BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
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The BOU is a Registered Charity: 249877 (England and Wales), SC044850 (Scotland)

SUMMER PLACEMENT SCHEME

GUIDELINES

ABOUT THE BOU

The BOU is an international charitable society whose aim is to promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community. Awarding grants and bursaries for ornithological research is one way in which we achieve our aims. To see how we further achieve our aims visit our website at bou.org.uk.

Please read these guidelines carefully, as they contain important information about the scheme and the application process.

Application deadline: 29 January 2027

1. Scheme outline

The BOU Summer Placement Scheme provides financial support for undergraduate students, studying at any UK higher education institute, to carry out small summer ornithological research projects which might otherwise be unaffordable.

As part of the scheme, the BOU offers a weekly stipend of up to £250 for up to 8 weeks, plus up to £400 for research expenses. Three funded placements, each to a maximum of £2,400, are available in 2026. Applicants are expected to work full time on the project for the duration of the placement.

The student must submit the application and must be supported by a host organisation who will provide all supervision and access to lab space, field sites, consumables and equipment as necessary for the proposed project. The BOU does not offer direct supervision, mentorship or facilities as part of this scheme.

BOU membership is not a requirement to apply and successful applicants, if not already BOU members, will be gifted a 1-year BOU membership.

2. Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Applicants must be an undergraduate student, at any stage of their undergraduate degree prior to graduation, studying at any UK higher education institution.
- The proposed summer placement project must be in the field of ornithology and be supported by a member of academic staff responsible for the student's supervision. We are open to supporting exchanges between organisations.
- The scheme does not support work that contributes to the requirements of an undergraduate degree (for example, as part of a final year project and/or dissertation).
- Previous award recipients are welcome to apply again; however, in years with a high volume of applications, priority may be given to first-time applicants.

The scheme is particularly seeking applications from individuals belonging to groups that are currently under-represented within ornithology:

- Applicants being in the first generation of their family to go to university (i.e. none of their parents, stepparents or guardians completed higher education);
- Applicants having experienced care (3 months or more) or had caring responsibilities (3 months or more for at least 10 hours per week);
- Applicants being from a low-income background and in receipt of additional financial support to attend university;
- Applicants being from a minoritised ethnic background;
- Applicants having a medical condition that affects their ability to study.
- Applicants having a disability that affects their ability to study.
- Applicants who are women or non-binary.

3. Application process

The 2027 application window runs from 1 October 2026 to 29 January 2027, for summer placements commencing in July 2027.

Applicants should submit their completed application form to grants@bou.org.uk by the 29 January 2027. The associated supervisor letter of support (see below) should also be sent to grants@bou.org.uk by the 29 January 2027.

Applications will be considered by members of the BOU's Engagement Committee and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in April 2027. As part of the assessment process, particular emphasis will be placed on the likely benefit of the placement to the student.

4. Supervisor letter of support

All applications must be accompanied by a short letter of support from the applicant's academic supervisor. The supervisor should send their letter of support to grants@bou.org.uk by the 29 January 2027.

The letter of support should include:

- Confirmation that the host organisation commits to providing all supervision and access to lab space, field sites, consumables and equipment as necessary for the proposed

project. This includes providing appropriate training to work safely and effectively and ensuring appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- A brief appraisal of the applicant, their project and their capacity to complete the placement.
- A brief statement of how the applicant stands to benefit from the placement.

5. Taking up an award

Successful applicants will be notified in April 2027. On being offered an award, recipients will be asked to confirm acceptance of the award under the terms of these guidelines and any other conditions contained in the offer email.

The award will be paid direct to the applicant's bank account.

6. Reporting back to the BOU

Successful applicants are required to adequately report back to the BOU on completion of their placement. As a charity, and in order to comply with charity regulations, the BOU needs to demonstrate where our funds have been spent, and that this spending complies with charity legislation.

Successful applicants are required to submit a report on their placement in the form of a post for #theBOUblog. The blog report should be submitted to the BOU within 3 months of completion of the placement. Further guidelines will be provided when applicants are notified of their successful application.

Any publications resulting from the placement should achnowledge the BOU's financial support.

7. Withdrawal of an award

If the BOU is not satisfied that the funds it has awarded have been spent as per the application for which funding was sought, or a suitable report is not submitted to us, then the BOU reserves the right to request the award, in part or in full, be returned.

An award cannot be transferred to a third party. If the original recipient is unable to use the award as intended, then the award must be returned in full.

8. Unsuccessful applications

Applicants who are unsuccessful will be notified by email. Due to the number of applications received, we are unable to provide feedback on applications.

9. BOU Mission Statement

Applicants should note the BOU's aims and mission statement:

The British Ornithologists' Union will promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community.

The BOU mission will be achieved by the following means:

- Publishing IBIS as a leading international journal of ornithological science.
- Organising a programme of meetings and conferences.
- Awarding grants and bursaries for ornithological research.
- Encouraging liaison between those actively engaged in ornithological research.
- Providing a representative body of the scientific community, able to provide ornithological information and advice to government and other policy makers.
- Maintaining and publishing the official list of birds recorded in Britain - The British List.

10. BOU Ethical Policy

The British Ornithologists' Union is committed to upholding the highest scientific standards, and it requires that all who engage with it in its activities, who publish papers in IBIS or who benefit from its financial support also uphold such standards.

In particular:

1. Scientific integrity
   Results should be reported honestly and openly, and data which does not support a hypothesis should not be suppressed or ignored.
2. Due acknowledgement
   All who contribute and all sources or references should be adequately acknowledged. It is recognised that material derived from citizen science surveys, long term institutional studies or similar may make individual acknowledgement impractical, but the organisation or group responsible should be acknowledged. Permission should be obtained to use data gathered by others where it has not already been made available for public access by the authors or compilers, and plagiarism will not be tolerated.
3. Mitigating any adverse impact
   The BOU expects authors and applicants to have proper regard for conservation considerations and best practice in work with wild or captive animals. Attention is drawn to the 'Guidelines for the Use of Animals in Research' published regularly in the journal Animal Behaviour (*Animal Behaviour* 2006, 21:245-253) and the specific guidance provided by ASAB/ABS for submissions to Animal Behaviour. In particular authors should consider the potential impacts of disturbance, trapping, and manipulations such as marking or tagging on their study animals and provide details in the paper or grant application of how these aspects have been or will be dealt with. Papers will not be accepted, nor grants and bursaries awarded if they are based on or relate to work involving cruelty to animals or if the work may or may have put at risk endangered populations, species or habitats.

   The BOU is not opposed in principle to the 'taking' of specimens from the wild for scientific purposes but would expect that only in exceptional circumstances is such an approach adopted. Authors and applicants are referred to the guidelines on collecting of

specimens from the wild proposed by Collar (*Bird Conservation International* 2000, 10: 1-15).

All collection activity should be carried out with discretion, and after consultation with any relevant local authority, landowner or other groups or individuals whose legitimate interests may be affected, even if no formal licence or permission is required to comply with principle 4 below.

Authors and applicants should adhere to the guidance published by the Economic and Social Research Council, *ESRC Framework for Research Ethics* where any research involves the participation of individuals outside the relevant research team or institution, data relating to such individuals, or may have an impact on such individuals, and where appropriate undertake an ethical review of their project in accordance with such guidance, providing a copy or summary of such review to the BOU if requested.

4. Legal compliance
   The BOU expects all authors of papers submitted to IBIS and applicants for awards, grants and bursaries to act within the standards and procedures laid down by UK legislation or equivalent legislation in the country where the work is conducted. They must ensure they have the necessary licences and permits for the activities described in the paper or grant application. Where work is carried out in places lacking legislation or where this is not adequately administered, the work should conform to the ethical standards expected in the UK.

5. Conflicts of interest
   Any interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, that might be perceived as influencing an author's or applicant's objectivity is considered a potential source of conflict of interest. These must be disclosed when directly relevant or indirectly related to the work that the authors describe in their manuscript or which is the subject matter of an application for funding. Potential sources of conflict of interest include but are not limited to patent or stock ownership, membership of a company board of directors, membership of an advisory board or committee for a company, institute or organisation and consultancy for or receipt of fees or sponsorship from a company, institute or organisation. The existence of a conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude publication in IBIS, or the awarding of a grant.

   It is the responsibility of the corresponding author submitting a paper to IBIS to review this policy with all authors and to collectively list in the covering letter to the Editor, in the manuscript (under the Acknowledgment section), and in the online submission system ALL pertinent commercial and other relationships. As part of the submission process,

corresponding authors will be asked to confirm whether or not a conflict of interest exists.

The BOU reserves the right not to publish any comment or response to any submitted or published paper if it considers that the comment or response may be motivated by personal animosity rather than genuine scientific disagreement.

6. Safety
   While the BOU does not accept any duty of care for those involved in BOU-funded activities, it expects those involved to take adequate steps to minimise risk to those participating in any research or expedition.

The BOU is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). IBIS is published on behalf of BOU by Wiley-Blackwell Publishing and we support Wiley-Blackwell in their policy on ethical issues in relation to scientific publications (see authorservices.wiley.com). Authors should make themselves familiar with this policy.

All awards, grants and bursaries funded by BOU are awarded on condition that the recipients comply with these guidelines, and applicants should confirm that they have read and understood them.

Please make clear whether your work includes the collection of specimens (for which copies of any appropriate licenses are required).