Ecological Data and Research Manager

at People For Wildlife

- Cairns, Queensland 4870; primarily office based
- Full-time: 1 year rolling contract
- $100,000–$120,000 per annum, including superannuation, depending on experience
- Periodic travel for fieldwork in Cape York and southern Africa, with other travel as required

About People For Wildlife

People For Wildlife combines scientific research, conservation management, community partnerships and nature-based businesses to deliver benefits for biodiversity and people. Our research helps us understand species' biology and identify effective conservation management approaches, while our monitoring systems track project delivery and outcomes across our landscapes. Our work primarily takes places in Australia and southern Africa.

About the role

We are seeking an organised, technically capable ecological scientist to help manage, analyse, and communicate the data generated by PFW's conservation and research programs.

Working with project managers and field teams, you will help turn field observations, wildlife-camera imagery, acoustic recordings, and spatial data into reliable datasets, useful analyses, clear reports, and scientific publications.

The role combines ecological data management, statistical analysis, GIS, field-data applications ,and dashboard reporting. You will maintain and improve routine workflows, undertake analyses appropriate to your experience and contribute to more complex work with support from senior staff and specialist collaborators.

Although primarily office-based, the position includes periodic fieldwork. We want you to understand how projects operate, how data are collected, and what the results mean biologically — not simply process information without understanding its context.

You do not need to arrive with expertise in every software platform we use. You do need a sound grounding in ecology, demonstrated analytical ability, a careful approach to data and a willingness to learn.

We are as interested in crafting this role around the skills of candidates that apply as we are finding an exact match for the job description. Therefore, if you have skills that you consider are a good fit for a small conservation and wildlife science NGO, while possessing some of the core competencies of this role, then we encourage you to apply.

Key Responsibilities

- Maintain and improve PFW's ecological data systems across Australia and Africa, including field observations, wildlife-camera imagery, acoustic recordings and spatial data, ensuring consistent organisation, quality control, documentation, secure storage, and appropriate access.
- Assist with developing and maintaining Fulcrum field-data applications, working with scientists and field teams to improve data collection, troubleshoot issues and connect field information with analytical and reporting systems.
- Process, analyse, and visualise ecological data using R and GIS software, prepare maps and other outputs. Document methods and limitations, and interpret findings in their biological and field context.
- Assist with designing and refining research and monitoring protocols, participate periodically in fieldwork, and support the training of Indigenous rangers, field staff, and volunteers in conservation science and data collection.
- Maintain and improve Power BI dashboards and prepare accessible summaries of ecological results for managers, field teams, donors, partners and communities, clearly communicating findings, uncertainty, and limitations.
- Write peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and project updates. Assist with grant applications and donor, permit, and animal ethics reporting, coordinating scientific input and tracking agreed deadlines.
- Work with colleagues and external collaborators to identify research opportunities, improve analytical workflows and evaluate emerging tools, including automated image and acoustic processing, under appropriate scientific guidance.
- Assist with preparing presentations and sharing PFW's research at relevant conferences, workshops and stakeholder meetings.

Essential qualifications, experience and skills

- A degree in ecology, environmental science, zoology or a closely related discipline, supported by relevant research or professional experience.
- A sound understanding of ecological principles, field sampling, and the limitations of observational data.
- Demonstrated experience using R or comparable statistical software to clean, analyse, and visualise ecological data.
- Experience organising and checking ecological datasets, with strong attention to detail.
- Scientific or technical writing ability, demonstrated through scientific publications.
- The ability to explain methods and findings clearly and recognise when further scientific advice is needed.
- An organised approach to documentation, deadlines, and competing tasks.
- The ability to work independently on agreed tasks and collaboratively with scientists and field teams.
- Willingness and demonstrated ability to learn new software, including Fulcrum and Power BI.
- Respectful communication with colleagues, Indigenous rangers, community partners, volunteers and other stakeholders.
- Willingness and ability to undertake periodic fieldwork in Cape York and southern Africa.
- A current Australian driver licence permitting the operation of manual vehicles.
- Rights to work in Australia and willingness to be Cairns-based.

Desirable qualifications, experience and skills

We do not expect applicants to bring every skill below. Experience in several of these areas would strengthen an application:

- A master's degree or a PhD in a relevant discipline.
- GIS analysis and mapping using QGIS, ArcGIS or comparable software.
- Managing large collections of wildlife images, acoustic recordings or geospatial files.
- Developing field-data applications in Fulcrum or a comparable platform.
- Building or maintaining Power BI dashboards or similar reporting tools.
- Preparing reproducible analytical workflows using scripts, version control or related tools.
- Camera-trap or acoustic data processing, including software such as Kaleidoscope.
- Spatial ecology, remote sensing or research involving rare or cryptic species.
- Formal project reporting, including donor, permit or animal ethics reports.
- Training or supporting field staff, Indigenous rangers or community-based monitoring teams.
- Research relating to the ecological or socioeconomic outcomes of nature-based enterprises.

The person we are looking for

You enjoy working through a dataset, checking an unexpected result and finding a clear way to explain what it means. You are methodical, curious, and comfortable with the detailed work that sits behind good conservation science.

You also understand that analysis needs context. You are willing to spend time with field teams, ask questions about how data were collected and seek advice when the evidence does not support a confident conclusion.

You do not need to know every method or software package already, but you should bring a solid scientific foundation and the motivation to keep developing your skills.

How to apply

Please submit the following via email:

1. A cover letter demonstrating your ability to fulfil the key responsibilities and requirements of the role.
2. A current resume or curriculum vitae.
3. Please provide contact details (name and phone number) of two referees.

Email: info@peopleforwildlife.org

Suitable applicants will be shortlisted and invited for an interview.

Deadline. 24.12.2026