

Science Intern – 2021 Red List update for birds

Background

Would you like to know what it's like to work as a scientist for a global nature conservation organisation?

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. The Science Division of its Global Secretariat (based in the David Attenborough Building in Cambridge) undertakes data gathering, analysis, research and priority-setting to underpin the conservation programmes of the 115 national grassroots conservation organisations that together form the BirdLife International Partnership.

As the global Red List Authority for birds, BirdLife is responsible for coordinating the process of evaluating all of the world's c. 11,000 bird species against the IUCN Red List criteria, to assess their extinction risk. To assign each species to a Red List category, BirdLife's Red List Team assesses the size, trend and structure of its population and geographic range, and compares this to quantitative thresholds set by IUCN. Doing this objectively and consistently across all species ensures reliable, comparable assessments that have global credibility. These assessments, and the extensive spatial and tabular data sets that underpin them, have a huge impact, by identifying priorities for conservation and research, and informing resource allocation.

In summer 2021, the team will be working hard on completing a comprehensive update to the Red List for birds, and will require additional capacity to help document the latest assessments for thousands of species and improve the integrity of the underlying datasets. They would therefore welcome applications from interested candidates, with the intention of hosting an intern between June and September.

Learning objectives

- Become familiar with the IUCN Red List categories and criteria, and with the database in which assessments of the relative extinction risk of bird species are made (Species Information Service).
- Learn how Red List data and assessments underpin multiple policy-relevant tools and indicators.
- Learn about BirdLife's strategy, structure, operating procedures, systems, culture and values.
- Understand the working relationships and dependencies between colleagues working in different departments, especially within the Science, Policy and Information Management Directorate.
- Strengthen time management skills to ensure that tasks are prioritised and delivered to deadlines.
- Gain experience of synthesising information from a variety of scientific and non-scientific sources.
- Gain experience of finding, collating and communicating relevant information to different audiences.
- Develop and strengthen research, writing, analysis, data management and presentation skills.

Requirements and qualifications

- Studying for a first degree in ecology, biology, zoology, geography, environmental science or similar.
- Interested in and committed to species conservation.
- Good general knowledge of biodiversity.
- Good verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to work independently, but also as part of a team.
- Competent with Microsoft Office, especially Excel and Word, and ideally with other software.