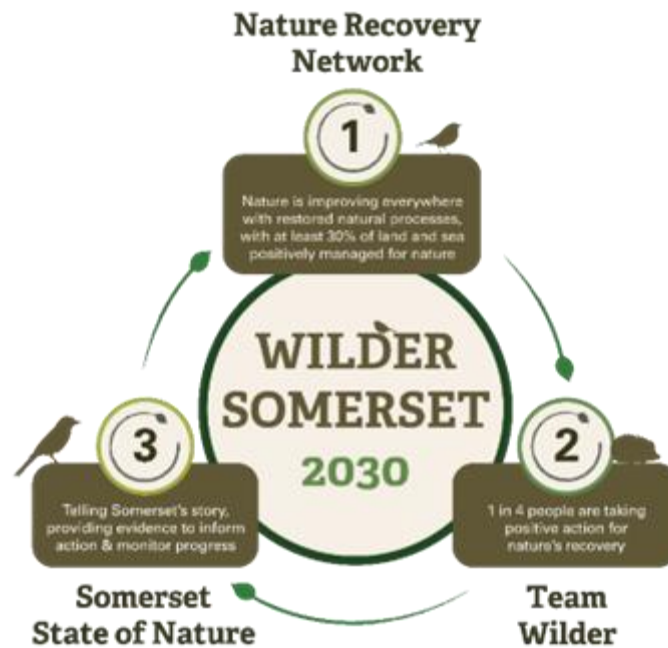
The climate and ecological crises require comprehensive, ambitious solutions and urgent action across all sections of society. The crises are also inexorably linked so it is vital that our strategy, '[Wilder Somerset 2030](#)' is delivered with both at its core. We recognise that people are part of the solution and everyone has a role to play in restoring nature and averting the worst of the climate change. Research suggests that if 1 in 4 people in society take action then social tipping points can be achieved and widespread positive change can happen. This underpins one of our key strategic goals and Team Wilder is our delivery approach to inspiring and empowering others to help nature recover.

Our New Vision

To deliver a Somerset wide nature recovery network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone, and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

Our New Mission

To champion the change needed to rebalance our relationship with wildlife and the natural world.



Our Goals for 2030:

To ensure that nature is improving across the county, supported by restored natural processes, and is connected and protected through a Nature Recovery Network, with at least 30% of land and sea managed positively for nature.

For nature to be valued and protected by everyone, building a movement with at least 1 in 4 people taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset.

By 2030 to tell the story of nature's recovery in Somerset through a shared, live online State of Nature tool that monitors progress and informs action.

About the Project

Funding by the Government's Species Survival Fund

This project is funded by the Government's Species Survival Fund. The Species Survival Fund supports the creation and restoration of wildlife-rich habitats in England to support species abundance at a landscape, catchment or local scale, either within or outside of protected sites.

The fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Species Survival Fund – Bogs and Bitterns: Somerset wetland restoration NL-23_00073

The primary aim is to create, restore and enhance 54ha of wetland habitats establishing seven (7) key stepping stone sites in the Avalon Marshes between Westhay village and Glastonbury to support species abundance and to balance local hydrologies to mitigate a changing climate.

The project runs from April 2024 until 28 February 2026.

The project will deliver:

1. Habitat creation, restoration/enhancement capital works at seven (7) sites:

Table 1: 1. *Habitat creation, restoration/ enhancement sites*

Ref	Project site	Ownership	Designation	Area to create/restore
1	Westhay South (former maize Fields)	SWT owned land - purchased July 2023	currently not designated.	14ha
2	Westhay Moor	SWT owned site	National Nature Reserve, SSSI.	Approx. 3ha of 106ha site
3	Catcott reserves	SWT owned site	Nature Reserve, SSSI	Approx. 4ha of 73ha site
4	Westhay Heath	SWT owned site	Nature Reserve complex, SSSI	5.5ha
5	Tealham Moor	SWT owned site	Nature Reserve, SSSI	Approx. 3ha of 44.81ha site
6	Honeygar	SWT owned site	undesigned former dairy-farm under restoration.	11.76ha
7	Beckery Fields	Land owned by Somerset County Council & Friends of St Brides Mound	no nature designation, contains scheduled monument managed by South West Heritage Trust.	13ha

- Construct wetland features including installation and repair of culverts, installation of an eel pass, sward, reedbed and ditch management.
- Creation of a hay meadow and wildlife-friendly wet grassland across a 13ha site at Beckery.
- Manage a community grant scheme to enable private landowners to deliver small scale capital interventions on Local Wildlife sites (LWS) in project area.
- Install bi-acoustic sensors and remote cameras at four sites (Westhay Moor, Catcott reserves, Westhay Heath & Honeygar).

2. A programme of engagement and other activities:

- Establish a volunteer group focused at Beckery associated with the project, including running practical training courses to upskill them.
- Run an activity programme focused at Beckery targeted at underserved audiences, including 30 young people, in Glastonbury and Street.
- Run an events, walks and talks programme across the project area.
- Deliver an activity programme focusing on theme of co-existence and climate adaptation for species survival at Avalon Marshes.

- Recruit a 12-month Somerset Wildlife Trust Reserves trainee.
- 3. Recruit a Project Coordinator (1FTE) and Project Ecologist (1FTE)
- 4. Create a costed management & maintenance plan to implement the proposed increased management and maintenance costs.
- 5. Undertake a **project evaluation** and, additionally, contribute data to the wider programme evaluation of the Species Survival Fund and disseminate lessons learnt to the wider sector.

As the project has reached past its halfway point, there are several elements that are completed, where we can supply information for finished works.

Evaluation Objectives and Research Questions

Methodology

We invite researchers to propose a methodology that best meets our needs, guided by the following key methodological and practical considerations:

- SWT can supply copies of datasets collected for the wider programme evaluation. This comprises quantitative data of actions taken, event/participation numbers and spatial data recording size of areas where action taken and nature of actions delivered.
- SWT can support in collecting data for the external evaluation, if the contractor can provide the information and method of data collection required, e.g., supply the required surveys.
- Lasting impacts on species abundance and hydrologies are not expected to be achieved and will not be directly measurable within the timeframe covered by the project evaluation. These will be subject to long-term monitoring and analysis and reported in our State of Nature reporting series.
- There will be a variety of types of volunteer and event participation, including a mix of regular and one-off engagement with the project activities across the sites.
- The project involves SWT staff across multiple teams, with hybrid working patterns from office bases in Taunton, Callow and the Avalon Marshes Centre, near Shapwick.

Research questions

- 1. To what extent has the project successfully implemented the stated habitat creation, restoration, and enhancement actions?**
- 2. Has the project been effective in developing a monitoring baseline for future evaluation of the long-term outcomes of the project actions for hydrology and species abundance?**
- 3. How has the delivery of project outcomes contributed to building long-term capacity by equipping local people with the skills and knowledge needed to support themselves?**
- 4. How has the project enhanced learning and understanding among local communities and young people regarding co-existence and climate adaptation, particularly in relation to increased species abundance?**

5. What are the most important actionable recommendations for Somerset Wildlife Trust to consider when designing and delivering future comparable funded projects on habitat management and/or community engagement?

We would prefer to engage a contractor capable of addressing all five research questions. However, if you are unable to fulfil all questions, we still encourage you to submit a tender outlining the specific areas you can deliver within the allocated budget. Please note that support with data collection can be provided.

Evaluation Deliverables

The following deliverables are required from this research project:

1. Interim output to confirm delivery approach, key dates and working arrangements with SWT.
2. Provide a final evaluation report by 31st December 2025 that outlines the effectiveness of the programme in delivering planned activities and contributing to the project purpose.
3. Highlight key learnings and good practices that can be applied, scaled or replicated in other similar nature recovery projects.

Evaluation Timescales

Key dates for the project are detailed in the following table, with some flexibility for interim timelines. Further guidance on milestones will be given to the successful organisation at the inception meeting.

Milestone	Purpose	Date
Start-up meeting	Agree approach, dates, working arrangements. Identify information requirements to be supplied by SWT.	May 2025
Interim output to show evaluation plan, approach, timings and data collection arrangements.	To confirm arrangements.	6-8 weeks after start date
Quarterly updates	Check in on progress	To be agreed
Final evaluation report and presentation To include <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key learnings and good practice• Supporting data files, as appropriate	Provide findings suitable to share with grant fund manager and SWT.	End of Dec 2025

The total budget for this project is £8,400 (inclusive of VAT, if applicable, and expenses).

We are willing to discuss what internal support the Trust can provide to support a cost-effective evaluation.

Considerations

Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the brief
- Approach
- Experience
- Value for money
- Ability to deliver in the timeframe

Key Contacts

The main point of contact for the evaluation will be Finlay Clothier, Species Survival Fund Project Coordinator. A steering group comprising Becky Fisher, Head of Engagement, and Simon Clarke, Head of Nature Recovery, will provide support as needed.

Proposal Requirements

You are invited to submit a document outlining your proposal – in Word, PDF, or PowerPoint. The following elements should be included in your proposal:

- Details of the proposed methodology.
- Your data protection processes and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- A brief overview of your experience and details of the individuals who will be working on the evaluation.
- Timetable for delivering the evaluation.
- Breakdown of the costs for undertaking the evaluation, including day rate and number of days for each team member.

Your final proposal should be emailed to finlay.clothier@somersetwildlife.org and received no later than 5pm on 30th April 2025.

Supporting documents

Blank copy of Species Survival Fund Programme Evaluation data sheets.

Copy of Species Survival Fund Programme Evaluation guidance – re spatial data requirements.