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**PhD Scholarship monitoring the patterns of Ireland’s bird migrations using a network of coastal sites centred around Irish Lights’ island stations**

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for a 4 year, full-time, PhD scholarship in the School of Biology and Environmental Science at University College Dublin. This position is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

This is an exciting opportunity to undertake a PhD as part of larger research project examining natural heritage and dynamic transformation of heritage assets in offshore island settings. This EPA project, entitled LIGHTHOUSE (EPA Project #2025-NE-1297) is a collaboration of academics based at MIC, Queens Belfast (QUB), University College Dublin (UCD), working in partnership with the Commissioners of Irish Lights and National Parks and Wildlife Service, with additional external advice from colleagues in University College London and University of Exeter.

The PhD candidate will be based at UCD and will additionally spend a portion of their time based with the Commissioners of Irish Lights in Dublin. The candidate will work with a second PhD student based at MIC-UL and a postdoctoral researcher at QUB, and there will be training, fieldwork, optional teaching experience and travel opportunities. The supervisory team will consist of Dr Adam Kane (PI at UCD) and Dr David Tierney (NPWS). The project is also supported by a steering committee and a stakeholder advisory group.

**Living allowance (Stipend):** €25,000 per annum [tax-exempt scholarship award].

**University fees:**  4 years of fees are covered for EU and non-EU applicants.   
**Other funds:** Additional funds are available for a project laptop, open access publications as well as T&S for project meetings, fieldwork and conferences.

**Demonstrating:** It is the policy of the School of Biology and Environmental Science (SBES) at UCD that all postgraduate research students act as demonstrator in undergraduate practical classes. Remuneration is provided and the UCD HR pay rates can be found [here](https://www.ucd.ie/hr/pay/tutorsdemonstrators/)

Closing date for applications: 30th June

Online Interviews: Will take place in mid July

Start date: September 1st 2025 (or asap thereafter)

**Project Description:** This doctoral project will establish a national coastal passive acoustic monitoring programme for bird migration exploring the use of Irish Lights fixed and floating infrastructure thereby establishing an early warning system of climate effects The project will be centred around focus on six offshore islands and properties owned by the Commissioners of Irish Lights. You will address two questions:

1. Can historical records from island sites inform current conservation of migratory birds?
2. How do acoustic monitors on island sites perform in detecting changes in migratory patterns of birds?

Applications are invited for the above EPA funded Doctoral Scholarship. For additional project details please contact Dr. Adam Kane ([adam.kane@ucd.ie](mailto:adam.kane@ucd.ie)).

Candidates must have or expect to gain a First (1:1) or strong Upper Second class (2:1) BSc degree in ecology/ biology or a related field. Experience with fieldwork on birds would be advantageous. Other evidence that signifies suitability for the doctoral project will also be considered.

**Further reading**

Van Doren, B. M., Lostanlen, V., Cramer, A., Salamon, J., Dokter, A., Kelling, S., ... & Farnsworth, A. (2023). Automated acoustic monitoring captures timing and intensity of bird migration. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, *60*(3), 433-444.

**Essential Selection Criteria**

· BSc degree with Upper Second class (2:1), in Biology/ Ecology/ Environmental Sciences or a related subject

· Field skills

· Evidence of an ability to carry out independent research

· Highly self-motivated

· Excellent written and oral communication skills

· Ability to work independently and as part of a team

· High level of spoken and written English.

· Full, clean driving license

**Desirable Selection Criteria**

· Relevant MSc

· Experience working on islands

· Experience with machine learning

· GIS skills

· Knowledge of ornithology

· Experience with survey techniques especially acoustic recorders

To Apply for the Scholarship: Email a cover letter and CV with contact details for TWO references in one PDF File with your name to [adam.kane@ucd.ie](mailto:adam.kane@ucd.ie)

The cover letter should include the following information:

i) Academic Awards or Scholarships received

ii) Details of your previous research experience

iii) Personal statement on your motivation for pursuing a PhD on this research topic and why you are particularly suited to this doctoral research project.

iv) Please provide any other relevant information.

v) Full contact details for two academic references.