Gough Island Restoration Programme – Aviculturist

What the job is about…

About Gough Island

Gough Island in the South Atlantic is a 65km² volcanic island that is part of the Tristan da Cunha archipelago. Widely considered the most important seabird breeding site in the world, the intrinsic value of Gough’s unique seabirds helped gain it World Heritage Site status in 1995. There are 22 species of breeding seabirds on Gough – many endemic and threatened with global extinction. From the outside the island appears a birding paradise, the nesting site for millions of petrels, prions and albatross. However, invasive, non-native House mice are devastating these populations. Two of Gough Island's endemic species, the Tristan albatross and Gough bunting, are already critically endangered and heading for extinction, and populations of several other endangered seabirds, such as Atlantic petrels, sooty and Atlantic yellow-nosed albatrosses and MacGillivray’s prions, are suffering unsustainable nesting failure.

Gough itself is entirely uninhabited except for up to 10 South African meteorological station staff and researchers who work on the island in one-year rotations. The RSPB employs a team of three to carry out bird monitoring and invasive species survey work each year.

Living conditions on Gough are communal, meals are taken at set times in a communal dining area. Accommodation will be in shared dormitories either in the Gough Meteorological Station or in a Weatherhaven tent. Communications with the outside world are via satellite link for phones and internet. For much of the year there will be a chef provided by the RSPB who will cater for all meals. As Gough is extremely remote, it is not possible to leave the island at short notice. Departure will take place from Cape Town, South Africa, likely to be on a 25m expedition sailing ship. The voyage to Gough will take six to ten days dependent on sea conditions. The climate and terrain on Gough are challenging with high winds and heavy rain regular occurrences.

The community of Tristan Island are the closest community to Gough, 350km away. The RSPB has a 25-year history of conservation work with Tristan da Cunha, and almost 20 years on Gough. The Tristan community are the custodians of Gough Island and the RSPB’s key partner in the restoration project. They are vital to the success of the Gough Island Restoration Programme today and to sustaining its impact in the long-term.

The Gough Island Restoration Project

Our overarching vision of the Gough Island Restoration Programme is to save endangered species from extinction and restore the Natural Values of this World Heritage Site. This will be achieved by eradicating house mice from Gough Island and safeguarding the island from potential introductions of invasive non-native species.

The main threat to Gough’s wildlife is invasive non-native mice. The mice are thought to have arrived at Gough on sealers’ ships in the 19th Century, but it was not until the early 2000s that nest cameras first captured the mice preying on seabird chicks and eggs. Up to 8 mice have been seen attacking a single albatross chick, often returning for up to three nights before the chick eventually succumbs to its injuries. Of the 22 seabirds breeding on Gough, we know that 15 of them are affected by mouse predation. The situation is severe. We cannot stand by and allow these declines to continue, which is why the Gough Island Restoration Project was established.
The operation will take place over 2021, with the main eradication effort occurring from May to August. This will involve the spreading of rodenticide across the entire island. The Aviculture Team will deploy to Gough in February 2021, to capture land birds for holding in specially designed aviaries through to the end of the operational phase in August 2021. Some members of the team will then remain on the island to release birds according to strict protocols staying perhaps into early 2022.

The Gough Island Restoration is one of the most challenging island restorations ever undertaken. Saving two Critically Endangered birds from extinction and preventing the deaths of a huge number of seabird chicks every year, has the potential for significant, long-lasting conservation impact. This is a rare opportunity to be a part of the team that will secure the future of Gough Island and its unique biodiversity.

There is more information on the Gough Island Restoration Programme at www.goughisland.com and see The Gough Island Restoration Facebook page (@GoughIsland) for more about island life and the operations.

Aviculturist

The Aviculture Team will maintain and safeguard populations of the two endemic land birds (the Gough bunting and Gough moorhen) in captivity to ensure that the populations of both species remain viable and secure. Due to the remoteness of Gough’s location in the South Atlantic, plus its inaccessibility, unpredictable weather and challenging terrain, the creation and operation of the captive bird facilities brings many exciting challenges.

The key activities of the Aviculture Team are as follows:

- Prior to the arrival of the Eradication Team, the Aviculture Team will work with the Build Team to construct and prepare the temporary aviculture facilities and associated resources on Gough.
- The Aviculture Team will capture a large number of endemic Gough buntings and Gough moorhens, often from remote locations all over the island. These birds will be transported on foot and then installed in the captive facility. Towards the end of the bird capture period it is possible that the Aviculturists may be assisted around the island by helicopter.
- During the bait drop, the Aviculture Team will undertake the daily husbandry of the captive populations, including: food preparation, feeding, cleaning, providing veterinary care, aviary maintenance, mouse control and record-keeping.
- Following the degradation of the bait, the Aviculture Team will be responsible for the release of the buntings and moorhens. The birds will be taken to remote locations for release. Initially a trial cohort will be monitored intensively for one-month post-release, followed by the release of the remainder of the captive flock.

The Aviculturists will be key members of the Aviculture Team, whose role can be summarised as follows:

- The Aviculturist will carry out all elements and activities of the aviculture programme.
- As a member of the larger Gough Operational Team, the Aviculturist will be expected to participate in a range of other activities, including the maintenance of the Gough base.
- The Aviculturist will report to the Aviculture Team Lead and will also be supervised by the Senior Aviculturist. They will work very closely with members of the RSPB’s Overwintering Team already on Gough.

The ideal candidate will be able to cope with the above tasks and will be confident in remote and challenging field situations. They will also have a high awareness of safety issues and be comfortable living in close quarters to other people from a diverse range of cultures. Successful applicants will be highly driven, self-motivated, and be able to get along with other team members. They need to feel comfortable with the realities of an aerial baiting operation. We encourage people who bring additional skills as electricians, mechanics, carpentry, cooks, builders or experience with infrastructure and technology to apply, to be able to contribute to the maintenance and operation of the camp.

These roles will be vital in delivering the restoration of Gough Island – it is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to save species from extinction and leave a lasting conservation legacy. Are you up for the challenge?

May 2017
Who we are and what we do

The RSPB exists to give nature a home. We help our birds, other wildlife and natural places survive and thrive.

On our doorstep are woods and farmland, moors and marshes, cliffs and mountains. They are home to an astonishing array of precious but threatened wildlife. Every species is unique, but they are all connected to one another. And every one of them needs a home to survive.

Sadly, many of our best loved and most iconic species can’t find a welcome home here anymore. It’s our job to change this. A country that’s not home to skylarks and puffins, red squirrels and hedgehogs is not a country any of us want to live in.

To protect our threatened birds and other wildlife, we need to protect the places where they live. If we are taking care of nature, we are taking care of ourselves and future generations.

The RSPB in a nutshell

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB):

- Was formed in 1889 to counter the barbaric trade in bird plumes for women’s hats
- Has since grown into a world-leading wildlife conservation organization and now speak out for all birds and wildlife, tackling the problems which threaten our environment
- Has over a million members, including more than 200,000 youth members
- Has more than 2,000 active staff members and almost 18,000 volunteers, who donate more than a million hours of their time – that’s the equivalent of 600 full-time staff
- Has a NET income available for charitable purposes of £89.3 million
- Has more than 200 nature reserves covering 143,780 hectares and home to 80% of our rarest or most threatened bird species
- Has a UK headquarters, three national offices and eight regional offices
- Has a network of over 150 local groups and more than 150 youth groups
- Has an impressive global reach, with active projects and capacity building programmes in 26 countries and 10 UK Overseas Territories
- Is the UK partner and leading player, in Birdlife International
- Has the largest charity mail order operation in the UK, and also has the UK’s most successful charity credit card

Volunteers

Volunteers founded the RSPB 125 years ago and remain a vitally important part of the organization today; there are approximately nine volunteers for every paid member of staff

Our volunteers bring a unique range of skills and qualities to the RSPB, help stretch our scarce resources and keep us in touch with grass roots.
Our Strategy, Mission and Cultural Values

Our Strategy

Our vision: a world richer in nature
Imagine this. Wild birds and other wildlife will no longer be declining. Nature is restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people as a result. Such a world would guarantee that future generations have clean air and water, a stable climate, abundant and diverse wildlife, and a robust, diverse and sustainable economy.

Our long-term purpose: saving nature
We believe that:
- There is a moral imperative to save nature
- Nature is crucial for peoples quality of life and the planet’s life support systems
- Birds are an integral part of the web of life
- We are well placed to stand up for birds and all nature
- The challenge is great, we must work with others to succeed
- We need growing popular support

Our Mission

By 2020…
Our work is both urgent and important and we need to act now to make a difference. The world’s governments have committed to halting biodiversity loss by 2020 and we will challenge them, as well as businesses, civil society and ourselves, to take the steps necessary to reach this goal, and then go further.

Our Cultural Values

Our cultural values are the way we work with each other and partners:

Bold
We speak out honestly for what we believe in, aiming higher and pushing further for growth. We seek to provide innovative, fun and sociable ways for people to get involved

Focused
We identify where birds and wildlife are most under threat, then act decisively and with commitment to save them and deliver tangible results

Supportive
We support each other and our sector partners in order to flourish, and make sure our supporters receive reward and recognition for their contribution

Together
We work together for the biggest possible impact across the RSPB and with partners across the UK and globally
What we offer

The RSPB offer some great benefits to reward and support you while working with us.

Pay
We offer a competitive salary to attract and retain great people.

Flexible Working
We pride ourselves on being a flexible and supportive employer. We realise that our staff have demands on their time outside of work, and are open to requests to work flexibly. There are a range of options to support you such as flexitime, TOIL and parental leave. Depending on the circumstances, up to five paid days a year is offered for unexpected family emergencies, elective medical procedures and compassionate leave.

Annual leave
Our leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March. When you start you will receive 26 days' holiday, excluding public holidays (four days are taken during the RSPB's Christmas shutdown). This will increase to 28 days after three years' continuous service and 30 days after seven years' continuous service. Leave will be pro-rata for part time staff and where you start part way through the year.

Pension
The RSPB offers a defined contribution pension scheme to all UK based staff, with a matching employer contribution of up to 7%.

Life Assurance
All employees age 18 or over and under 75 are automatically covered for death in service benefit. A lump sum of five times basic salary at the date of the employee's death is paid to their beneficiaries or estate.

Maternity, paternity and adoption leave
To support your family life we have enhanced our legal obligations towards employees. We offer up to 12 weeks full salary to employees going on maternity or adoption leave, and up to two weeks on full salary to employees taking paternity leave.

Sickness Pay
If you become ill, you are supported by our enhanced Occupational Sick Pay Scheme. Your entitlement is determined by length of service but can be up to a maximum of 36 weeks for full-time staff. We also work closely with one of the UK's leading occupational health providers, to help you in returning to work.

Employee Assistance Scheme
All RSPB employees have free access to an Employee Assistance Programme provided by The Validium Group. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Staff Association
All employees are eligible to join our staff association. The RSPB set up the Staff Association to independently protect and promote the interests of staff. It is officially recognised by the Management Board and Council and is consulted on many key decisions. The Staff Association also negotiate member discounts on a wide variety of goods and services.

Learning and Development
The RSPB is committed to supporting all RSPB employees with quality learning and development opportunities. We offer a wide range of learning and development opportunities including our induction process, on-going training and e-
learning. We prioritise leadership and management which is key to people motivation and success. Our recent leadership programmes have received the Institute of Leadership and Management accreditation. The Learning and Development team’s focus and aim is to help both you and the organisation to succeed.

Volunteering
All employees are entitled to one extra day of paid leave each year to spend volunteering. This can be for any charity or voluntary organisation - not just the RSPB.

Sabbaticals
After five years' continuous service, and each five years thereafter, all employees are entitled to a 4-week sabbatical. This is a chance to take time out of your busy day-to-day job to do research, volunteer, learn a new skill or travel. Sabbaticals should have specific goals and objectives designed to benefit both you and the RSPB.

Childcare Vouchers
The Childcare Voucher Scheme is open to all employees who are parents or guardians and currently use childcare facilities. Employees can opt to receive part of their salary in childcare vouchers up to a maximum of £243 per month to use with a wide range of childcare providers. The amount received in vouchers is tax free.

Green loans
Employees can apply for an interest-free loan to buy a bicycle or a season ticket.

RSPB Nature Reserves and RSPB retail
Employees can visit any RSPB reserve free and can receive up to 20% off retail items in the RSPB’s shops.

Relocation
We are able to offer a limited amount of financial help towards relocation costs for employees, depending on the circumstances. We need the right people in the right place so offer financial help towards relocation costs for employees, depending on the circumstances. Whether you are a home owner or renting, we may be able to offer you assistance.

How we expect you to work

The RSPB has seven key competencies that are important to our organisation’s success. We expect all employees to demonstrate the following behaviours in everything that they do:

Direction:
You ensure you have a clear direction and sense of common purpose that guides what you do and how you approach your work.

Energy:
You bring energy and urgency to the RSPB to motivate people to do the best they can.

Capability:
You build your own and other people’s capabilities, directly and indirectly.

Relationships:
You communicate effectively and build productive internal and external relationships.

Change:
You support continuous improvement and change and constantly look for way to do things better.

Advocacy:
You act as an advocate for the RSPB.

Performance:
You get things done achieve ambitious goals and the RSPB’s aims.
Environmental Statement

We have a role to play in protecting our environment by being as ‘green’ as possible. As a conservation organisation, we know a healthy environment is critical for nature and that we need to lead by example. Through our environmental management system (EMAS), we have an Environmental Policy, objectives and targets which prioritises where we can do most. All staff members are asked to respect and adhere to our green principles.

Equality and Diversity at the RSPB

The RSPB is part of a global network that incorporates a diversity of traditions and cultures, and which represents different inheritances, backgrounds, influences, perspectives and experiences. A better understanding of people’s differences will help us to appreciate and value everyone’s contribution and recognise that we are all an integral and invaluable part of the RSPB.

Everyone has the right to be treated with consideration and respect. The RSPB is committed to achieving a truly inclusive environment for all, by developing better working relationships that release the full potential, creativity and productivity of each individual, and an atmosphere where everyone can learn, work and live free from prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence.

The RSPB aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, partners, clients, contractors, members and the general public are treated fairly. Unless it can be shown to be justified, this will be regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin), disability, medical status, age, religion or belief, political opinion, social or economic status, or ex-offender status.