

Species Recovery Fund

Guidance for Applicants

1 Introduction 1
2 Eligibility 2
3 The species 3
4 Types of Species Recovery projects 3
5 Timetable for project delivery 4
6 Ongoing management 4
7 What we don't fund 4
8 Specification and quotes 5
9 Match funding is encouraged 5
10 Project publicity 5
11 Submitting your application 6
12 What happens next 6
13 Claiming your grant 6
14 Our commitment to you 7
15 Data Protection and confidentiality 7
APPENDIX 1 – Species List 8

1 Introduction

1.1 Our priority

The Species Recovery Fund responds to the launch of Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) — a shared, evidence-based plan to restore habitats, support biodiversity, and strengthen the county's resilience to climate change and flooding. Read about the LNRS here.

The strategy has been developed with input from local people and organisations and identifies clear priorities for action, including 61 targeted actions to support certain species at risk of decline or local extinction. Grants will be awarded to projects that support nature's recovery by delivering at least one of the actions listed on the LNRS Species Priorities List which can include creating and managing new habitat or enhancing and managing existing habitats. Projects are expected to deliver actions that would increase the biodiversity resource and improve the way land is managed for threatened species.

1.2 Funding available

Grants of £500 to £5,000 are available from the Species Recovery Fund for projects supporting targeted species recovery across Oxfordshire.

For larger projects, grants of up to £25,000 are available from our Local Environment Fund. See our website page for more details.

1.3 Our promise

At TOE we want to make applying for a grant as **easy as possible**. ***We are here to help*** guide you through our application process from inception, through application to project completion.

We require applicants to **talk to us about their project ideas** – big or small – ***before applying*** to check their idea meets our funding criteria so, before applying, please speak to Rachel Sanderson or Sue Martin-Downhill at TOE (01865 407003) to check your idea meets the funding criteria.

We like to meet people, see their project site and talk through project details to ensure that grant applications are as robust as possible. To ensure applicants complete the correct form, we identify the best Fund to support projects. We can also identify early on the projects that are unlikely to be successful.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Your organisation

Funding is open to those delivering practical, species-specific, work aligned with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. We encourage applications from:

- Community and voluntary groups
- Charities and conservation organisations
- Farmers and land managers
- Schools and educational settings
- Parish and town councils
- Partnerships and collaborations

2.2 Your project

We are seeking to support practical, species recovery projects that contribute to the actions listed on the LNRS Species Priorities List.

Projects might include:

- Targeted conservation work for LNRS priority species
- Habitat management or restoration that directly supports species recovery
- Measures to reduce pressures on vulnerable species
- Reintroductions or actions to support population recovery
- Community-based or volunteer-led species conservation

We welcome applications from both established projects and new initiatives.

2.3 Your location

Projects must be based in Oxfordshire and demonstrate how they will contribute to species recovery by delivering at least 1 action listed on the LNRS Species Priorities List.

We ask applicants to provide information about the size of the area where action for species is planned and to send us a plan/map and some digital photos of the site.

3 The species

3.1 Species to benefit

There are a great range of species at risk in Oxfordshire; the LNRS has narrowed down which species are most in need of targeted, bespoke recovery actions to recover. The Strategy provides a coordinated framework to help guide nature recovery across the county and it includes 61 species - specific actions are described on the Species Priorities List. This list identifies those species most in need of targeted action in Oxfordshire.

Within the application form, we ask applicants to tell us which species you are targeting. The application form also includes a table listing the last-stand or particularly at-risk species (i.e. those with very few remaining locations in the county) and the table is attached below as Appendix 1.

3.2 Proposed action

We ask applicants to give a summary of the specific action(s) which will be delivered for the species. The proposed action(s) should align with the actions listed on the LNRS Species Priorities List. Projects are encouraged to use the latest available information or best practice management guides about the target species if this has changed since the LNRS publication.

3.3 Evidence

We want to know about recent records or sightings of the target species at, or near to, the site where applicants intend to deliver the action. Evidence may have come from the LNRS Local Habitat Map, the LNRS Species Priorities List, online or local data records, or existing site records.

4 Types of Species Recovery projects

4.1 Practical work

Many of the species are expected to benefit from bespoke habitat creation, enhancement, or management actions, such as creating ponds, scrub management or enhancing woodlands. While some habitats are natural, we appreciate others may need artificial habitat features to be delivered such as swift boxes. Other species need other tailored actions, such as erecting temporary electric fencing around ground nesting birds to prevent predators reaching them. We ask you to explain the practical work you want us to fund, whether any similar intervention has previously been undertaken for the target species on site and why the project is important for the site.

4.2 Species Recording

Some species on the LNRS Species Priority List are thought to be under-recorded. Successful applications should involve the delivery at least one practical action from the LNRS Species Priorities List and can also include a request for funds for monitoring and reporting on that species. For example, the project might include the surveying of habitat resources within a geographical area

to record the target species. Recorders might be experts or 'citizen scientists' from local communities and the requested funding could be for materials in support of the surveys.

If you are looking for a grant for equipment for species recording we also suggest that you contact the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) or other organisations which may already have equipment available on a loan or hire basis.

Before applying, please contact us on lef@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk or phone us on 01865 407003 if you have any questions as to whether your project meets the eligibility criteria. Many of the projects we fund are similar so we can help save you from 'reinventing the wheel' by sharing recent learning or experiences.

5 Timetable for project delivery

5.1 Maximum project length

Projects supported by the Species Recovery Fund should be completed within a reasonable timescale. The project completion deadline will be stated in our formal grant offer to successful applicants.

5.2 Start date for your project

TOE ***never*** funds any work retrospectively so it is ***essential*** that a project does not start before the formal funding contract is in place. As the fund is administered in a quarterly cycle, the project start date should be at least two months after the project application deadline to allow time for us to undertake our due diligence before the Grant Panel meet to consider your application.

6 Ongoing management

The Species Recovery Fund seeks to fund projects which are sustainable into the future and we need to know:

- How the project will be managed in the long term.
- Where the funds will come from to pay for the future management of the work delivered.
- Who will undertake ongoing management in the future.
- How you plan to monitor the impact of the proposed action on the target species.
- The succession planning in place to ensure your organisation/delivery team will have the capacity to manage the project effectively in the longer term.

7 What we don't fund

- We cannot fund projects which fulfil a statutory requirement or a requirement of planning permission.
- Most projects funded should involve capital works to improve a site. We do not fund revenue costs or overheads alone but can support a small proportion of administration costs which are directly related to the delivery of projects.
- We do not fund the production of leaflets.
- We do not fund bird seed or other food used to attract species in survey work.

8 Specification and quotes

8.1 Work by contractors

Where work is to be done by contractors, please submit a copy of the specification with your application.

For projects appointing contractors, it is essential that you ensure the inclusion of a clause in your contract that clearly states that the responsibility for making good any damage caused to the site lies with them and should be rectified before they leave site. For example, running machinery across sites invariably churns up the ground surface which is not ideal if the contractors' access is also the path used by site visitors. The contractor should leave the site as close to the condition it was when they arrived as possible. If necessary, we can provide advice on getting appropriately worded contracts in place.

8.2 Quotes

All costs need to be justified and accompanied by a detailed breakdown so that TOE can see all the costs associated with the delivery of the project. We require

- 1 quote for costs in project budgets which are less than £1,000, and
- 3 quotes are required for all costs over £1,000.

These quotes could be screenshots showing the prices quoted by online suppliers or email/formal quotes from contractors. Suppliers should be based in the UK except in exceptional circumstances.

8.3 Exceptions to multiple quotes

Some of the projects we support are very specialist in nature and require specific expertise for their successful delivery. We recognise that in these circumstances there will often be little value going to more than one contractor for a quote, but the rationale for presenting fewer than the required number of quotes needs to be justified in answer to Question 5.3 on our application form.

8.4 Contingency

Applicants are allowed to include a separate budget line for up to 10% contingency in the event of price increases. The contingency budget can only be claimed if cost increases caused by inflation or unseen impacts can be demonstrated. The contingency budget cannot be used on additional items simply to spend it.

8.5 Project Management

Applicants are allowed to include a separate budget line for project management up to a maximum of 10% of the grant request but please speak to us before including this in your project budget.

9 Match funding is encouraged

TOE looks favourably at applications from projects that have strong local support and volunteer input, and that have raised funding from other sources. We believe that the best projects are those in which the project applicants have a financial stake in their project as this demonstrates wider community support.

10 Project publicity

TOE and its funders request that all grants are acknowledged and promoted in project publicity. Guidance on project publicity will be sent to all new grant holders with the formal grant offer.

11 Submitting your application

- Please complete all the sections on the application form including the Declaration.
- Provide photographs and site plans which help to illustrate the need for your project. Please note that we ask successful applicants to keep a photographic record of their projects as a way of recording progress.
- Provide maps showing project location. This could be a screen shot of Google Maps after you have placed the 'pin' on your site, or an annotated OS map, or a map produced in GIS.
- Provide copies of quotes from contractors and/or for materials – these can be screen shots if using online suppliers.
- Submit your application by email to lef@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk
- Your application will be processed at the TOE office.

12 What happens next

- The Species Recovery Fund is administered in a quarterly funding cycle. Application deadlines are midday on Tuesdays in March, June, September and December and the date is on our website.
- The Species Recovery Fund Grant Panel meets virtually, four times a year, one month after the application deadline in January, April, July and October.
- Applicants will be asked to attend the meeting to present their application to the Grant Panel.
- Please note that the Grant Panel makes funding recommendations to TOE's Chief Executive who makes the final decisions about the allocation of funds.
- Following our Chief Executive's decision, all applicants will be contacted.
- Successful applicants will then receive a formal contract for signature by the new grant holder. The signed acceptance of the grant offer must be returned to TOE before the project can start or any expenditure is incurred.

13 Claiming your grant

13.1 TOE reimburses after completion

TOE does not give grants up front, but reimburses the costs incurred in delivering a project as agreed and outlined in the formal funding offer. We can provide longer running and/or expensive projects with interim grant payments to avoid applicants facing cash-flow problems.

Projects are expected to claim their grant when the project has been completed. Applicants must claim their grant before the completion deadline date stated in the formal funding offer. If the project is delayed, grant holders should notify TOE of the revised delivery schedule. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to extend project completion deadlines, but this cannot be guaranteed.

13.2 Claiming your grant requires a simple form or two and photos

Before grant payments can be made, TOE must receive a duly completed grant claim form, copies of the relevant associated invoices and a project progress/completion report. Applicants should keep a photographic record of their projects as a way of recording progress and send pictures when claiming their grant.

14 Our commitment to you

We appreciate that fund raising is not easy, but TOE is proud of the care taken in considering applications. Whatever the outcome, you can be confident in our approach and the care with which we handle your information.

1 Every application received is acknowledged so you know it has arrived safely.

2 All applicants will be notified of the outcome of application, whether successful or unsuccessful.

3 Every eligible application is considered by at least one of TOE's Trustees.

4 Your application will receive careful attention, but it is not possible to guarantee that funding will be available – we know you will understand that sometimes we have to decline good projects as it is simply not possible to support everything.

5 The Grant Panel will note any requested amount you may indicate, but they do not work on an "all or nothing" basis so we may provide support at a different level than that requested.

6 We are respectful of your time and resources – please be assured that we will only request additional information when we think it forms an important part of your overall proposition, or if we wish to clarify something we feel is relevant to our understanding of your project. We ensure we have all the information we need so you can be confident you have done all you can to make your case.

7 Applicants will be invited to attend a Grant Panel meeting to provide additional information and answer questions.

8 TOE does not give grants up front, but reimburses the costs incurred in delivering a project as agreed and outlined in the formal funding offer. We can provide longer running and/or expensive projects with interim grant payments to avoid applicants facing cash-flow problems.

9 Reporting guidelines are kept as clear and uncomplicated as possible to ensure we can remain up-to-date with the delivery of your project while minimising the administrative burden for us both.

15 Data Protection and confidentiality

We share application forms and supporting information with members of the Species Recovery Fund Grant Panel. Information is only shared as required to make a funding decision regarding the project and we have procedures in place to keep information safe.

The TOE Privacy Notice is available at https://trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/. Please contact us if you would like any further information regarding our data protection procedures by emailing admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk or giving us a call on 01865 407003.

May 2026

APPENDIX 1 – Species List

Schedule A "Last Stand" Species (24 species)	Schedule B Very Limited Range Species (17 species)	Schedule C Other 'At Risk' Species (20 species)
Barberry Carpet Moth	Adder	Bats
Beetle of Autumn Gentian	Bittern (and Marsh Harrier)	Beaver
Cigarello Gall-Fly	Black Poplar trees	Blackthorn butterflies
Clubbed general soldierfly	Dark Green Fritillary	Breeding waders
Creeping Marshwort	Dung specialists and dung beetles	Common lizard
Desmoulin's Whorl Snail	Greater Water-Parsnip	Curlew
Downy Woundwort	Hazel dormouse	Devil's bit scabious (and Marsh fritillary)
Duke of Burgundy Butterfly	Juniper	*Ellipteroides alboscutellatus*
Fen violet	Long-Leaved Helleborine	Farmland Birds
Fungi and fungi-associated plants found with woodland	Meadow Clary	Fish
Lichens (on veteran trees)	Moths of Dyer's Greenweed	Great Crested Newt
Limestone fern	Nightingale	Hedgehog
Liquorice Piercer Moth	Silver Spotted Skipper	Otter
Lousewort flea beetle	Striped Lychnis Moth	Small Blue butterfly
Meadow Ant Hoverfly	White Clawed Crayfish	Swifts and House martins
Military Orchid	Willow Tit	Tawny Owl
Monkey Orchid	Wood White butterfly	Turtle Dove
Montagu's Harrier		Water Vole
Mountain Bulin snail		White Admiral
Noble chafer		White Letter Hairstreak
Snail killing fly		
Southern Damselfly		
Stone Curlew		
Tuberta maerens spider		