Small Grant: Research for Bird Conservation

Are you interested in bird research and evidence-based conservation of birds in India? If you are excited about studying natural history, ecology, or behaviour of India's birds to generate key evidence for conservation action, read on...

Despite the wide interest in birds and birdwatching in India, several of our bird species are in need of research attention and lacking basic information. The State of India's Birds 2023 report has highlighted the importance of further research on birds across the country to understand their conservation requirements. For example, we know that the veterinary drug diclofenac had a significant role in vulture declines and a complete ban was necessary for vultures to survive. However, Indian Courser is declining rapidly even within grasslands but we do not know why. Reasons for the decline of many species are still poorly known, and therefore what interventions are needed to halt those declines are unclear.

This small grant for bird research is directed towards supporting work species with conservation importance and those lacking in natural history information.

We especially encourage proposals on the following species:

- Black-breasted Parrotbill
- Grey-crowned Prinia
- Jerdon's Babbler
- Chestnut-backed Laughingthrush
- Bank Myna
- Stoliczka's Bushchat
- White-throated Bushchat
- Indian Roller
- Andaman Pale-footed Bush Warbler
- Great Grey Shrike
- Malabar Grey Hornbill

Although proposals are encouraged on the above species, they need not be restricted to this list. While these are our priority species for this year's grant, we welcome proposals based on other species that broadly meet the criteria of being of high conservation priority and /or with insufficient data.

The list we propose covers species from different regions and habitats from across the country that will benefit from focused research efforts. More research on their habitat requirements, diet, breeding biology as well as aspects like its sensitivity to disturbances are particularly encouraged.

Duration of project: 1-2 years
Grant amount: 1-3 Lakhs

Who can apply:
This grant is specifically targeted at amateur ornithologists - birdwatchers who have a passion towards ornithology. Applications from backgrounds other than life sciences or ecology would be given priority. This is a competitive grant and each year, only two of the top research proposals will be awarded up to ₹ 3,00,000 each.

Requirements:

1. A proposal (*in the format provided below*), highlighting the importance of the species, specific research idea and the justification, study area, a research plan, tentative timeline and budget (all details provided in the format).

   <Format for the application: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uPvvnEAhdhWmYrzf2qHEO0alYiO2eDbIrEVbUzqC61Q/edit>

2. Please include your CV with some details demonstrating your prior interest in ornithology - e.g. online certificate courses, published papers or notes, popular media articles, links to recordings of webinars you presented, etc - anything that will help us assess your inclination and commitment towards ornithology research.

Email your application package (CV and proposal) to: rbcgrants.in@gmail.com

Deadline for application: 31st July 2026

After the initial screening of proposals, there will be an extended timeframe when the proposal will be developed by the applicants with support from mentors from the grants team. This will happen over emails and several rounds of online discussions. Selected applicants should be willing to work on this proposal with their mentor(s). The final proposals will be submitted to the grant selection team for consideration. Only the proposals that get selected at this final stage will qualify for the grant.