

Birds of Prey Unit (BOPU) Senior Field Officer Vacancy

Purpose of the position:

The Birds of Prey Unit (BOPU) is committed to driving its conservation initiatives through applied research and robust scientific methodologies. This position aims to coordinate and lead the research and monitoring strategy of the EWT Birds of Prey Unit within the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), working closely with the BOPU Research and Monitoring Coordinator and Field Officer, as well as with APNR management, landowners, and other stakeholders.

The incumbent will strengthen BOPU's relationships with relevant research institutes, represent BOPU at the APNR AGM and other relevant meetings, contribute to the production of scientific publications, technical reports and annual reviews, and actively disseminate findings to support broader conservation goals.

Responsibilities and tasks:

Strategy & Planning

- Contribute to the implementation of the BOPU strategy within the APNR.
- Develop monthly, quarterly, and annual work plans for project activities.
- Identify priority research and monitoring needs to address current and emerging conservation challenges.

Research & Monitoring

- Oversee, implement, and strengthen existing and new BOPU research and monitoring programmes within the APNR.
- Identify and address critical knowledge gaps relating to threatened raptors, other priority large bird species, and their habitats.
- Enhance understanding of the ecological roles, population dynamics, and conservation needs of priority large bird species identified in the BOPU strategy.
- Establish baseline data and implement long-term monitoring programmes for threatened raptor populations.
- Work with EWT colleagues, universities, APNR management, and other partners to co-design, implement, and report on research and monitoring projects.
- Organise and participate in field data collection.
- Conduct data analysis and prepare scientific and technical reports.
- Maintain accurate project databases and ensure data quality.
- Ensure all required research permits, ethical approvals, and other authorisations are obtained before fieldwork commences.
- Contribute to the development of evidence-based conservation strategies and management recommendations for threatened birds of prey and other priority large bird species.

Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships

- Maintain effective communication with APNR management, project partners, landowners, researchers, and other stakeholders.
- Build, strengthen, and maintain strategic partnerships that support effective project implementation.
- Represent the EWT at relevant conservation meetings, workshops, and stakeholder forums, with the support of the BOPU Manager.
- Deliver presentations and posters at meetings, workshops, conferences, and other events as required.
- Promote a positive image of the EWT and maintain constructive working relationships with EWT staff at all levels.
- Provide excellent service to existing partners to strengthen relationships and identify new collaboration opportunities.

Fundraising, Communications & Outreach

- Assist with the development and fundraising of new research and conservation initiatives, including the BOPU intern programme in the APNR and surrounds.
- Support donor servicing and reporting requirements.
- Contribute to internal and external communications for the Birds of Prey Unit, including preparing popular articles, media releases, social media content, website content, newsletters, and other communication material as required.
- Assist with planning and implementing International Vulture Awareness Day (IVAD) and other education, outreach, and awareness activities.

Administration & Compliance

- Prepare and submit monthly reports, project progress reports, and workshop, meeting, and conference reports on time.
- Track project activities, budgets, travel claims, and expense reporting in a timely manner.
- Assist with general administrative duties, including processing claims and maintaining project records.
- Maintain a high standard of administrative practice.
- Participate in EWT Conservation Forum meetings and other organisational meetings as required.
- Adhere to all EWT policies, procedures, and the EWT Code of Ethics.

Essential requirements for the position:

Qualifications

- Applicants must have a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience in the ecology and field research of large birds in southern Africa.
- Must have a PhD in Ecology.
- Must have current SAVC authorisation to collect blood samples from large birds.

Research and publication experience

- Must have experience in collecting and analysing ecological data, and in leading the preparation and submission of manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals.
- Must have co-authored peer-reviewed publications on African bird species.
- Must have experience using camera traps, collecting behavioural data, analysing behavioural datasets, and working with large datasets.

Field and species expertise

- Must have experience monitoring the breeding of large birds.
- Must have experience handling, ringing, measuring, and collecting biological samples from large birds.

Regional knowledge and stakeholder engagement

- Must have a minimum of three years of experience working with the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR) management.

Practical requirements

- Expected to reside in Hoedspruit and be willing to undertake fieldwork within the APNR and work from the EWT's Hoedspruit office.
- Must have valid driver's licence and experience driving 4×4 vehicles.

Level of decision-making, including limitations:

This position falls under Band C3 in the EWT chosen grading system. Jobs in this grade are characterized by responsibility for a relatively complex body of either project work or significant operational areas where the organization relies on the judgment of the incumbent. The work is subject to supervision, but the incumbent may supervise others in the same area of work.

Incumbents in this grade contribute to the organization's strategic understanding of their area of expertise. Consequences of failure will impact internally and on the organization's external credibility. Reports to line manager (D or E), produces results against agreed targets. Initiates change to improve unit / project processes. Responsible for who, how and support by availing resources for organizational effectiveness.

Why work for us?

By working for one of the most effective conservation NGOs in the region, working for the EWT offers the opportunity for growth, personal satisfaction, and fulfilment. We are a highly congenial organisation focusing on staff empowerment, individual development, and building strong relationships. This position will be based in Hoedspruit. In line with EWT policies, we offer flexible working hours and arrangements, competitive salary and benefits (in line with our sector), and a chance to be part of a strong team of committed conservationists.

Applicants are requested to submit a CV and a detailed cover letter motivation as to how and why they would be the best possible candidate for this position. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted within 20 days of the closing date. The EWT reserves the right not to make an appointment. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence. **Closing date for applications 08 August 2026.** To apply please e-mail your CV to [Application link](#). Applicants who will not have heard from the Endangered Wildlife Trust **by 14 August 2026**, should consider their application unsuccessful.