

# Peatlands Research Assistant Placement Opportunity 2026-27



**Responsible to:** Senior Peatlands Officer, Protecting Shared Waters Project

**Role Duration:** One Full-time role available. Training and travel expenses to Ulster Wildlife Offices will be provided with a daily mileage cap of 30 miles round trip @ 45p per mile.

## Background

Ulster Wildlife is Northern Ireland's largest local nature conservation charity. Peatland habitats cover 12% of NI and are a key focus for Ulster Wildlife. The peatlands team has been working with landowners and farmers across the country to restore these superhero habitats so that they can clean our drinking water, prevent flooding, store carbon and support some of our most iconic species.

Restoration includes many different types of measures but blocking drainage channels and raising the water level is one of the core principles of making a peatland habitat healthy again. We are interested in how different approaches hold up after we've installed them and if they haven't worked then why?



## Purpose of role:

We have worked with contractors on a number of different sites using excavators to build thousands of peat dams, blocking many kilometres of drainage channels. We've realised though that some have worked well and others haven't. This might be due to the slope, the size of the drain, how big the dam was built, how deep the peat was or a variety of other reasons.

The purpose of this placement opportunity would be to investigate a representative sample of the many peat dams that have been installed and assess success and failures of these measures and catalogue the associated factors for each. This will help us build a better picture of why measures work well and when they don't. We can in turn use this to inform future restoration planning and design.

## Main responsibilities:

- Carry out a research project to include: -
  - Select a sample of peat dams from various peatland restoration sites
  - Develop a protocol for assessing success and failure of dams
  - Develop a protocol for surveying key site metrics like drain size, slope, peat depth etc.
  - Carry out an analysis of peat dam failure and success against site metrics



- Assist with peat depth & condition surveys across other peatland sites
- Assist with drone surveying of other peatland sites
- Help with landowner and stakeholder engagement.
- Promote Ulster Wildlife and our peatlands work.

#### **Skills required:**

- Undertaking an Environmental Sciences/Ecology MSc degree or similar.
- Experience of fieldwork/surveys.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- IT skills – competent in MS Office; particularly Word and Excel.
- Excellent team worker.
- Motivated and able to work without supervision, well organised.
- Passionate about nature conservation.
- Willingness to learn.
- Use of a car/driving licence.

We do not require practical conservation skills we are happy to teach these and provide training qualifications. However, we do require that the student has a willingness to learn and is proactive about their own self development.

#### **Desirable skills:**

- Confident in/experience with GIS and any mobile mapping applications.

**Placement location:** Ulster Wildlife Offices, McClelland House, 10 Heron Road, Belfast, BT3 9LE. Field work will be carried out at a range of locations across Northern Ireland.

Please send a CV and cover letter to [volunteering@ulsterwildlife.org](mailto:volunteering@ulsterwildlife.org) by  
**12 noon on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026.**

