



Job Description

Irish Bird Atlas Project Manager

Job title: Irish Bird Atlas Project Manager.

Department: Surveys & Monitoring.

Vacancy type: Fixed term contract with the possibility of extension subject to funding. A six-month probationary period will apply.

Place of work: This position can be based at BirdWatch Ireland HQ in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow or Midlands Office in Banagher, Co. Offaly. Options to work from home will also be considered.

Salary: €40,000 - €45,000 pro rata depending on experience.

Other benefits: Pension auto-enrolment in the government's My Future Fund pension scheme.

Contract term: October 2026 - October 2033.

Hours: 5 days per week. 35 hours. Some evening and weekend work will be essential.

Annual leave: Statutory annual leave of 20 days per annum.

Closing date for applications: September 11th 2026 at 17:00.

Start date: October 2026.

Interviews: Applicants who are deemed to be suitable for interview will be interviewed in person at BirdWatch Ireland Office (either Kilcoole Co. Wicklow or Banagher Co. Offaly) or online in the week starting September 21st 2026.

About BirdWatch Ireland:

BirdWatch Ireland is Ireland's leading non-governmental organisation focused on the conservation of wild birds and other biodiversity. Through survey and monitoring, on the ground conservation, advocacy, education and awareness raising, we are working to secure the futures of Ireland's birds and the habitats they need to thrive. We work in partnership with a range of organisations to achieve our goals. Our Surveys and Monitoring Team coordinates thousands of volunteer and professional scientists to track bird populations across Ireland. We design and manage nationwide survey programs, such as the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS) and Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS), to gather data on species distribution, abundance, and trends. BirdWatch Ireland is the BirdLife International partner in Ireland.

The Bird Atlas story:

Every twenty years since 1968, with our project partners (BTO and SOC), we have undertaken a complete stock-take of the wild birds of Britain and Ireland through a project which has harnessed the power of tens of thousands of volunteers - the Bird Atlas. Through Bird Atlas 2007–11 we used bird records provided by over 40,000 volunteers across Britain & Ireland over four years to produce updated information about the distribution and abundance of our birds throughout the year. By comparing data from different Atlas periods, we are able to detect changes in bird distributions and population trends - critical for understanding how factors like climate change, habitat loss, and human activities impact birds.

There has never been a more important time for identifying solutions to the big threats facing our natural world. Bird Atlases have an invaluable role to play in connecting people with nature and helping us gather the information we need to target conservation interventions most effectively. Our ambition is for Bird Atlas 2027–31 to be the most inclusive and impactful Atlas yet, with demonstrable step-changes in the diversity of people we engage and the real-world outcomes for birds.

About the role:

BirdWatch Ireland is seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated individual with excellent interpersonal skills and 3 years' experience in project management or similar role. They should also have good bird identification and survey experience, and a broad knowledge of Ireland's birds and habitats to lead organisation of the Bird Atlas 2027-31 across the Republic of Ireland.

The post holder will be responsible for the recruitment and management of a team of staff, contractors and volunteers. This will include three regional coordinators (funding dependant), contract field staff, a network of volunteer county organisers (typically with one or per county, where they can be recruited) and survey volunteers nationwide to achieve coverage in the winter and breeding season surveys for the Bird Atlas 2027-31. They will be the main point of contact for volunteers in the Republic of Ireland. They will also be responsible for ensuring consistent methodologies are utilised, leading an extensive surveyor recruitment and training campaign, identifying any gaps in coverage and ensuring data validation is completed.

Ideally, the post holder will have previous project management experience, to include experience of managing budgets, line-management experience, fundraising and reporting.

This role will sit on the Bird Atlas Steering Group (Britain & Ireland) which meets monthly and the Irish Bird Atlas Steering Group which will meet twice annually. Participation in other committees and working groups will be required. A close working relationship will be important with project partners, funding partners and other stakeholders, particularly the BTO Atlas Coordinator and Northern Ireland Organiser.

The post holder will play a key role in representing the Bird Atlas 2027-31 in Ireland. Working closely with the BirdWatch Ireland communications team, the role will involve giving talks, interviews and contributing to media coverage as needed.

This role will support the legacy and impact ambitions of the Bird Atlas 2027-31 by contributing to the production of the Bird Atlas. Working closely with project partners, the post-holder will contribute to the contents, structure and format of the final Atlas publication.

This is a full time, fixed term role and can be based at our HQ in Kilcoole Co Wicklow or Midlands Office in Banagher Co. Offaly. Hybrid working will also be considered.

Key responsibilities

1. Take overall responsibility for the project management and coordination of the Atlas in the Republic of Ireland, to ensure that an integrated and consistent approach is taken to the project. This will require a close working relationship with the Atlas Steering Group, Irish Atlas Steering Group, funding partners, lead partner (BTO), Country Organisers, and other partners and stakeholders.
2. Direct responsibility for organising Atlas coverage in the Republic of Ireland. This will require the recruitment and management of a staff of three regional organisers (dependent on funding); contract fieldworkers; a network of volunteer county organisers (typically with one or per county, where they can be recruited) and survey volunteers nationwide.
3. Lead on the recruitment and coordination of an extensive network of volunteers across Ireland. Volunteer coordination and training will be a central aspect of this role year-round.
4. Oversee the Bird Atlas project budget for the Republic of Ireland. This will include drafting annual projects budgets (with the Head of Surveys and Monitoring), monitoring project expenditure and working with the Head of Finance on financial reporting.
5. Assist the BirdWatch Ireland Senior Leadership Team with project fundraising. This may include delivering presentations to funders, writing grant applications and funding bids and project reporting/drawdowns.
6. Support the county organisers and other volunteers to fulfil coverage targets in all regions of the Republic of Ireland, working closely with BTO colleagues in Northern Ireland. Support the provision of volunteer training.
7. Ensure that quality of records is maintained for the entire Atlas by (a) ensuring that the methods are adhered to consistently, (b) that appropriate data checking procedures are in place, (c) liaison with local experts where necessary.
8. Be responsible for maintaining oversight of data collection, including the computerisation of any paper records, verification, handling of sensitive records and so on.
9. Input into methods for feedback of provisional results and coverage information, and on methods of final presentation of results. Maintain oversight of all feedback to volunteers across the Republic of Ireland.
10. Lead the establishment and ongoing coordination of the Irish Atlas Steering Group and report progress and all aspects of implementation to the Atlas Steering Group (Britain & Ireland), and to other committees as required.
11. Promote the Atlas through BirdWatch Ireland and other publications (e.g. Wings), websites, the press, radio and television interviews, and through talks to BirdWatch Ireland Branches, NPWS staff, Biodiversity Officers and at conferences. This will require close liaison with staff in the BirdWatch Ireland Communications Team.
13. Liaise with other surveys and data sources to mobilise records for inclusion, under the guidance of the Methodology Working Group.

14. Provide support to any local atlas projects underway in the Republic of Ireland.
15. Take a major role in developing the contents, structure and format of the final Atlas products and in preparing maps and text for those products.
16. May be required to carry out limited fieldwork, possibly requiring periods away from home.

Essential

- A good knowledge of Ireland's birds and habitats.
- A relevant university degree or equivalent qualifications and experience.
- At least 3 years' experience in a project management, or similar role.
- Project management experience including staff management, budget and reporting requirements.
- A strong proven ability to communicate effectively, both written and in person. This will include report-writing skills, letter-writing skills and the ability to influence a diverse range of people at all levels and including on social media.
- Ability to inspire and engage a variety of people to get involved with a demonstrable passion for birds and excellent interpersonal skills.
- Experience of volunteer management and the ability to understand, enthuse and motivate volunteers from a range of backgrounds, with differing learning styles.
- Excellent time management skills with the ability to prioritise multiple work streams and meet strict deadlines.
- Highly self-motivated with excellent organisational skills and ability to work independently for extended periods of time.
- Ability to build and maintain strong working relationships across teams internally and externally.
- Confidence to recruit and manage coordinators and contract fieldworkers and plan and deliver expeditions.
- Good electronic data management skills, including a good working knowledge of the standard Microsoft Office packages such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Ability to work as part of a team or independently.
- A current driving licence.
- Willingness to travel within Ireland and beyond where necessary.
- Willingness to work flexibly (some weekend and evening work will be essential).

Desirable skills:

- Experience of participating in previous bird atlas(es).
- Experience of training volunteers.
- Experience of writing social media content.
- Knowledge of GIS and/or querying relational databases.

How to apply

Please complete the application form available on the BirdWatch Ireland website. Please do not send CVs. Also please write a one-page max cover letter telling us why you're the best person for this role.

Completed application forms and cover letters should be sent by email to recruitment recruitment@birdwatchireland.ie

Closing date for applications: September 11th, 2026, at 17:00. Late applications will not be accepted.