



African Golden Oriole in Fazao-Malfakassa National Park

Bird Biologists for Mist Net Project in Togo, West Africa

Contribute to an investigation of birds in the largest protected area in Togo, West Africa: Fazao-Malfakassa National Park, an [Important Bird Area](#) that remains poorly known to science! In collaboration with the University of Lomé, Togo, and Togo's Ministry of the Environment and protected area staff, the International Bird Conservation Partnership ([IBCP](#)) has been conducting bird research in Fazao-Malfakassa National Park since 2022, including expeditions in [2022](#), [2023](#), and 2024. In 2025, we will initiate the first study of birds in the park using constant-effort mist netting. This project will contribute to a future publication that will follow up the only previous [peer-reviewed publication](#) on birds in the park and inform [conservation outreach](#).

Our goals in this project are both to discover new baseline information on bird species and populations in the park as well as to investigate the impacts of human activities (e.g., hunting, logging, charcoal production, cattle grazing, and agriculture) on the conservation status of the park using birds as environmental indicators. This research will thus support efforts to understand, value, and protect the park and its wildlife, which includes Togo's last populations of critically endangered mammals including African forest elephants and white-thighed colobus as well as many rare, declining, and endangered birds including the Martial Eagle, Great Blue Turaco, and Northern Ground-Hornbill.

To this end, IBCP seeks two seasonal bird biologists to lead a mist net project investigating birds in tropical forests, riparian woodlands, and wooded savannas of Togo's Fazao-Malfakassa National Park. Applicants must have prior experience and advanced skills in mist netting and/or bird banding and safely handling birds, and should describe this experience and state the number and types of birds handled in their cover letter. Prior experience leading or assisting bird banding efforts through the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship ([MAPS](#)) program or similar efforts would be extremely helpful. French is the official language of Togo, and ideally, applicants will have some knowledge of French, although this is not absolutely necessary. Applicants with French proficiency or fluency will have a strong advantage and should indicate this in their cover letter. Prior experience working with birds or other wildlife in Africa or elsewhere in the tropics is also highly advantageous!

Fieldwork dates: ~25 February through May 31, 2025.

Responsibilities: Fieldwork will involve a team of two bird biologists working together to operate at least six mist net stations with the assistance of one or more Togolese biologists and a park ranger. Bird biologists will use the [Birds of Ghana](#) field guide (which includes the birds of Togo) to identify birds captured in mist nets, photographing and taking measurements of birds before releasing them at the site of capture. Biologists will also take habitat measurements using field tools including a spherical densiometer and tree DBH tape. Data will be recorded in field notebooks before being entered into a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. During the project, the biologists will train Togolese assistants, including a University of Lomé graduate student, in mist net operation and safe bird handling methods.

Compensation and related information: Bird biologists will receive a stipend of \$2400/month. Biologists should provide their own binoculars and field clothing, including good hiking boots. Flights and eligible travel expenses to Togo and the research site will be covered by the project, as will eligible field expenses during fieldwork. Travel in Togo will take place via a work vehicle operated by one of the Togolese biologists. Travel insurance that includes emergency health insurance (such as [this](#)) can also be reimbursed by the project. Fazao-Malfakassa National Park is a remote location and mist net station operation will involve tent camping (biologists can bring their own tent or use one provided by the project) and/or staying at one or more ranger stations in the park. Bird biologists will be provided with Togolese SIM cards but there is little cell phone network coverage in the interior of the park, so communication by phone may not be possible for days at a time. Weather conditions are tropical, with high temperatures and often very dry conditions during the field work period.

Requirements: Applicants must have a valid passport and have or obtain proof of yellow fever vaccination to enter Togo; other health and vaccination recommendations for Togo are available [here](#). Candidates must be in excellent physical and mental condition and be willing and able to work long days that begin before dawn, including in high heat and tropical conditions. Strong interpersonal skills, attention to detail, a strong work ethic, and a sense of humor are all indispensable for this position! Candidates must also be flexible, able to adapt to changing conditions and schedules, and passionate about birds and conservation. Selected applicants will be provided with additional information on Togo, travel requirements, and suggested items to bring. For the right candidates, this project promises to be an adventure of a lifetime and an opportunity to make a real difference for birds and conservation!

To apply: Please email a single PDF file (file name: YourLastName_Togo2025.pdf) that includes your cover letter, resume/CV, and contact information for at least two references, at least one of whom can describe your mist netting/bird banding skills. As we are seeking two biologists, candidates may indicate if they would like to be considered together with another applicant. Please email your application materials with the subject line "Togo Bird Biologist Application" to Nico Arcilla (email: [nico.arcilla\(at\)birdpartners.org](mailto:nico.arcilla@birdpartners.org)). Please contact Nico with any questions. Applications are due by January 13, 2025.