

## Field Assistant opportunity in Ornithology

Apr – July 2026, Finland



**Project leaders:** Dr. Clemens Küpper and Dr. Krisztina Kupán (Behavioural Genetics and Evolutionary Ecology Group, Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence, Germany) and the Dr. Kari Koivula and Dr. Veli-Matti Pakanen (University of Oulu, Finland)

### Project summary

We seek a highly motivated field assistant to support a **3-months field project** focusing on the ruff *Calidris pugnax* in the area of Lumijoki, Finland. The project aims to understand **basic behaviour ecology** of the ruffs, such as breeding behaviour and success, habitat use and movement **to improve conservational management** practices.

### Dates and location

- Work period: mid-April to mid-July 2026 (3 months)
- Location: Lumijoki (near Oulu), Finland
- Field sites: grazed coastal meadows which serve as important breeding habitats for many shorebird species including the ruff

### Main tasks

First half of the season:

- Daily **behavioural observations** on ruff leks: we collect data on presence/absence of males and females, mating ground activity, breeding behaviour
- Deploy and regularly check trail cameras
- Collect habitat data
- Assistance with bird captures

Second half of the season:

- **Nest searches, nest measurements and brood monitoring**
- Assistance with chick and female captures and ringing

Fieldworkers are also required to enter, manage, and quality-check data in regular intervals

### **Required skills**

- Basic fieldwork experience with birds - preferably shorebirds, e.g., using spotting scope, using handheld GPS device, basic species recognition
- Basic training in ecology and behaviour ecology (preferably Bachelor degree)
- Data handling in excel with high precision
- Fluent in English
- Good physical condition, ability to work in variable terrain and cold weather (the work will require long daily walks potentially in wet and cold circumstances)
- Strong teamwork and communication skills; ability to work independently after training
- Strong, ethically and environmentally responsible approach to working with threatened wildlife in the field
- Driver's license is an advantage

### **What we offer**

- Payment will depend on the level of previous experience
- Housing, travel costs by mini bus and petrol will be provided
- Working time: 6 days per week with shifting daily schedules
- Shared housing: field team will live in a fully equipped weekend house near the field site
- Vehicle: field team will have a mini bus available for transfer
- Employment eligibility: applicant must be authorized to work in Finland and must have a valid health insurance
- We provide binoculars and a spotting scope for the time of the fieldwork if needed

### **Provided trainings and benefits**

- Training for field observations and nest monitoring of shorebirds
- The work will provide incredible observations of wildlife and fascinating behaviour
- Experience with advanced fieldwork methodology, e.g. trail camera, spotting scope, thermal drone
- Opportunity to improve your knowledge in R and GitHub for data handling
- Be part of a great and enthusiastic team
- Fieldwork can be part of an ERASMUS internship for eligible EU applicants with student status

## **How to apply**

Applications should include:

- motivation letter
- a short CV including a list of previous field work experiences and skills
- contact information of 1-2 references

**Application deadline:** application review process will start from mid-January

**E-mail address** for application submission or for further questions:

[Krisztina.Kupan@bi.mpg.de](mailto:Krisztina.Kupan@bi.mpg.de)

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