



CONSERVATION FUND APPLICANT GUIDELINES (PUBLIC)

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Related Documents

1. Assessment Ethics and Code of Conduct (Public)

The South Australian Ornithological Association Inc. (Birds SA) established the Birds SA Conservation Fund with the intention of making available small research grants (\$10,000 maximum) to encourage and promote research into birds and their habitats *principally in South Australia*, and occasionally outside of the state where the value of the research contributes to the conservation of South Australian bird populations. The value must be justified in the grant application. The Conservation Fund is administered by the [Conservation Fund Committee](#).

Applications are encouraged from research institutions for supervised project funding at the Honours Degree, Masters Degree and PhD levels and projects conducted by the research community at South Australian universities and nature conservation NGOs. Applications are also encouraged from citizen researchers of the bird community not aligned to any institution.

2. GRANT CALLS

There are two calls per year.

Grant applications open on 1 February and 1 August and close by **31 March** and **30 September** each year. Applications for the March call are considered in April and the September one in October of the same year.

In special circumstances, the Committee may consider an application outside of the calls. Please email the [Secretary](#) of the Conservation Fund Committee with a justification for why the Committee should grant special circumstances for your application to be considered outside the call times.

3. FOCAL AREAS AND RESEARCH TOPICS

Topics studying the focal areas below will be considered for funding support. They are:

1. Projects that investigate factors relating to declining or threatened species of birds.
2. Projects that increase knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats.
3. Projects relating to management and conservation of Australian bird species and their habitats.
4. Research into birds and their habitats must be **principally in South Australia**, and occasionally outside of the State where the value of the research contributes to the **conservation** of South Australian bird populations.

Research topics may address various ecological and biological studies on bird species of South Australia, with a focus but not limited to, conservation of species that are threatened or declining now or predicted to decline by 2050. Examples include:

- studies that increase knowledge on breeding, home ranges, dispersal, habitat use and preferences, particularly where it assists with understanding population modelling, impact of threats, and management options;
- impacts of threatening processes (e.g., climate change, resource loss and declines, feral animals and predation, recreational hunting, habitat loss);
- long-term population monitoring studies;
- changes in life histories, movements, breeding success, ecophysiology, behaviour in response to climate change;
- effectiveness of conservation management and recovery interventions;
- molecular studies that inform conservation management;
- relevant new technologies to address the above topics.

5. FUNDING LEVELS

Projects of one year are restricted to a maximum of \$3,000 per grant (e.g., full-time Honours Degree research). Projects taking 2 years to complete can apply for up to \$6,000 maximum (e.g., full-time Masters Degree research) and those taking 3 years to finish can apply for up to \$10,000 maximum (e.g. full-time PhD research).

A grant of \$10,000 may be awarded in a single year in *special circumstances* where outcomes on the ground are workable and able to be implemented with confidence after completion of the study. Inquiries about these Special Circumstances Grants should be

forwarded to the [Secretary](#) of the Conservation Fund Committee for consideration by the Committee before submitting an application.

Applications are encouraged from research institutions for supervised project funding at the Honours Degree, Masters Degree and PhD levels and projects conducted by researchers at South Australian research institutes. Applications are also encouraged from people not aligned to any institution such as community research groups, citizen scientists and NGOs with an interest in bird conservation research.

6. ELIGIBILITY

- The research must focus on the four focal areas above to be considered for funding.
- Applications with budgets exceeding the different funding levels will not be considered.
- The applicant must be a Birds SA member (Student members are \$10 per year)
- A student applicant must be a recently graduated undergraduate, masters or doctoral student supervised by a South Australian university supervisor with experience in the field.
- An application from community research groups, citizen researchers and NGOs must show in the application a clear involvement of a professional/retired researcher (the Principal Researcher) such as an academic/CSIRO scientist in the project. That person(s) must show relevant research experience in the past 10 years via journal publications.
- The applicant must be the individual conducting the specific research project and responsible for data analysis and documentation. Those undertaking laboratory or field studies are best based in South Australia with local supervisors and principal researchers.
- An applicant may receive a maximum of one research award per year and two research grants per lifetime. Typically, two lifetime grants would consist of one award for an Honours project and a second later award for a Ph.D. project; however, other scenarios are possible. Individuals are limited to one award per project.
- Applicants may also apply for funds from other sources. However, requests for funding from other sources must be noted in your application, especially the name of the fund, the amount requested, the date requested, whether successful or outcome is pending. The Committee needs a clear indication in the budget on how all funds are allocated, and if the project is viable if other proposals are not successful.
- Applicants must have sufficient funds to progress the research as successful grants are paid by instalments over the duration of the project as shown below.

Project duration	First Payment*	Second Payment**	Final Payment***
1 year (< \$3,000)	80%	-	20%
2 year (<\$6,000)	30%	50% (12 months)	20%
3 year (<\$10,000)	30%	50% (18 months)	20%

*First payment - upon return of signed grant agreement

**Second payments - conditional upon a progress update (via email)

***Final payment - upon receipt of the final report and a media report

< is less than or equal to

7. TO APPLY

Read the information below carefully before submitting your application.

- Applicant Guidelines
- Conservation Grant Application form ([docx](#), [pdf](#))

8. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Birds SA Conservation Fund Committee considers all applications for funding from the Birds SA Conservation Fund. Should expertise not reside in the Committee, the application will be sent to external assessors with appropriate knowledge in the field.

1. Applications **must clearly address all requirements** in the Application form and be submitted via email to Attention: CFC Secretary at grants@birdssa.asn.au .
Applications not using this format will not be accepted.
2. A complete application consists of a completed form describing the project title and funding sought (1-2), principal researcher details (3-4), other funding sought (5), the project budget, volunteers and payment arrangements (6-8), project description (9) and authorisation signatures (10 -11). In addition, applicants must upload their application and project description as a single PDF file that does not exceed 8 pages. Once your application is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive a confirmation, please contact the [Secretary](#).
3. All researchers must obtain the appropriate Permits to Undertake Scientific Research, and adhere to the conditions of the permit. In South Australia research permits from the Department of Environment and Water (DEW) are required before undertaking any research in a National Park, Conservation Park, Recreation Park, Game Reserve, Regional Reserve or Wilderness Protection Area or on any species of bird protected under the (SA) National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.
4. Research conducted may also require approval from an Animal or Wildlife Ethics Committee.

5. Funds are primarily to cover field/laboratory/analytical expenses for researchers to pursue their studies. Items of equipment may be funded at the discretion of the Committee but are generally not supported. **Salaries and attendance at conferences will not be considered.**
6. Applicants should indicate clearly the parts of their project for which they are seeking funding support.
7. If approved, a payments will be made as follows:

8. Project duration	First Payment*	Second Payment**	Final Payment***
1 year (< \$3,000)	80%	-	20%
2 year (<\$6,000)	30%	50% (12 months)	20%
3 year (<\$10,000)	30%	50% (18 months)	20%

*First payment - upon return of signed grant agreement

**Second payments - conditional upon a progress update (via email)

***Final payment - upon receipt of the final report and a media report **if both are received by the project completion date.**

< is less than or equal to

9. Applicants can appeal to bring second instalments forward under exceptional circumstances. The final 20% will be paid upon receipt of the final report and a media report (as outlined in the Grant Agreement) AND the acceptance by the Birds SA Conservation Fund Committee that the report has fulfilled all criteria.
10. Birds SA members may be available to assist in fieldwork if required. The applicant will be responsible for organising the volunteers, but the researcher's organisation must have volunteer insurance for Birds SA volunteers.
11. The recipient of a grant will inform the Conservation Fund Committee Secretary at grants@birdssa.asn.au of any difficulties, or anticipated delays, arising from the project. Evidence of progress may be requested (particularly if original timeframes are not met).

9. APPLICATION EVALUATION

Successful applications are usually built around one or a few carefully defined, feasible, and clearly delineated question(s). Other characteristics of a good proposal include necessary background information, alternative hypotheses (if appropriate), relevant citations and figures, and clear, concise writing (see [Hints for Writing a Successful Proposal](#)). Common problems with applications include proposed research projects that are too broad and

overly ambitious, objectives that are defined too loosely, and methods that are stated too vaguely or fail to address the questions and budgets that are not clearly itemised. Review and critique of the application by your advisor and one or two additional colleagues will likely improve its readability and overall quality. Applications are assessed:

- Relative to the research focal area of the Conservation Fund (See section on Focal Areas above)
- Dependency on other funding and whether that funding has been secured
- Significance and contemporary relevance of the research question
- Clarity of the objectives
- Feasibility of the plan of research
- Appropriateness of the budget
- Approach and methodology proposed
- Likelihood of the project being successfully completed in the nominated timeframe
- Good value for the funds requested

12. The Birds SA Conservation Fund Committee will assess the application and may seek additional information and/or clarification prior to making a decision.

13. Assessors are guided by the Bird SA's [*Assessment Ethics and Code of Conduct*](#)

14. The decisions of the Birds SA Conservation Fund Committee will be final.

10. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

15. The Birds SA Chair will notify applicants of the outcome of the assessment and will remain the personal contact for the duration of the project.

16. All successful Grant recipients will be required to return an Acknowledgement of Offer and Grant Agreement prior to any payments being made.

11. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTING

17. Upon completion of the project a copy of the final report and a media report (as outlined in the Grant Agreement) must be forwarded to the Secretary, Birds SA Conservation Fund Committee.

18. The final report must contain the following:

- a. Summary
- b. Purpose of the Research
- c. Research findings
- d. A statement on how the grant was spent.

- e. Implications of the research for species/habitat conservation
 - f. What key aspects of bird conservation do the findings do not support (i.e., limitations)
 - g. Describe how the findings directly support on ground management and policy decision for SA bird conservation
 - h. Publications
 - i. Acknowledgements
19. Wherever possible, an oral presentation at a General meeting of Birds SA is required.
 20. Birds SA reserves the right to publish a summary of the project and results (based on media report) on its website, online social media and/or E-News or The Birder.

12. FAQs

- ***Can my application be accepted after the deadline?*** Yes. Applicants are encouraged to complete their application well ahead of the deadline of the call offer. However, applications outside of the call may be accepted under special circumstances. Please contact the [Secretary](#) of the Conservation Fund Committee.
- ***Does the application have to be double-spaced?*** No.
- ***Is a letter of recommendation from my supervisor/mentor required?*** No letters are required but you must indicate that your supervisor or mentor in the case of a community research project has approved the project.
- ***Can an individual receive research award funds directly, or do they need to go through a university/CSIRO?*** Graduate students receive funds directly via the University Research Office or CSIRO Finance. Community researchers can go directly to individual recipients. However, if an individual receives the payment directly, the individual must have an ABN as a sole trader. It is generally in the recipient's best interest that funds go through the NGO, community group or Birds SA if a Birds SA member leading a project.
- ***Can a proposal be in a language other than English?*** No, only proposals submitted in English will be accepted.
- ***Can an applicant reside outside of Australia, attend an international university and not study in Australia for the project apply for funding if they have a supervisor in a South Australian university?*** No, the applicant on the application form must be the undergraduate researcher doing the project in South Australia.
- ***Does my project need to be completed within the nominated completion date?*** Yes, if you wish to receive the final payment. Applicants can apply for an extension by requesting an amendment to the completion date if special circumstances have interfered with the research. Please contact the [Secretary](#) of the Conservation Fund Committee.

13. MORE INFORMATION

Contact the [Secretary, Conservation Fund Committee](#)