



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Conservation Keeper, PeacePlus Nature

Division:	Conservation
Immediate Line Manager:	Conservation Project Manager, PeacePlus Nature
Location:	Co. Donegal
Vacancy type:	Full time
Start date:	November 2025
Hours:	Seasonally variable; overall average of 35 hours per week
Salary:	€42,000

Background

Established in 1968, BirdWatch Ireland is the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland with 15,000 members and 25 active branches at county level. Our aim is the conservation of wild birds and their natural habitats and other biodiversity. Our mission, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2024- 2030, is to be a strong and influential leader for nature conservation in Ireland, one that takes action based on the latest scientific data and supports and inspires people to get involved in environmental protection. We undertake bird surveys and monitoring, direct conservation action, engage in research and formulate and advocate policies related to the protection and management of birds and biodiversity. We also conduct important education work, manage nature reserves, and raise wider awareness of nature conservation in Ireland.

PeacePlus Nature is funded by PEACEPLUS, a programme supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the UK and Irish Governments and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It is a four-year multi-million-euro project focusing Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. It is a partnership of nine organisations, led by RSPB NI.

BirdWatch Ireland will be responsible for delivering the Donegal Wader Recovery Work Plan, which aims to protect and restore breeding wader populations in a NRN which comprises 35 sites, mostly in Co. Donegal, which holds an important proportion of Ireland's total resource of breeding waders. The project aims to conserve these populations through a range of conservation measures, including installation and maintenance of predator fences, direct predator control, population monitoring and habitat works. Working closely with other stakeholders will be a key element of the work, to ensure synergies of effort and conservation delivery.

We are seeking a very experienced individual, with a strong background in undertaking keeping activities to protect threatened ground nesting birds (hereafter termed Conservation Keeping) to lead on the delivery of key elements of the PeacePlus Nature Project.

The starting salary for this position is €42,000 per annum. Leave entitlement is 20 days per annum, plus statutory holidays.

Overview of the Role

BirdWatch Ireland is looking for a suitable person to undertake predator control in one of three areas in Donegal – likely to be West Donegal, Fanad or Inch. The location will be agreed with the successful candidate.

The Conservation Keeper position is a crucial element of PeacePlus Nature, which will initially involve gathering information and knowledge of the site before developing a site specific and tailored predator control programme. The post holder will work closely with the Conservation Project Manager to focus their efforts, with the aim of retaining and if possible, growing populations of breeding waders in the chosen area and thus contributing to the overall objectives of the project.

Although the annual average hours per week will be 35 hours, this will vary seasonally. It is expected that the candidate will work long, often irregular hours during the breeding season with late finishes and weekend work. We envisage a 45 - 50 hour/week during the breeding season months of March – July; this will be followed by a 25 - 30 hour/week during the non-breeding season months of August to February. There may be some flexibility around this.

Main duties and responsibilities

- The strategic and systematic control of unprotected predators in the chosen area of Donegal to assist in reducing the impact of nest and chick predation.
- The legal control and humane dispatching of predators namely Red Fox, American Mink, Hooded Crow and Magpie within an agreed buffer of the chosen site.
- Maintain a log and recording relevant information on keeping activities.
- Assist in the monitoring of bird populations.
- Assist the Conservation Project Manager in the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of predator proof fences.
- Assist with erecting and maintaining of temporary electric predator fences around nests as required.
- Build positive relationships with landowners. Explain the purpose of the work involved, gain access to lands and build a positive profile of the project.
- Build positive relationships with Donegal ACRES, Life on Machair, Corncrake Life and the Breeding Wader EIP, and assist the Conservation Project Manager to identify where landscape actions at sites within the network are required which are not being delivered by other projects.
- Deliver or partake in farmer training events and youth engagement events as required by the project.
- Support in delivering habitat management works.
- Partake in additional training which may be required by the project.
- Additional tasks as required by the project.

Essential experience

- A minimum of three years' experience in Conservation Keeping.
- A thorough knowledge of the legislative requirements relating to the control of predators in Ireland.
- Demonstrate a good knowledge of best practice in humane control.

- A good knowledge of Health and Safety in relation to safe use of firearms and the requirements of remote working.
- Knowledge of the breeding wader populations of Donegal and the factors affecting them.
- Demonstrable experience of good record keeping and data management.

Requirements

- A high level of literacy, numeracy, and professionalism.
- Applicants must have all relevant licences and insurances relevant to the role, including firearm licences (NPWS licences and consents will be applied for prior to commencement).
- Applicants must also have personal indemnity insurance and public liability insurance. Operatives will also be covered by BirdWatch Ireland personal and public liability insurance.
- A current full driving licence and access to own commercially insured transport.
- The candidate is responsible for the provision of their own suitable firearms and ammunition. The project expects as a minimum: a centrefire rifle, rimfire rifle and shotgun.
- The candidate is responsible for the provision of their own equipment including traps and other gear deemed appropriate to the role. The project may supply additional equipment as required if budgets allow.
- Ability to work weekends, evenings, and early mornings especially during the breeding season.

A completed application form should be emailed to dmoloney@birdwatchireland.ie by midday on 30/10/2025. You can also include a CV **together with a cover letter**, to provide more detail if required. Interviews are likely to be first week of November.
