

**The Pamela and Alexander F. Skutch Research Award
for Studies in Avian Natural History
The Association of Field Ornithologists**

The Pamela and Alexander F. Skutch Research Award supports minimally invasive research into the life histories, especially social relations and reproduction, of little known birds of the continental Neotropics, including Trinidad and Tobago.

This award is supported by a fund that was established by Dr. and Mrs. Skutch following the joint meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists, Asociacion Ornitologica de Costa Rica, and the American Birding Association in San Jose, Costa Rica, in 1997. At that meeting, Dr. Skutch was honored by AFO for more than sixty years of contributions to Neotropical ornithology.

Dr. Skutch is known for his hundreds of scientific papers and more than forty books, which focused on the behavior and life histories of birds. His intention in establishing the Skutch Fund was to support the kind of research to which he devoted his life, and especially, to encourage studies by people who live in the Neotropics. For this reason, preference will be given to Neotropical-based applicants proposing research projects that involves a substantial amount of *observation* of birds in the field.

Eligibility: The Association of Field Ornithologists welcomes applications for funding from amateur or professional ornithologists of any nationality. Preference will be given to applicants that have had some previous experience with the geographic region (and if possible, the specific locality) as well as the bird species involved in the proposed study. Applicants and/or their primary research supervisor must be members of the Association of Field Ornithologists (prior to the application deadline) to be eligible for an award. To become a member of the AFO, please visit <http://www.osnabirds.org/>.

Preference will be given to applicants proposing studies that are expected to produce results that can be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. All awardees are encouraged to consider publishing at least some of their findings in the *Journal of Field Ornithology*. In addition, publication of less technical accounts in popular magazines or books is encouraged. Awardees are also strongly encouraged to present the results of their research at an annual meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists. Awardees can apply to the AFO for assistance with travel expenses.

Frequency and value: One award of up to \$10,000 US is offered annually.

Language of, deadlines for, and submission of applications: Applications may be submitted in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. Applications are due each year by 15 July. Applications must be submitted as a single, electronic attachment to an e-mail in Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, or TEXT (.txt) file format. All margins must be ≥ 2 cm wide, and the font size must be ≥ 11 pt). Applications should be to Elissa Landre, Chair of the Skutch Award Committee, at: elandre@massaudubon.org. Applicants should put "Skutch Award Application for [applicant's initials and last name here]" in the subject line. Applicants must also arrange to have one letter of reference in Microsoft Word, PDF or TEXT (.txt) file format e-mailed directly from the referee to the award committee Chair. Referees should put "Skutch Award Reference for [applicant's initials and last name here]" in the subject line.

Format and content of applications: The application must contain the following in the order specified, each starting on a separate page:

1) a cover sheet, the template for which appears in the box below (please replicate the contents of this box in the first page of your application and provide the requested information);

Template for Application Page 1

APPLICATION FOR SKUTCH RESEARCH AWARD

Name:

Member of the Association of Field Ornithologists? (write “yes” or “no”)

Mailing address:

Telephone:

Fax number:

E-mail address:

Title of study:

Amount of funding requested from the Association of Field Ornithologists:

Starting date and anticipated duration of study:

Name of primary research supervisor (if any):

Is supervisor a member of the Association of Field Ornithologists? (write “yes” or “no”)

Name of person supplying reference letter:

Their telephone:

Their E-mail address:

2) a curriculum vita *no longer than two pages in length* summarizing academic degrees, relevant employment history, current position, and any publications;

3) a research proposal, not exceeding three single-spaced pages, which describes the objectives of the study and its scientific or conservation significance, contains a brief description of the methods to be used and the facilities available for the study, and includes any critical, supporting citations;

4) a budget itemizing total costs for the proposed project and indicating the amount you are requesting in the form of a Bergstrom award (not to exceed \$10000 US when converting from local currency).

5) a description of other funding for the study that has been awarded/received or has been (or will be) requested in the near future. The award committee considers need, so a statement can be included with the budget describing the probability of the project's completion if the Skutch Award is not received.

Review of applications: Applications are reviewed and scored by professional ornithologists from throughout North, Central and South America. Reviewers are instructed to consider the following in scoring proposals:

1) Degree to which proposed research meets the criteria for a Skutch Award

Skutch Awards are intended to support *field* research on the life histories of little-known birds of the Neotropics. As such, all else being equal, studies that involve extensive field work to increase knowledge and understanding of avian life histories, ecology, behavior, and conservation should be rated higher than proposals in which, for example, the field work component is limited to collecting blood or tissue samples for analysis in the laboratory. In addition, preference will be given to research that is non-invasive and emphasizing “pure” observation in accord with Dr. Skutch's expressed wishes.

2) Significance of the proposed research

Are the questions being asked relevant and important? Are the results likely to advance our knowledge of Neotropical avian biology and/or have important applications to avian conservation and management? Will the results be publishable?

3) Quality of the proposed research

Is the research well-designed, i.e., are the methods appropriate to answering the questions being asked? Are facilities adequate to complete the study? Are sample sizes adequate? Has the applicant considered how their data will be analyzed and do proposed analyses seem appropriate?

4) Quality of the proposal itself

Does the proposal contain all required/critical elements? Is the proposal well-written and easy to comprehend? Is the proposal largely free of grammatical errors and does it appear to have been carefully proof-read? Attention to quality and detail when preparing the proposal suggests that there will be attention to quality and detail when completing the research (both from the applicant and supervisors).

Please direct any questions you may have about the awards or application process to:

Elissa Landre, Chair
Skutch Award Committee
Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary
280 Eliot St.
Natick, MA 01760 USA

e-mail: elandre@massaudubon.org