Appointment of

Chief Executive Officer

July 2023
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Introduction

Introductory letter by Dr Mike Rands on behalf of the Council of Partners

Are you passionate about driving change and making a lasting impact? BirdLife International is an extraordinary conservation partnership of 120 national, grassroots NGOs united by a passion for birds and wider biodiversity. We are committed to action informed by science and a belief in working together locally, nationally and internationally for the conservation of all life on Earth.

Established 101 years ago, but having undergone serious evolution throughout its history, BirdLife has never been stronger or more effective. However, the threats facing birds and other biodiversity have never been greater; therefore BirdLife must deliver more action, innovation and collaboration to conserve and restore nature across the world, working with - and for - people.

If you are excited by our vision and strategy, believe in working through a partnership approach, and undaunted by the global challenges facing the natural world, I hope you will join us as the next CEO of BirdLife International. We need you, and I promise it will be a remarkable role in our unique, ambitious and highly dedicated community.

Dr Mike Rands
Chair, BirdLife International
BirdLife International

BirdLife International is a truly global partnership of environmental NGOs, national conservation organisations, all of whom share a common vision – to mobilise lasting, sustainable protection for the world’s birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity in general.

Together, we believe in a holistic approach to conservation – using the insight we gain from our rigorous studies on the health of the world’s bird species, to work for a world where nature and people live in harmony.

We are driven by our belief that local people, working for nature in their own communities, but connected and supported through our global partnership, are the key to sustaining all life on this planet.

Our world-class science guides us as we pinpoint and protect threatened bird species, which then helps us identify and conserve the most vital habitats for nature. We work to make human impacts kinder to the planet and to convince society to take positive action against climate change and biodiversity loss. As Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, the “godfather” of biodiversity said, “If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the environmental problems in the world.”

With a new and ambitious strategy reflecting our unique capacity, we believe we are well positioned to meet the planet’s urgent challenges with unparalleled global presence and scientific and conservation excellence and innovation. This is an incredible opportunity for a leader who has a passion for the natural world and wants to make an impact.
BirdLife International

How we work

BirdLife is a global family, a flock, covering all continents, landscapes and seascapes.

Our worldwide partnership of 120 conservation organisations are supported by staff in our global headquarters in Cambridge, and offices in Amman, Brussels, Dakar, Nairobi, Singapore, Suva, Sao Tome & Principe, Tokyo, and Quito.

BirdLife International Partnership

Our focus areas

Our work is strategically organised around Species, Sites, Systems and Society – linking birds and habitats, nature and people.

We take a critical look at the ways in which we consume our natural resources and the choices we make in areas such as finance, government policy, land management and our use of marine life.

In this way we can effectively tackle the underlying causes of the destruction of our planet, change our behaviour and our choices to ensure our children’s and grandchildren’s future.

- **Species:** We are committed to championing the long-term future for all bird species, and we are the global authority on their status and conservation through our leadership and management of the IUCN Red List for birds.

- **Sites:** To protect birds, we need to protect the places they live and travel through. We identify, document, and conserve over 13,000 Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), which form the core of a wider network of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

- **Systems:** On our planet, there is a specific set of human-caused systems which are driving the rapid destruction of our natural world. At BirdLife, we are determined to change these systems for the better, to make them work for people and nature.

- **Society:** As a Partnership, we act to engage, educate and mobilise the general public to support and be champions of nature. We push for a just and equitable society where we acknowledge that nature is fundamental to our well-being.
Strategy

We need to be bold, and we are. We need to be ambitious, and we are. We need to implement changes now, and we are doing so.

The natural world is in crisis. With the climate crisis accelerating at an unprecedented rate, and ecosystems worldwide on the verge of collapse, we are fast running out of time to save the natural world.

For millennia, birds have been winging their way across the globe and through our imaginations. They play a huge role in preserving our precious ecosystems and as such, all life on this planet. Birds control pests, clean up waste and spread seeds. Around 5% of the plants humans use for food or medicine are pollinated by birds.

And in addition to this critical environmental and economic importance, they also have enormous value culturally, artistically, and philosophically. The wings of birds and natural flight are and have always been one of humankind’s most powerful inspirations.

Yet, despite their importance, birds are declining at a shocking rate. One in eight birds species is now threatened with extinction.

BirdLife’s newly launched flagship *State of the World’s Birds* report paints the most concerning picture for the natural world yet, with nearly half of the world’s bird species now in decline.

Promisingly, despite the desperate state of the natural world, birds also provide a cause for optimism, showing that with effective conservation efforts, species can be saved, and nature can recover. Since 2013, 726 globally threatened bird species have directly benefited from work by the BirdLife Partnership.

With bold and scaled up action, we can save species and habitats, while also helping the people who live alongside them.

2022 saw the launch of our new strategy and our ambitious 10-year plan to tackle the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.
We are about birds, they are the best ambassadors for nature. So we need to keep them safe. BirdLife will champion a long-term future for all bird species, and act as the global authority on their status and conservation.

BirdLife will be a strong global network of sustainable, independent, national civil society conservation organisations that collaborate to achieve a nature-positive and carbon-neutral future.

We protect bird species by protecting where they live. BirdLife will identify, conserve and champion key sites for birds and biodiversity, and ensure they are effectively integrated into flyways, wider landscapes and seascapes.

BirdLife will also work beyond Species and Sites to address the systemic drivers of the biodiversity and climate crises, and promote a nature-positive and carbon-neutral world.

BirdLife will engage, influence and mobilise people to support conservation and contribute to a just, equitable rights-based society where nature is fundamental to our well-being.

BirdLife science continues as a prime source of evidence to influence and drive global conservation action.
BirdLife International

How we are structured

The BirdLife Global Council is BirdLife’s diverse and democratically elected governing body, with members from each of BirdLife’s six regions, executives of Partner organisations in those regions, chosen by the entire group of BirdLife Partner directors.

The International Secretariat has over 250 employees, with offices in Amman, Brussels, Cambridge, Dakar, Nairobi, Sao Tome & Principe, Singapore, Suva, Tokyo, and Quito.

Finances

The Secretariat has increased its income during 2022 with total income of £40.4 million compared to £24.3 million in 2021. This represents a significant growth in restricted income.

The Secretariat’s total expenditure has risen to £32.2 million in 2022 compared to £24.7 million in 2021. This enabled the organisation to deliver against its strategic objectives with 94% of its expenditure being spent on charitable activities.
Our values

As the BirdLife International Secretariat, we are committed to leading, coordinating and supporting the Partnership around the world according to the following values.

Act for nature
Birds are special. They give us a unique insight into the challenges nature faces and their beauty helps us connect people to nature. While birds are our entry point, and often our focus, our work encompasses all nature, and we take a whole systems approach.

Action through insight
We are the leading experts in bird science and conservation. We apply insights gained from the evidence to make informed decisions that drive practical and tangible solutions in conservation and policy.

The power of many
We support the largest Partnership for nature and believe that we are stronger together. Our network of independent grassroots organisations enables us to act locally while having impact globally. We build alliances with other like-minded organisations and individuals, engaging with civil society and through the Partnership with local communities to develop, drive and share conservation innovations.

Champions of change
The planet is in crisis, and we must take urgent action. We are leaders of change, and we welcome challenges, learn from experience and are ready to try new approaches. We stand up for nature and with the Partnership we bring about change by holding governments and other decision makers to account.

Diverse by nature
We celebrate the diversity of nature and each other. We are committed to creating a culture of mutual respect, where every voice is heard and individual differences, cultures, communities are valued. We believe that everyone can make a difference, and through our Partnership, we seek to provide a voice for those who would otherwise not be heard.
Job Description

The opportunity

Reporting to the BirdLife International Council, the Chief Executive Officer will provide vision, leadership, and guidance to BirdLife International as a worldwide Partnership, and be responsible for managing the BirdLife Secretariat. The Chief Executive Officer will be an ambitious, bold and passionate individual with strong credibility in global conservation, to influence, inspire, lead and build on the successes of BirdLife International to date, to help deliver its crucial objectives and bring about change on a global level.

You will bring a track record of strategic leadership experience gained in an internationally diverse and multi-stakeholder environment, bringing a deep understanding of the Global South. An empowering people leader, you will demonstrate an ability to lead by example, to motivate, support, and champion the global Partnership, as well as the diverse and professional Secretariat, to best deliver the BirdLife Strategy.

Bringing a high level of emotional intelligence and the ability to listen, you will have significant interpersonal and relationship building skills. With a deep commitment to the approach and values of BirdLife, you will bring a demonstrable ability to foster and facilitate collaboration at local, national, and international levels. An excellent communicator, you will bring the passion, authenticity and charisma required to both represent the BirdLife Partnership, our mission, and our work on the global stage, as well as to effectively engage with those at the grassroots. Bringing an excellent track record of influencing for impact, you will demonstrate significant experience of strategic fundraising, as well as personally securing funding from a range of donors internationally. You will bring experience of the international conservation eco-system, including familiarity with key international policy fora and stakeholders, as well as a deep appreciation of BirdLife’s science and evidence base and the credibility to be a compelling ambassador on behalf of BirdLife International.
Job Description

With a deep passion for the natural world, you will have an authentic commitment to BirdLife’s mission and the pursuit of global conservation.

You will bring positivity, energy, and vision, recognising the potential and ambition of this unique global Partnership, and the conviction to help us realise it.

Responsibilities

Our Chief Executive Officer will be specifically responsible for the following:

Strategy and leadership

• Lead BirdLife’s diverse and professional Secretariat and Global Leadership Team.
• Lead by example, across the BirdLife Partnership to deliver the new 10-year global strategy.
• Together with the Partners and Secretariat Global Leadership Team, oversee the implementation of BirdLife’s worldwide programmes to meet high ambitions and expectations, whilst assuring efficacy and quality assurance.
• Through personal expertise and passion, inspire, lead and collaborate with the BirdLife Global Leadership Team. Champion and model organisational values, provide guidance and support to nurture their direction, energy, capacity and capability to deliver the organisation’s goals.

BirdLife Partnership

• Champion, motivate and support the BirdLife Partnership in pursuance of global conservation of birds and other biodiversity goals.
• Lead, facilitate and support the Partnership in the development and implementation of BirdLife International strategies, policies, programmes and fundraising.
• Facilitate and support Partners working together with the BirdLife Secretariat on BirdLife’s conservation programmes.
Job Description

External representation

- Represent and promote BirdLife International with a range of global stakeholders, including but not limited to: BirdLife partners, other NGOs, policymakers, international media, donors, advisory councils and scientific community.
- Represent BirdLife International on selective boards, steering committees and other related groups or bodies as requested, to maximise its organisational objectives.
- Further enhance and build BirdLife’s reputation and awareness to deliver greater impact, reach and funding.
- Inspire and influence key stakeholders, mobilise partners and members, advocating for our position across sectors and geographies.

Fundraising and finance

- Develop opportunities to raise funding for the BirdLife Secretariat and wider Partnership.
- Partner with the Chief Development Officer and Development Team to build authentic relationships with key supporters and hit ambitious fundraising targets.
- Proactively develop and nurture relationships with specific prospective and existing funders and donors and lead on the cultivation of key funding relationships and income diversification.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are generated to support BirdLife’s ambitious plans, and that these are properly managed in line with regulatory requirements.
- Ensure the Secretariat is financially sustainable as set out in the current Business Plan, building appropriate financial reserves.

Governance

- Account to, support and service the BirdLife Council.
- Foster a good working relationship with the Council to discuss and inform on BirdLife’s high level progress, activities, risks, and opportunities, as well as engaging the Partnership.
- Enable and support effective management, policies and processes, governance and compliance to mitigate organisational risks.
Person Specification

This role offers a unique opportunity for someone with a genuine passion to lead the largest conservation partnership in the world, to bring about genuine change on a global scale.

Applications are encouraged from senior leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds, who can demonstrate experience against the following:

Skills, Experience and Knowledge

• Deep understanding and knowledge of international conservation and development issues.

• Demonstrable commitment to biodiversity conservation and credibility in engaging with specialists in the field. Prior knowledge of birds specifically is desirable.

• Capacity to work with governmental and inter-governmental institutions and familiarity with international environmental institutions and inter-governmental processes.

• Knowledge of workings, and prior experience of working within non-governmental (not for profit) organisations.

• High level capacity and demonstrable experience of setting vision, developing and implementing strategy and change management acumen.

• Relationship building skills to foster and facilitate collaboration at local, national and international levels.

• Experience with overseeing and managing (finances, people, and resources) towards the delivery of tangible results.

• A proven track record and an approach to leadership and partnership that inspires and motivates others; experience of building collaboration and impact through trust and influence.

• Excellent oral and written communication skills and prior experience of representing an organisation or issue to a wide range of audiences.
Person Specification

Key Attributes, Values and Personal Qualities

• A demonstrable commitment to BirdLife’s mission and values.

• A passion and energy for conservation with the ability to be a credible and impactful representative at this critical time for action and change.

• A respect for the science and evidence-base underpinning BirdLife’s programmes, policies and approach.

• A demonstrable commitment to the structure of BirdLife International’s Partnership and its approach through working with local people and organisations.

• An inspiring leader with integrity and a depth of cultural intelligence to work across an authentically global family of committed conservation organisations.

• A deep and genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion, as demonstrated in previous roles.

• An ability and willingness to travel both within the UK and internationally frequently, whilst working across global time zones.

• Fluency in English; a good knowledge of, and ability to work in other major languages would be an asset.

• A proven track record of success in relational fundraising from high-net-worth individuals, trusts, foundations and corporations (in partnership with a professional fundraising programme).

• Experience in audacious, multi-year and multi-million dollar campaigns is an asset.

• Exceptional senior management skills of people, finances and systems, with proven ability to empower, motivate, lead and develop people, in a complex and multi-cultural environment.

• The ability to influence through informed vision, political skill and networking.

• Ease in working with and relating to people from different cultures and diverse backgrounds.

• Track record of working globally, with the credibility to lead and influence in both the global South and the global North.

• Governance experience and an appreciation of how to engage and facilitate a global governance structure, including an elected representative council of international composition.

• The ability to lead organisational change and resolution of top level issues, to resolve conflicting priorities across the organisation, and to establish new areas of business and bring in new knowledge and skills.
How to apply

We are looking for people who are passionate about nature. Join our committed and diverse team and you will have the opportunity to play a part in creating a world where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably. If you want to make a difference and join the world’s largest nature conservation Partnership, then we would love to hear from you.

To apply, please submit a CV and covering letter, detailing how you fulfil the role description and personal specification to https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/ quoting reference 6645. The deadline for applications is 9am Monday 4th September 2023.

Though based at BirdLife International’s headquarters in Cambridge, UK, the role will require significant travel and communication across global time zones. As such, BirdLife International are willing to consider flexible working arrangements for candidates who can commit regular and significant amount of time in Cambridge. The salary is commensurate with the seniority of the appointment.

BirdLife is a registered business sponsor and is able to support relocation to the UK through the Skilled Worker Visa route.

For a conversation in confidence, please contact Principal Research Associate, George Hourmouzios, george.hourmouzios@perrettlaver.com.

Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, if you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via accessibility@perrettlaver.com.
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