



PhD Scholarship: Phillip Island bush stone-curlew reintroduction

Do you have a strong interest in conservation and translocation science? Would you like to obtain skills in GPS telemetry and wildlife research? We are seeking a dedicated, passionate, and high-quality PhD candidate to work with a team of ecologists that are delivering a major project to translocate bush-stone curlews to Phillip Island and beyond.

Background

Phillip Island (Millowl in the local Indigenous Bunurong language) in Victoria is a haven for the protection of native species. Phillip Island Nature Parks, in partnership with the Odonata Foundation, aim to support this unique environment and its community through threatened species reintroductions.

The bush stone-curlew is one of two species prioritised for reintroduction, with the primary aim being to establish a self-sustaining population, within the overarching goal of returning ecosystem functions to the woodlands. This population will be independent of localised threats that may be faced at other sites, aiding in the species' recovery in south-eastern Australia, and acting as a 'conservation ambassador' to improve the community's connection to nature and reverse the 'extinction of experience'.

Opportunity

We are seeking a highly motivated PhD candidate to conduct research in conjunction with a translocation program to establish a population of bush stone-curlews on Phillip Island. This is an exciting opportunity to conduct PhD research while working with scientists, park rangers, and Traditional Custodians on an important conservation initiative for one of Victoria's declining birds. The candidate will obtain skills in conservation fieldwork, GPS telemetry, spatial and statistical analyses, and multi-stakeholder engagement.



Research opportunities within the project include, but are not limited to:

- Designing and testing tactics (techniques capable of influencing post-release performance) to reintroduce bush stone-curlews in the absence of foxes but in the presence of feral cats and a human population.
- Comparing the post-release performance of captive-born birds and wild-caught birds, and exploring the genetic, demographic, and behavioural implications for metapopulation management.
- Exploring the potential role of dispersal for metapopulation connectivity between Phillip Island and mainland Victorian sites.

Further research will be identified by the candidate in consultation with their supervisory panel, Phillip Island Nature Parks, and Odonata Foundation.

Location

The candidate will be based at the Fenner School of Environment and Society at The Australian National University in Canberra, but with substantial periods spent in the field at Phillip Island, Mount Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre, and other field sites as needed.

Scholarship

The candidate would need to successfully apply for Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship in the April 2024 round (\$36,652 per annum for 3.5 years). On securing an RTP scholarship, the successful candidate would be offered an \$6,800 per annum top-up scholarship for three years.

Supervision

An expert supervisory panel will be appointed to support the successful candidate research. An operating budget will also be provided, but the successful candidate would be encouraged to apply for other funds to support their research.

To apply

Interested individuals are invited to submit an expression of interest to Professor Adrian Manning (adrian.manning@anu.edu.au) stating their interests and ideas for a proposal, detailing their experience in this field, and including their academic transcript(s) and CV.

Closing date: 29 March 2024

Contact:

Professor Adrian Manning

The Fenner School of Environment and Society,

The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: (02) 6125 5415

adrian.manning@anu.edu.au



**Australian
National
University**