



## VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

# DARWIN'S FINCH MITIGATION VOLUNTEER



**SAVING SPECIES FROM EXTINCTION | [WWW.DURRELL.ORG](http://WWW.DURRELL.ORG)**

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**PATRON** HRH The Princess Royal **FOUNDER** Gerald Durrell, OBE, LHD **HONORARY DIRECTOR** Lee Durrell, MBE, PhD **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER** Lesley Dickie, PhD

# INTRODUCTION TO DURRELL

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is an international charity working to save species from extinction. Headquartered in Jersey in the Channel Islands, Durrell focuses on the most threatened species in the most threatened places.

Established by author and conservationist, Gerald Durrell, in 1959, Durrell delivers its conservation mission through our three integrated core areas of operation.



**A centre of excellence  
in animal husbandry,  
research, training and  
education**



**Training future  
conservation practitioners  
and monitoring and  
evaluating conservation  
science which underpins  
all Durrell activities**



**Conservation action  
where it is needed most**

With a track record of 60 years, Durrell leads some of the world's longest running and most successful species and habitat recovery programmes. The quality of our work is equally as important as how we deliver it. Our values, underpin how we approach our work and the work environment we create.



# OUR VALUES

## PURPOSEFUL

We are clear on why we do what we do, are connected as an organisation, we understand and demonstrate enabling / delivery, we are passionate about what we do and work tirelessly to achieve it.

## ACCOUNTABLE

We are accountable for our actions. we act with integrity and always have the best interests of the Trust at heart. We take it upon ourselves to update our knowledge and deliver excellence, and our ethics are of the utmost importance.

## SUPPORTIVE

We develop and encourage our staff, we work as a team, work well with other departments and trust and respect each other. We promote a learning culture, treat people fairly, encourage diversity in the workplace, and value the opinions and views of others.



# ROLE PURPOSE

The Floreana Island Ecological Restoration Project is an ambitious, multi-partner project to restore Floreana Island's ecosystem through community-based conservation and adaptive management. To achieve this the first stage to be undertaken is the eradication of invasive species (black rats (*Rattus rattus*), house mice (*Mus musculus*) and feral cats (*Felis catus*)) which threaten native endemic species and prevent future species reintroductions. This is scheduled to be undertaken in October 2023.

During the eradication operation on Floreana Island, there is a risk of significant non-target poisoning for five Galápagos endemic finch species – medium ground-finch (*Geospiza fortis*), small ground-finch (*Geospiza fuliginosa*), common cactus-finch (*Geospiza scandens*), small tree-finch (*Geospiza parvula*) and medium tree-finch (*Geospiza pauper*), which is endemic to the island and is assessed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Durrell's role during the eradication is to bring in and maintain safety populations of all five Darwin's finch species in two aviary complexes on Floreana Island to protect them from exposure to brodifacoum bait and the threat of primary and potentially secondary poisoning. After a successful eradication, the captive populations will be sufficient to re-establish viable populations of these five finch species in the wild, with 95% chance of recovery in the unlikely event of 100% mortality in the wild populations. Captive holding trials for all five species have been undertaken (2018-2021) and a Darwin's finch mitigation plan developed.

The mitigation component of the project will involve the capture (using mist nets, pre-baited sites, and call back), of c.800 individual finch's representing all five Darwin's finch species found on Floreana. There are two climatic zones on Floreana the cool and wet highlands and the hot and arid lowlands, with an aviary complex in each so that the species can be kept within their respective zones. Birds will start to be captured in May 2023 with release scheduled for January 2024

The role is largely an avicultural role with ongoing lab work and health management of the captive population. At the start of the mitigation (May-August 2023) and at the end (January 2024) there will be a component of field work. Due to the nature of the role and having birds in captivity volunteers will be expected to assist in a variety of activities and be willing to work abnormal hours and at weekends as required (average of 8 hours per day for 6 days per week). Volunteers will be working as part of a team with Galápagos National Parks staff. The island has a small population of around 100 people and English is not widely spoken.

We will be looking for several volunteers between May 2023 and January 2024 for a period of 3 months (length of temporary visa available to non-Ecuadorians). Ecuadorian volunteers will have the option to volunteer for longer.

Accommodation and subsistence costs on Floreana will be covered for the volunteer period along with national travel to and from Floreana. Volunteers would be expected to cover the cost of their international flights to Galápagos (limited support for some volunteers may be available).

## DARWIN'S FINCH MITIGATION VOLUNTEER

**DEPARTMENT**  
Field Programmes

**REPORTS TO**  
Floreana Mitigation Officer

**CONTRACT**  
Temporary up to 3 months

**LOCATION**  
Floreana, Galápagos Islands

# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assisting mist netting wild Darwin's finches using a mixture of pre-baiting and call back, taking and recording biometrics, safe and secure transport from the collection site to the aviary complex (May - September 2023).
- Assisting daily avicultural work including cleaning and disinfecting the aviaries, preparing feeds, recording data, behavioural observations, light maintenance, vegetation management and checking and setting live traps around the perimeter of the aviary.
- Assisting health management of the birds including collection and analysis of faecal and blood samples, diagnosis, and treatment of sick or injured birds and performing necropsies when necessary.
- Assist with record keeping and general upkeep of the aviaries, laboratory and equipment.
- Work with and liaise with the aviary managers and lead vet.



# KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ABILITY

- Captive husbandry experience, particularly with birds, highly beneficial (full training will be provided).
- Fieldwork experience and handling of wild animals highly beneficial. BTO (or equivalent) ringing licences would be highly desirable for June – September 2023 period.
- Ability and willingness to live and work in close proximity on a small remote island with limited resources.
- Ability to work as a part of a culturally diverse team.
- Able to integrate well and respect cultural differences.
- Willingness to work abnormal hours and at weekends as required.
- Some knowledge of Spanish would be beneficial.



# BEHAVIOURS

- Acts with integrity and with the best interests of the Trust at all times;
  - Passionate about conservation and an understanding of, and commitment to, Durrell's vision, mission and aims;
  - Culturally sensitive;
  - Positive and 'can do' attitude conducive to bringing people together and developing that global network;
  - Ability to carry out the role independently but also collaboratively with colleagues and partners;
  - Gets involved proactively and has a determination to reach targets and excel at tasks.
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# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

- This voluntary role would be an excellent opportunity for graduates with degrees in the biological sciences to gain much needed experience.
- Some previous experience of field work or other captive husbandry would be beneficial, but full training will be provided for the successful volunteers.
- We would be particularly interested in hearing from professional aviculturists wishing to fine tune their skills, gain experience of field aviculture in remote locations and experience in field conservation projects.
- We would also be particularly interested in hearing from qualified or final year veterinary students to assist with the project and the challenges associated with holding 800 birds in captivity.

## **Essential information before you apply for this role:**

- This is an unpaid voluntary role.
- Activities will take around 8 hours 6 days per week.
- Accommodation and food will be provided locally.
- International travel is not included.
- A visa will be required please check your eligibility - cost paid by volunteer
- Vaccinations may be required, and costs must be paid by volunteer.
- Florena is a small remote island in the Galapagos with around 100 people.
- English is not widely spoken.
- The climate will change depending on the time of year you are going.

Interviews will be ongoing from now so please register interest by emailing **[daniel.craven@durrell.org](mailto:daniel.craven@durrell.org)** with your cover letter and CV, if the team believe you may be able to help, we will contact you to schedule in a video call.