



MSc Project

Closing date: 31-Jan-24

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Determining the predictors of fox abundance in Wales

Timescale: Spring and summer field work, but some flexibility about other times of year

Location: RSPB reserves - Lake Vyrnwy and Tan Rallt

Resources available: data, training, access to RSPB reserves

Limitations: Own transport essential

Background

The UK has high abundances of some mesopredators, including foxes, which are known to be predators of ground-nesting birds. Understanding the predictors and causes of high fox abundance will help us to develop management practices to reduce or mitigate their impacts.

There is likely to be a regional element to these relationships, and we are interested in knowing more about this issue in Wales. RSPB reserves already collect information on fox abundance via scat transects, and we also hold other data sets from historical surveys.

We seek to link data from those surveys to habitat and management variables, to understand what best predicts fox abundance, to generate further research questions, and to inform reserve management.

Brief Aims and Methods

The student will carry out fox scat transects at one or more RSPB reserve in Wales, and will have access to other historical data that the RSPB holds. Fox abundance will then be related to habitat and management variables, to determine whether which factors best predict fox abundance.

The student will be encouraged to develop potential ideas for management interventions that may reduce or mitigate the impact of high fox abundance.