

## Job Vacancies:

### Seabird Surveyor & Tern Wardening Roles – Summer 2025

#### **Background**

BirdWatch Ireland is Ireland's largest conservation charity concerned with the protection of birds and biodiversity. A key part of our conservation work over many decades has been the protection and monitoring of nesting seabirds at a number of sites. Seabirds are important indicators of the health of our marine environment and so it is important that they are monitored for changes in populations, and that efforts are made to protect them and address pressures and threats that may impact their breeding success.

In recent decades, BirdWatch Ireland, largely funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), local authorities and EU funds such as LIFE and Interreg, has carried out detailed censuses of seabird islands, particularly those on the east coast. Similarly, largely under contract to NPWS and with the support of Dublin Port and County Councils, the protection and monitoring of nesting terns has long been a focus for BirdWatch Ireland at a number of east coast colonies and we have achieved great success in the conservation of species like Roseate, Common and Little Tern, in cooperation with NPWS and other bodies.

We are seeking to recruit for a number of seabird monitoring and tern wardening positions this summer, subject to successful funding applications and tender bids. An overview of each role is provided below.

#### **Rockabill Island Tern Warden**

'Rockabill' is situated around 7km off the coast of Skerries in north Dublin and consists of two small islands. The larger of the two hosts a lighthouse and associated buildings and gardens and is home to the largest Roseate Tern colony in Europe, as well as hundreds of pairs of nesting Common Terns, tens of pairs of Arctic Terns, a Kittiwake colony on the cliffs and a significant number of breeding Black Guillemots. Generally under contract to NPWS, BirdWatch Ireland have been employing wardens to protect and monitor the breeding Terns on Rockabill since the late 1980's and over that time have seen the Roseate tern population increase to over 10 times its size in 1989. There has been a similar increase in the Common Tern population, though it recently decreased again due to avian flu amongst other pressures.

There will be a small team of 2-3 wardens with assistance from BirdWatch Ireland staff and volunteers during key stages of the season. Wardens will be resident in the lighthouse keepers houses on the island from late April to early August, with basic facilities including gas cooker and limited electricity. The role of the wardens involves removal of vegetation, deployment of nestboxes, ring-reading, daily nest checks and data collection throughout the season of clutch sizes, hatching success, ringing and taking biometric measurements of chicks, and writing an end of season report.

### **Kilcoole Little Tern Warden**

Kilcoole beach in north Wicklow is the site of the largest Little Tern colony in Ireland, with 285 pairs nesting there in 2024, comprising over half the Irish population. Conservation of Little Terns at Kilcoole has been carried out since the mid-1980's by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and BirdWatch Ireland. In recent years there has been 24/7 protection of the colony, with wardens during the day tasked with preventing disturbance, locating and monitoring nests, ring-reading and deterring predators. Night wardens are responsible for predator control. This system of protection has been hugely successful in recent years and ringing efforts have shown that many Kilcoole birds have gone on to nest at other important Irish colonies, meaning the benefits have been felt at population level.

Day wardens begin set-up of the colony, including multiple layers of protective fencing, information signs and a large viewing hide, in late April. Once the first eggs are laid, they are observed on a daily basis throughout the season to monitor their progress and quickly identify any losses to predators. Hatching success is recorded and chicks are ringed for future identification. A variety of predators can threaten the colony and wardens must ensure a high level of vigilance to identify any threats or predation incidents. As well as the Little Terns, wardens monitor the breeding success of nesting Ringed Plover and Oystercatcher. Following the breeding season, data is compiled, and a detailed end of season report is written.

### **Seabird Surveyors**

We anticipate requiring a small team of 2-3 surveyors to census cliff-nesting and colonial seabirds on the east coast, including both offshore islands and mainland cliffs. Surveyors will be based on the mainland and required to travel to these sites on a daily basis to carry out census and productivity counts using binoculars and scopes according to standardised methodology to ensure data gathered is comparable with previous years. Surveyors will have to strictly abide by safe operating procedures and in some instances may have to use ropes and climbing equipment.

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### **Duration**

The start and end times of each position will vary, but most will run from late April to mid-August and possibly later.

### **Pay**

Salary and any other benefits may vary according to each position and will be determined following outcome of tender process.

## Requirements

The skills outlined below are desirable and the applicants should tailor their application forms to highlight their experience in these areas:

	Rockabill	Kilcoole	Seabird Surveyor
A degree in zoology or related discipline, or previous proven experience working on conservation projects.	Y	Y	Y
Ability to compile data, analyse results and write reports.	Y	Y	Y
Previous experience working at seabird colonies.	Y	Y	Y
Experience working in a close-knit team.	Y	Y	Y
Awareness of the conservation issues relating to Roseate and Common Terns, Little Terns and other seabird species.	Y	Y	Y
Experience carrying out bird or wildlife surveys according to standardised methodology.	Y	Y	Y
Bird ringing or bird handling experience	Y	Y	
Experience working safely on cliff-tops.	Y		Y
Experience working/living in remote locations.	Y		Y
Ability to erect and maintain electric fencing		Y	
Any additional outdoor qualifications e.g. climbing, powerboating, mountaineering etc.	Y	Y	Y

## How to Apply

[Please download and complete a BirdWatch Ireland application form here.](#)

Applicants who wish to apply for multiple positions should rank their order of preference.

**Closing date for applications: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 13:00. Interviews are likely to be conducted the following week.**

Applications, or queries, can be emailed to [recruitment@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:recruitment@birdwatchireland.ie)

Or posted to: BirdWatch Ireland (Recruitment), Unit 20, Block D, Bullford Business Campus, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow A63 RW83.

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*Please note that we expect to be advertising a range of other positions in the coming weeks, working with different species and on different projects. Please check the 'Jobs' section of the BirdWatch Ireland website for updates.*