



Fair Isle
Shetland
ZE29JU

www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk

Thank you for your interest in applying for work at Fair Isle Bird Observatory (FIBO). This document aims to give you full details of the role you have applied for as well as a brief introduction to the island. It is recommended that you carry out some further research into Fair Isle to help you get a full feel for the unique setting that you are applying to work in. Although the work can be tough and you will be required to show great flexibility and patience at times, there is no doubt that the rewards can be fantastic and the experiences you will gain if you are the successful applicant will stay with you for the rest of your life.

Background and the work of FIBO

Fair Isle is a small (approx. 5 x 3 km), remote island that lies approximately halfway between Orkney and mainland Shetland in northern Scotland. The island is owned by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and is famous for its spectacular coastal scenery, internationally important seabird populations, diverse marine and archaeological heritage, and as a thriving centre for local arts and crafts. Fair Isle is also well known for its history of recording rare vagrant birds to the UK.

There is a vibrant local community of around 55 residents and the island has a primary school, a shop and a resident nurse. Fair Isle is served by regular transport links (six days per week in summer) to mainland Shetland, by sea and air.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory (FIBO) is owned and run by Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, an independent, non-profit-making charity. FIBO was established in 1948 by the eminent Scottish ornithologist George Waterston. Its original aims – to carry out ornithological studies and research, to provide accommodation, interpretation and education for visitors, and to assist the economic well-being of the island – remain among its core objectives today.

The Observatory has recently been completely rebuilt, and is due to be ready for re-opening in early 2025. The Observatory will provide full board en-suite accommodation and facilities for up to 35 visitors, primarily through the season of April to early November.

The key ornithological work of the Observatory is the study of the breeding seabirds (currently undertaken as part of a JNCC contract) and the continued recording of migrant species (through daily census and ringing activities). FIBO staff also play an important part in ensuring visitors to the island are able to enjoy their visit to Fair Isle.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory
Ranger
Job Description

Position:	Ranger
Term of contract:	17th March to 31st October 2025
Salary:	£356 per week
Additional benefits:	Board and lodging (including laundry facilities and internet) provided free of charge, reasonable travel expenses paid to and from Fair Isle (travel by cheapest possible means, to be arranged in advance with Finance Director). A PPE allowance will also be provided.
Hours of work:	Workload is variable throughout the season. There will be some early starts and late finishes and the ability to be flexible is essential as the presence of birds, the weather and visitors all play a part in daily activities.
Holiday:	The holiday entitlement is 14 days. Dates must be agreed in advance with the Head of Ornithology.

Purpose of the Ranger role

Promote the wildlife and environmental attractions of Fair Isle and enable people to enjoy them by providing a programme of events throughout the main visitor season. To conduct biosecurity monitoring. To assist with daily census of migrant birds on Fair Isle as required

Ranger Service Funding

NatureScot provide funding towards the Ranger Service, although it is important to note that the Ranger is employed by FIBOT, not NatureScot. As part of the contract, FIBOT and NatureScot have agreed a work programme and it is vital that the targets contained in this are met. Achieving these targets and recording progress towards them is an important part of the Ranger's role.

Main Duties:

The Ranger role has a certain amount of flexibility and candidates are welcome to introduce ideas to the work programme, although it is important that the NatureScot contract targets are met.

The Ranger is expected to:

- Arrange events to suit the interests of visitors to Fair Isle. These should include regular guided walks (including evening walks to Puffin colonies), talks (in the Hall), activities for families with young children and ensuring that any visitors with limited mobility or other special considerations are catered for.
- Be responsible for maintaining and updating the information provided to visitors (at the airstrip, harbour and accommodation providers).
- Working with the other FIBOT staff to ensure that visitors and islanders are kept up to date with interesting sightings and arranging transport for these where possible.
- Liaise with the relevant islanders to arrange guided walks for visiting cruise ship passengers.
- Carry out biosecurity surveillance tasks according to the agreement with the National Trust for Scotland.
- Work with volunteers on a variety of practical tasks.
- Work with the Head teacher to plan and conduct environmental lessons for the pupils of Fair Isle Primary School (there are currently four pupils on the school roll).
- Liaise with the other FIBOT staff and islanders to help with Isle social events where necessary.
- Ensure that the Ranger Service is available to all potential users and investigate ways of promoting the service off the Isle.
- Investigate potential funding sources for the Ranger Service and liaise with Fair Isle Development Company and the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area group to identify potential crossover projects.
- Ensure the accurate recording of participation in events and regular reporting on progress towards NatureScot targets (including completing NatureScot evaluation forms).
- Assist in bird monitoring (daily census of migrant species, and seabird surveys) as required.

Requirements (Essential):

The post-holder must be comfortable dealing with the public (from serious birders to those developing their interest, or those keen to learn about knitting, archaeology or island life) and who is friendly, outgoing and happy to help people enjoy their visit to Fair Isle. Given the demands of the job, a patient, flexible and helpful approach is essential. A working knowledge of standard computer software such as Excel, Word etc, and ability to post FIBO updates on social media is also required.

The post-holder must be a capable birder, able to identify a wide range of bird species likely to occur on Fair Isle. They must also be knowledgeable about a wide range of other wildlife, particularly marine and coastal species, in a UK context.

Not everybody has been lucky enough to live somewhere like Fair Isle, but applicants must demonstrate that they have considered the challenges associated with living on a small island and show how they feel they will be able to deal with them.

Many tasks may be carried out alone, so the Ranger should be well motivated and capable of performing to targets without close supervision.

A degree of physical fitness is essential as the Ranger will be responsible for leading guided walks etc.

Requirements (Desirable):

- Experience of systematic census and survey work.
- Experience of working with the public.
- Experience of working as part of a small team.
- Experience of managing or working with volunteers.
- A current full driving licence for manual vehicles.

Working for the Observatory

Fair Isle Bird Observatory has been established for over 60 years, is a registered charity, and is administered by a board of Trustees. It is located on the small, remote island of Fair Isle, 24 miles south of Shetland.

1. Teamwork

Carrying out the work of the Observatory is a team effort. It is important to get on well with all staff, and every employee needs to be flexible in their approach. At certain times we may all have to turn our hands to tasks that are not part of our normal job.

2. Visitor relations

Tourism is very important to Fair Isle and FIBO operations are funded almost entirely by guests to the Bird Observatory. Visitor relations are therefore possibly the most important aspect of anything the FIBO team does. It is essential to be friendly and helpful to all visitors.

3. Relations with islanders

To carry out its work effectively, the Observatory is dependent on the goodwill of the islanders. They are friendly and easy to get to know, and it is absolutely crucial that all staff should continue to foster the existing goodwill. This is one of the reasons that the FIBO team help out in communal Isle events, such as baling and rounding up the hill sheep. Another reason is that they're good fun!

Accommodation (single room), three meals a day and use of a washing machine are provided for seasonal wardening staff at no cost. It is expected that all seasonal wardening staff will assist with any domestic duties as requested by the Head of Ornithology, and that they take the time to chat with Observatory guests at meal times, explaining the ornithological work of FIBO and answering any questions about the island.

All staff will be able to use the Observatory vehicles (provided they have a valid driving licence) for work, but personal use is not permitted.

Given the charitable status of the Observatory, travel expenses will be reimbursed on the assumption that staff travel by the cheapest means possible and are dependent on completion of the agreed contract. This will vary depending on where staff are travelling from in the UK, but travel from the mainland to Shetland and onwards to Fair Isle will be reimbursed according to the current price of a foot passenger travelling from Aberdeen to Lerwick on the Northlink ferry and the cost of the Good Shepherd ferry crossing to Fair Isle, irrespective of the means of transport actually chosen.

Please note: there is a no-smoking policy throughout all buildings owned and used by FIBO, including the use of e-cigarettes.

For more information on the Observatory and island you may want to look at the following websites: www.fairisle.org.uk and www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk