

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR A 2024 SKUTCH RESEARCH GRANT

Applicants should submit their application as a single PDF using the following form <https://forms.gle/8ERXRVQesbHd7G6X8>.

The application must include a research proposal, the applicant's resume or CV (up to two pages), a single-page budget and a current and pending support statement and, for students, the supervising professor's confirmation of proposal review and approval. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Applicants are expected to submit proposals that are *largely*, if not completely, free of typos, missing words, etc. In addition, proposals must be consistently formatted throughout in terms of punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, etc. Be aware that shortcomings in this regard can be a red flag signaling either a lack of attention to detail, a degree of carelessness, and/or a lack of proper mentoring. Applicants should have their supervising professor or some other experienced individual review and proof a near-final draft of the application.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL - 3 pages

Format

- 3 pages maximum (not including Literature Cited, which should go on a single, separate page)
- margins must be a minimum of 0.75 inches/2 cm on all four sides
- single-space text in un-indented paragraphs; separate paragraphs with a minimum of 6 points of blank space
- all text should be left-justified only; do not right-justify
- use a Calibri font with a font size of 11 points or larger
- do not number pages
- any and all figures must be included within the 3-page proposal

Write using "active voice" rather than the "passive voice" (e.g. "I will erect 50 nest boxes..." rather than "50 nest boxes will be erected..."). The pronoun "we" can be used after indicating that others will be assisting with certain aspects of the study. Denote in general who the collaborating individuals will be (e.g., undergraduate assistants, your supervisor, volunteers, etc.); i.e., don't leave reviewers wondering who "we" is.

Only the **Title** of the proposal/project should appear in boldface at the top of the first page. Do not include your name or the name of your institution. Do not include an abstract or summary paragraph at the start.

Introduction

This section of the proposal should outline the purpose and objective(s) of the research. Applicants are reminded that Skutch grants support *question-driven* projects that add to our knowledge of the natural history, ecology, and/or conservation of birds living under natural conditions. If not explicitly stated, the question(s) that the research is designed to answer should be obvious. The Introduction should also make clear the project's significance, i.e., why it is worthwhile and hence worth funding. What interesting, important, and/or useful knowledge will be gained if the research is successful?

Methods

Applicants should consult the [AFO Research Guidelines](#) before writing this section. As noted in those guidelines, applicants are expected to briefly describe their experience with certain methodologies and/or the experience of the person who will provide training/mentoring in the field. This is especially the case with more advanced and/or invasive methodologies (e.g., mist-netting, blood-sampling, tracking using geolocators or transmitters, etc.).

If work has been done previously on this project or related project by the applicant or other individual, applicants may want to indicate this and state briefly what was learned and how this should enhance the success of the proposed work. If this project is new, note whether the intent is to start and complete the project in a single year (assuming adequate information is collected) or if this is the first year of an anticipated two-or-more-year study.

Where appropriate, indicate anticipated/target sample sizes. If data were collected previously, be sure to indicate the anticipated *total* sample size at the end of the project.

LITERATURE CITED - 1 page

If you cite publications, reports, etc. please provide full citations on one additional page in the style of *Journal of Field Ornithology* (<https://journal.afonet.org/>). When finished, check to make sure that citations are complete and properly formatted. Note that proposals will not be judged on the number of citations. Applicants should, however, cite enough relevant studies to support arguments regarding the significance of the project. Per the Research Guidelines, applicants may also want to cite studies confirming the efficacy of some of their proposed methodologies and/or the known impacts of those methodologies (or lack thereof) on individual birds or populations.

APPLICANT'S RESUME / CV - 2 pages

Provide a resume or curriculum vitae with relevant information regarding professional or other preparation for the project including education, work or volunteer experience, and output such as publications or presentations. You may use up to two pages. Do not include a photo.

BUDGET AND CURRENT/PENDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT INFORMATION - 1 page

On a single, separate page provide a budget for the proposed project. You do **not** need to specify exactly how you would use the Skutch grant money (i.e., on what budget line items). It will be assumed that, if received, the grant will be used in the most strategic way possible to support the research.

Below the budget, please list funding you have already secured and amounts, along with funding that has been, or will be, applied for.

A sample Budget and Support statement appears below. Applicants should convert amounts in their home currency to U.S. dollars using the current exchange rate.

Applications will not be ranked lower if the applicant has applied for, or will apply for, multiple grants even if the total amount of funding *applied for* may, along with funding already received, exceed the project's total budget. The AFO acknowledges the wisdom of hedging one's bets when attempting to secure funding for research.

You may request up to \$1,500 USD.

Sample Budget and Support Statement

Budget and Current/Pending Financial Support Statement

Applicant: Suzy Q. Troglophile

Research Project: *Effect of cattle overgrazing the forest understory on Red-rumped Wren reproductive success*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Itemized Cost</u>	<u>Total cost (US \$)</u>
Lumber/hardware for nest boxes	\$14/box x 30 boxes	\$420
Mist nets	3 @ \$69 each	\$207
Mist net poles	2 sets @ \$61 each	\$122
Banding pliers	2 pair @ \$84 each	\$168
Colored leg bands	200 @ \$0.50 each	\$100
Digital recorders for fieldnotes	2 @ \$45 each	\$90
Waterproof speakers for song playback	3 @ \$38 each	\$114
Portable digital scales	2 @ \$33 each	\$66
<u>Field station lodging – self + field assistant</u>	<u>75 nights @ \$25/night</u>	<u>\$1875</u>
*210 miles round trip		Total: \$3162

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Decision pending</u>
University of Belize Thesis Support Award	\$2000	
Aedon Lake Field Station Summer Scholarship	\$1500	
Central American Ornithological Society Research Grant		\$1250
Belize Natural History Society Grant		\$1400
AFO Skutch Research Grant		\$1500

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR APPROVAL STATEMENT

For students and other applicants who will be working under a research supervisor, the last page of the application should be a one-page document produced by the supervisor stating that they have reviewed, proofread, and approved of the research proposal that the applicant is submitting. This document should be signed and be on institution letterhead. An electronic image of the signature and of the statement is acceptable. See the suggested template below.

Recommended Template for Research Supervisor Approval Statement

Date:

To: AFO Grants Committee

From:

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and approved of the research proposal entitled " _____(proposal title) _____," with _____(applicant's name) _____ as the researcher.

Signed: _____

Typed name: