

NOTE. By completing ONE application, you will be considered for ALL SCO awards

**APPLICATION TO THE SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS
FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT IN 2017**

Student Awards			
Applicant's Name:			
Applicant's Address:			
Telephone: (W) (H)		E-mail:	
Institutional Affiliation (if any):			
If student: Degree sought:		Date expected:	
Name of Supervisor:			
Title of Proposal:			
Amount Requested from SCO:			
Have you ever received a research award from the SCO?	Yes	No	
If Yes, list award and date received			
Are you currently a member of SCO?			
<i>(if not, you must submit a membership application along with your dues to the current SCO treasurer – information is available on the SCO web site – only current members of SCO will be considered for awards.)</i>			
Name and address of first individual from whom you have solicited a letter of recommendation:			
Referee's e-mail address:			
Referee's phone:		Date letter requested:	
Name and address of second individual from whom you have solicited a letter of recommendation:			
Referee's e-mail address:			
Referee's phone:		Date letter requested:	
Signature of Applicant	Date		
COMPLETE APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 15 FEBRUARY 2017			

GUIDELINES

How to Prepare the Application for the SCO Research Awards

INTRODUCTION:

Taverner Awards are offered by The Society of Canadian Ornithologists to honour Percy A. Taverner and to further his accomplishments in increasing the knowledge of Canadian birds through research, conservation and public education. The awards are aimed at people with limited or no access to major funding, regardless of professional status, who are undertaking ornithological work in Canada. **Two awards of up to \$2000 each are made annually.**

The **James L. Baillie Student Research Award** is open to any student conducting ornithological research at a Canadian university. It honours the memory of James L. Baillie and shall be for research that is consistent with the objectives of the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund. These are to support: studies of Canadian birds in their natural environment; projects which contribute to preservation of birds; and projects which disseminate knowledge of birds. The James L. Baillie Student Research Award is funded by Long Point Bird Observatory / Bird Studies Canada (BSC) from proceeds of the Great Canadian Birdathon, and is administered by The Society of Canadian Ornithologists. **A single award of up to \$1000 is made annually.**

The **Fred Cooke Student Award** is offered by the Bird Studies Canada to honour the contributions of Professor Fred Cooke to Canadian ornithology by supporting ornithological conference travel or research activities by a student at a Canadian university. The Award shall be open to any student conducting ornithological research at a Canadian university, except that previous recipients of the Award shall not be eligible. The Award shall be for travel to ornithological conferences at which the student will make a verbal or poster presentation, or research in any aspect of ornithology anywhere in the world. **A single award of up to \$1000 is made annually.**

A single application may be made for all awards, but only one award can be won by an applicant in a given year. After evaluation and ranking of all proposals, the Research Awards Committee will determine the appropriate fund source for the top proposals (i.e., it is not necessary for the applicant to indicate whether he or she is applying for a particular award). Taverner Awards are given only once for the same project; Baillie Awards only once to the same person. However, past winners of either award may apply for the other. Funds are not awarded for stipends. There is no restriction on an applicant's applying to or receiving awards from other funding organizations (e.g.: AOU, ABS, Sigma Xi, etc.), however, requests for funding from other sources must be indicated as instructed under Item 3 (below). If applicants are successful in obtaining funds from both the SCO and other sources, they are expected to notify the Chair of the Research Awards Committee.

Successful applicants for the Baillie Award must acknowledge support from The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Long Point Bird Observatory / Bird Studies Canada in scientific papers and other articles based on research funded by the award. Similarly, successful applicants for Taverner Awards and Fred Cooke Awards must acknowledge support from The Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada, respectively, in scientific papers and other articles based on the research funded by the Award. Successful applicants are required to submit an accounting of expenditures to the Chair of the Research Awards Committee by December 1 of the year in which the award was made. Successful applicants must also submit a brief (500 word) progress report on the project, suitable for posting on the SCO web site, to the Chair of the Research Awards Committee by March 1 of the year following receipt of the award.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION:

Successful applications are usually built around one, or a few, carefully defined, feasible, and clearly-delimited questions. The most common problems with applications are that the project is too broad and overly-ambitious, objectives are defined too loosely, and methods are stated too vaguely. Having one or two colleagues read and critique the proposal before its final revision may help to improve substantially its readability and overall quality.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria: significance and originality of the scientific question, clarity of the objectives, feasibility of the plan of research, appropriateness of the budget, and letters of recommendation. Other characteristics of a good proposal include necessary background information, alternative hypotheses (if appropriate) and relevant citations and figures. Enclosed with this application is a copy of the scoring sheet that committee members will use in evaluating the proposals.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

The applicant must request letters of recommendation from two individuals. If the applicant is a student, one advocate should be his or her supervisor. The applicant should give advocates a copy of the enclosed "Instructions to Advocates" and a copy of the applicant's complete proposal so that advocates can write meaningful letters of recommendation. A common, yet avoidable, problem is not giving advocates sufficient time to write a thorough and thoughtful letter. To expedite the application process, letters from advocates must be sent by e-mail to the Chair of the awards committee BEFORE or on the deadline date below.

SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE:

Send the completed application (and ensure letters of reference have been sent) directly to the current Chair of the Research Awards Committee, to be received via e-mail by **15 February 2017**. Material received after the due date will not be included in the application. Do not fax or mail any portion of the application to the Chair. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Note that this is the deadline for receipt of ALL materials (application and letters of recommendation) by e-mail. Applications that are received at least several days before the deadline are preferred.

AWARD NOTIFICATIONS:

Applicants will be notified by **15 May 2017** as to whether or not they have received an award.

REPORTING AND ACCOUNTING:

Successful applicants are required to submit a brief report summarizing their progress and accomplishments no later than 1 March of the year following receipt of an award. Successful applicants are also required to keep records and documents relating to their expenditures and to submit a statement of expenditures by 1 December of the year in which they received the award. These reports should be sent to the current Chair of the Research Awards Committee. Successful applicants are also requested to send the current Chair copies of any publications resulting from the funded project.

USE THE FOLLOWING FORMAT IN PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION:

A complete application consists of six parts, **SAVED AS A WORD OR PDF FILE**, as explained below.

1. Cover Page:

Use a copy of the enclosed form and type the required information. Remember to place your full name and date on the cover page.

2. Proposal Statement:

Type-written and double-spaced, **not exceeding five pages** with 2.6 cm top, bottom, and side margins. Font size should be no smaller than 12-point (10 characters per inch). Cite references in the text according to the author-date method (see "Instructions to Authors" in *The Auk*). Include the following in the body of the proposal:

- a) Abstract: About 150 words.
- b) Introduction: Clearly state the objectives, the purpose and goals of the project and, if applicable, what hypotheses and associated predictions are to be tested.
- c) Background information: Summarise relevant work by yourself and others, published or unpublished.
- d) Significance and uniqueness of your project.
- e) Methods and experimental design: Describe and carefully reference methodology to be used. Write this section for reviewers who may know little about the specific methodological details in your narrow field of investigation. If the project involves capturing, manipulating, or collecting animals, or otherwise requires permits, make it clear that you have obtained, or at least have initiated the process of securing the necessary permits, and that the project has been approved by the appropriate institutional Animal Care Committee. Any work that proposes to collect (kill) animals must be thoroughly justified, confirmed as necessary by the supervisor in his or her letter of recommendation, and performed according to provincial and federal permits.
- f) Timetable: Dates for completion of project phases, graduation (if applicable), and publication of results.
- g) Facilities: Describe the available facilities (specialized equipment, labs, study sites) required for the proposed project. State exactly the extent to which you have made arrangements for the use of facilities (e.g. "Dr. X at the University of Y has agreed to help me with the use of her sound analysis equipment during July, 2012").

- h) Literature cited: Cite references according to the format used in *The Auk*. (This section does not count as part of the five-page maximum.)
- i) Figures, legends, and tables: Use as necessary to clarify the text. (This section does not count as part of the five-page maximum.)

3. Budget:

Request what you need to do a good job. Be reasonable. Padded budgets and unjustified items may be a detriment to the application. Appropriate budget item requests include the following: essential research-related travel (e.g., to and from a study site); expendable supplies and equipment; living expenses in the field for the applicant, and, if essential, for field assistants. Requests for salaries for assistants are appropriate only if you can convince the committee that volunteers are unavailable. Inappropriate requests for budget items include: routine living expenses, stipend or salary for yourself, travel to meetings (except for the Cooke Award), supplies and overhead expenses normally provided by your institution, and most requests for permanent equipment (e.g. binoculars, scopes, camping equipment) unless these are to become property of the applicant's institution.

- a) List items: For each item, indicate clearly whether you are requesting it from the SCO or from another source. The budget list should be arranged according to actual and/or potential funding sources. You may need to indicate "Pending" for some items.
- b) Statement of justification and need: In some cases it may be necessary to explain briefly why you need certain items. All applicants should include a brief statement summarizing how the project may have to be modified if SCO funding is not granted.
- c) Multiple applications to granting agencies: Applicants may apply to additional agencies besides the SCO for funding the same research project, and even for the same item. Applicants must not, however, accept more than one award or grant for the same budget item.

4. Curriculum Vitae: Include education, employment history, papers presented at meetings and publications list. Restrict your CV to no more than two pages. Do not send reprints, thesis proposals, etc.

5. Score Sheet: Fill in your name and proposal title on the enclosed score sheet. Include a copy of this partially completed score sheet as the last page of your application.

6. Letters of Recommendation: Give a copy of the proposal and the "Instructions to Advocates for SCO Research Award Applicants" to your supervisor and one other referee. Letters of recommendation are due February 15, 2017. Only letters from the two designated advocates will be accepted; any additional letters will be discarded. Letters from advocates must be sent by E-mail, by the advocate, directly to the address below:

SEND YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA E-MAIL TO:

Colleen Barber

Chair, SCO-SOC Student Awards Committee

Department of Biology, Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS. B3H 3C3

E-mail colleen.barber@smu.ca

Phone (902) 496-8126

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: This application form is a modified version of the form used by the Research Awards Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union. The permission of the American Ornithologists' Union to adapt their application form and the cooperation of Paul J. DuBowy are gratefully acknowledged.

SCORE SHEET AND COMMENTS: SCO RESEARCH AWARDS 2017 Include this page as the <u>last</u> page of each copy of your proposal.						
Applicant's Name:	Reviewer's Name:					
Proposal Title:	Reviewer's Rank:					
Category	Possible Points	Earned				
Proposed Research						
Significance	15					
Originality	15					
Feasibility	15					
Presentation of Proposal (e.g.: clear objectives, citations, methods, and complete proposal)	30					
Budget Justification and Presentation	15					
Special Considerations (Includes letters of recommendation)	10					
COMMENTS:						
		TOTAL POINTS				
		RANK NUMBER	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;">of</td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		of	
	of					
Each evaluator will rank a subset of all of the proposals and send their ranked list to the committee chair; those highly ranked proposal will then be evaluated by all committee members to determine award winners. A rank number of 1 is best. If several proposals are tied for the same rank, then each will be assigned an "average" rank. For example, if there were 10 proposals, and four were tied for third place, then the ranking scores would be 1, 2, 4.5, 4.5, 4.5, 4.5, 7, 8, 9, 10. If an applicant is a student or close affiliate of an evaluator, then that evaluator will be excluded from the evaluation process for that application.						

INSTRUCTIONS TO ADVOCATES FOR SCO RESEARCH AWARD APPLICANTS

Your letter of recommendation for the applicant and his or her research project can significantly influence the decision of the SCO Research Awards Committee. Here are some suggestions to follow in preparing your letter that will facilitate the committee's task.

1. **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE APPLICANT.** Your thorough evaluation and specific comments on the applicant's ability to carry out the proposed research, and personal attributes relevant to completing the work successfully are the most significant contributions that you can make to help the committee in its evaluation of the application. Emphasize assets as well as liabilities. Be candid, and try to present a fair and balanced picture of the applicant's research qualifications. Blanket statements praising the applicant's general success in graduate school, for example, are of very little help. Comments on exactly which of the applicant's qualities will contribute to the success of the proposed project are valuable. To what extent is the applicant capable of persevering, of collecting and analyzing the data, and of making a final written presentation (e.g., for publication)?

2. **PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE AND FEASIBILITY.** The awards committee receives applications from a wide variety of disciplines, and it is not always easy to evaluate the relative merit of applications from widely-differing fields. Your letter of recommendation may include a paragraph or two summarizing the applicant's proposed research project if you believe that the committee is unlikely to be familiar with the proposed methodology or approach. A lengthy reiteration of what we already have before us in the form of the proposal itself is not necessary, however. Rather, comments on your interpretation of the project's significance and feasibility will be of greater value.

3. **EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATION AND COLLECTING BIRDS.** If the applicant proposes to manipulate or collect birds, the supervisor should provide a statement substantiating the necessity of such activities, and should confirm that necessary permits and approval of an institutional Animal Care Committee have been, or will be, obtained.

4. **PERSONAL CONTACT.** Briefly state the nature of the relationship between the applicant and yourself (e.g. graduate supervisor, instructor). How long have you known the applicant?

5. **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.** Your letter of recommendation will be confidential, of course. Further comments and questions can be directed to the committee chair.

6. **SUBMISSION OF LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.** Please send your letter by E-mail to the address listed below. The deadline for receipt of completed applications, including letters of recommendation, is **15 February 2017**. If you have concerns about sending a letter by E-mail, please contact the chair.

Send Letters of Recommendation VIA E-MAIL to:

Colleen Barber
Chair, SCO-SOC Student Awards Committee
Department of Biology, Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS. B3H 3C3
E-mail colleen.barber@smu.ca
Phone (902) 496-8126

APPLICANT NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSAL RECEIPT

Applicants normally will be notified via email (at the address given on the first page of the application) of receipt of their application and of whether or not both letters of reference have been received. If you do not receive notification within 10 days of mailing your application, contact the Chair of the Research Awards Committee immediately by email:

Colleen Barber
Chair, SCO-SOC Student Awards Committee
E-mail colleen.barber@smu.ca