



**British  
Antarctic Survey**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

## Zoological Field Assistant – Antarctica

Contract type: Antarctic Contract

Duration: Antarctic Winter (Up to 18 months)

Salary: £23,937 per annum initially. Additionally, upon completion of a successful tour, you will receive a 10% bonus on your Antarctic Service.

Benefits: We offer generous benefits

Team: Antarctic employment pool team

Location: Antarctica

### Description

Zoological Field Assistants will be recruited to carry out fieldwork on seabirds and seals. Bird Island is small (7 km in length) and forms part of the South Georgia archipelago where it is buffeted by both prevailing westerlies and cold winds from Antarctica. It has a high annual rainfall and variable snow cover during winter. In summer tens of thousands of seals and hundreds of thousands of seabirds breed there. Up to 10 staff live in a modern research station with a satellite link to the outside world and comfortable accommodation.

The successful applicants will work and live on Bird Island continuously, living with other residents and 3 summer only visitors. Whilst everyone is assigned duties to keep the research station running (including cooking and cleaning), the residents have extra responsibilities (after pre-deployment training), such as providing IT, communications and medical cover. They will each be responsible for one element of a long term science programme. The learning curve is very steep and so all candidates must have previous experience of handling appropriate wild animals, but BAS will provide a finishing school (at Bird Island) to hone these skills. A recent magazine article gives an insight into what it is like to do one of these jobs.

Work in the wildlife breeding season at Bird Island is very intensive, with long hours of fieldwork and data preparation, so it is important to be well organised. Data are collated using databases and by submitting reports, observing deadlines at frequent intervals. The results underpin key research into regional and global change processes based on seabird and seal life histories, reproductive success, behaviour and diet.

The position of Zoological Field Assistant offers a unique opportunity for highly motivated and disciplined individuals with relevant fieldwork skills and a keen interest in wildlife, who will adapt well to small island living in a challenging sub-Antarctic environment.

## Purpose

To work at Bird Island for 18 months (with a possibility of extension) preparing, collecting and recording seal and seabird data for a long term science programme. To assist with other elements of the zoological research programme as required.

## Qualification

Degree in biology or zoology; experience of remote unsupervised fieldwork and animal handling skills.

Applicants must be competent and efficient in managing, analysing and reporting on large data sets. Smart time management, attention to detail and effective communication are important attributes.

Candidates should also be comfortable working in a small and vibrant science community.

## Duties

Field Assistant 1:

- Responsible for work on seals.
- Monitor a population of tagged fur seals, sample for diet and weigh pups (to estimate growth rates).
- Systematically tag and re-sight leopard seals during winter.
- Assist with penguin and flying bird monitoring.
- Collect project data for BAS scientists and visiting researchers (e.g. deploy transmitters and loggers to determine at-sea behaviour).

Field Assistant 2:

- Responsible for work on albatrosses.
- Monitor and collate data from four species of albatross including parameters on population size, breeding success, chick growth and diet.
- Assist with seal and penguin monitoring.
- Collect project data for BAS scientists and visiting researchers (e.g. deploy transmitters and loggers to measure aspects of foraging and chick provisioning strategy).

Field Assistant 3:

- Responsible for work on penguins and giant petrels.
- Monitor and collate data from penguins and giant petrels including parameters on population size, breeding success, chick growth and diet.
- Assist with seal and albatross monitoring.
- Collect project data for BAS scientists and visiting researchers (e.g. deploy transmitters and loggers to measure aspects of foraging and chick provisioning strategy).

Other Duties:

- To undertake other duties as requested by the Director of BAS.

*We welcome applications from all sections of the community. People from ethnic minorities and disabled people are currently under-represented and their applications are particularly welcome. We operate a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the job role.*

*You will need to be physically capable and medically fit to work in Antarctic conditions.*

## Skills Specification

*Skills are listed as either Essential or Desirable. Desirable skills importance rating in parenthesis (1 is high, 5 is low)*

### Communication skills

- Fluent in written and spoken English language. - Essential
- Experience of scientific report writing. - Desirable [1]

### Computer / IT skills

- Proficient in the use of IT equipment, word processing, spreadsheet and email software - Essential
- Knowledge of GIS software. - Desirable [1]

### Interpersonal skills

- Considerate and mature in attitude. - Essential
- Worked in a small team in remote locations. - Essential

### Managerial ability

- Self-motivated and can work unsupervised. - Essential

### Other Factors

- Physically fit and capable of carrying out fieldwork in rugged terrain. - Essential
- Knowledge of wilderness survival techniques and first aid. - Desirable [1]

### Qualifications

- Must have been awarded an honours degree in biology/zoology or equivalent. - Essential

### Skills / Experience

- Wild bird/animal handling experience in the field. - Essential
- Bird ringing license. - Desirable [1]
- Handled wild seabirds or non-captive seals. - Desirable [1]
- Laboratory management experience. - Essential
- Attached devices to animals. - Desirable [1]