

Recruitment Information



Curator/Senior Curator, Birds

Curator/Senior Curator, Birds

£33,111 – £41,785 per annum plus membership of Civil Service pension scheme

Permanent
Full-time

Based at the National Museum of Scotland this permanent, full-time post will support the work of the Natural Sciences Department. The natural sciences collections comprise around 10 million specimens mostly from Scotland and Britain, but they are also worldwide in extent. The Department of Natural Sciences is divided into four sections: Earth Systems, Invertebrate Biology, Palaeobiology and Vertebrate Biology.

The Department's bird collections are part of the Vertebrate Biology section and comprise about 68,000 skins, 47,000 clutches of eggs, 7,000 skeletons and a smaller collection of spirit specimens and nests. The collection includes around 100 type specimens. Skins and eggs are mainly from Britain and the rest of the western Palaearctic, and important historical collections include those of E.V. Baxter & L.J. Rintoul, P.A. Clancey, W.E. Clarke, J.J. Dalgleish, L. Dufresne, H.W. Feilden & J.A. Harvie-Brown, J.H. McNeile, D.A. Ratcliffe, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition and J.I.S. Whitaker. We continue to receive modern specimens, which are prepared as skins and skeletons by in-house preparators. Eggs are also collected, principally as infertile eggs from raptor groups in Scotland. We have important series of aged and sexed skeletons, which have been acquired as a result of oil spills, e.g., *Braer* and *Sea Empress*, or natural casualties, e.g., common buzzard *Buteo buteo*. We have been collecting tissue samples from bird specimens for the last 25 years and these are now curated in our biobank, which was established in 2018 and contains around 10,000 samples from vertebrate taxa.

We welcome applications from potential candidates with a demonstrable specialism in any relevant aspect of ornithology, a track record of delivery in research, and a wide knowledge of bird taxonomy. Desirable expertise might include knowledge of the use of museum bird collections in a wide variety of research including molecular studies. Your strategic collecting will continue to build the collections and you will be able to demonstrate an awareness of current research on and conservation of birds. You will contribute to the wider activities of the section and the department, and support and participate in public engagement activities and exhibitions.

Candidates will have a degree/postgraduate qualification (or equivalent) in a relevant subject area, such as zoology, plus proven relevant work experience in a museum or similar environment. A doctoral degree in a relevant subject will be an advantage. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate best practice in collections management. You should be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the study and communication of birds. To this end you should be an excellent communicator with some evidence of research and good presentational skills. You will be a team worker, able to plan and organise your own workload, manage projects, and build relationships within and outwith National Museums Scotland. Equally essential are ICT skills in Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel and Outlook together with knowledge of collections management databases.



You are not required to identify if you wish to apply for Curator or Senior Curator, as the final decision will be made after shortlisting and selection event based on qualifications and experience.

You are provided with a job description and person specification for further detail about the post. To apply visit www.nms.ac.uk.

The closing date for completed applications is **Sunday 26 March** at midnight.

Please state reference number **NMS22/47**

It is anticipated that the selection event will take place online on **Friday 14 April**.

Please note that CVs are not considered as part of applications and will not be forwarded to the shortlisting process.

Find out more about [National Museums Scotland](http://www.nms.ac.uk) and our range of [employee benefits](#). National Museums Scotland is committed to being an Equal Opportunities Employer. We are keen that our workforce profile reflects the diversity of our visitors and audiences. Therefore, all jobs at National Museums Scotland are open to everyone and we encourage applicants from all backgrounds, irrespective of sex, gender identity, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. We welcome candidates who think they have the required skills and can make a contribution in this key role.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Curator of Birds		
Department: Natural Sciences	Section: Vertebrate Biology	
Directorate: Collections	Grade: 4	Hours: 37 (net)
<p>Purpose of Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be responsible for the curation and development of the bird collections, in line with National Museums' objectives ▪ To develop specialist knowledge, including research activity, about the bird collections and promote the widest possible access to them, in line with National Museums' objectives 		
<p>Key Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be responsible for the curation of the bird collections, aiming to achieve best practice in line with National Museums' policies and procedures. This covers activities relating to acquisitions, loans, collections care and documentation ▪ Support and advise the Head of Section ▪ Articulate collection requirements and implications for forward planning ▪ Enable public access to the bird collections through dealing with enquiries and visitors, and organising study visits / conferences ▪ Represent National Museums and the bird collections in the academic and cultural sectors as required, and give professional advice ▪ Develop and contribute to projects using the bird collections, such as exhibitions and preparation of material for publications and educational activities ▪ Contribute to outreach activities, such as National Programmes of National Museums ▪ Contribute to Learning & Engagement activities to reach a wide variety of audiences ▪ Undertake, as required, digitisation projects in line with National Museums' plans ▪ Develop, through an agreed programme of research and its dissemination, increased specialist knowledge of the bird collections and ornithology to improve understanding of the collections among a wide audience 		

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop knowledge of potential funding sources and develop funding bids for further approval
- Supervise volunteers supporting curatorial work, to ensure their contribution is focused and recognised
- Ensure compliance with legislative frameworks (e.g., health & safety) and any special requirements of the collection (e.g., toxic chemicals), in liaison with the line manager and other National Museums' staff
- Commit to good health & safety and access practice and ensure familiarity with National Museums' health & safety and access policies, procedures and guidelines

Expected Outcomes:

- Contribution to curatorial and management activities
- Extended knowledge of the bird collections and ornithology
- Knowledge applied and disseminated in research and public programmes
- Management of collections in line with National Museums' standards
- Effective management of staff and volunteers as required

Reports To:

Head of Section

Facts and Figures:

Budget: On occasion delegated responsibility - also responsible for seeking and drafting external funding bids

Staff Managed: Volunteers and contractors

Indirect Staff Managed:

Other: Responsibility for a section of the national collections of birds of historical importance, financial value, and scholarly significance

Thinking Skills (Judgement / Decisions Made):

- Judgement and interpretation of specified collections to analyse their strengths, care requirements, context, potential development and / or research direction

Thinking Skills (Judgement / Decisions Made) cont:

- Knowledge of external context to inform daily work and subsequent recommendations (e.g., where / how to publish? Whom to borrow from? Why acquire? Who might fund?)
- Application of National Museums' collections management policies and procedures
- Communication and organising skills, internal and external
- Recognition of issues which require upward referral

Communication and Contact:

Internal:

- Line manager, head of department and other curators
- Collections Management department
- Conservation & Analytical Research department
- Director of Collections
- Exhibitions & Displays department
- Learning & Engagement department
- Estates department
- Facilities Management department
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External:

- Visitors and enquirers
- Other museums and related organisations
- Potential sponsors, donors and vendors
- Borrowers and lenders
- Volunteers

Most Challenging Parts of the Job:

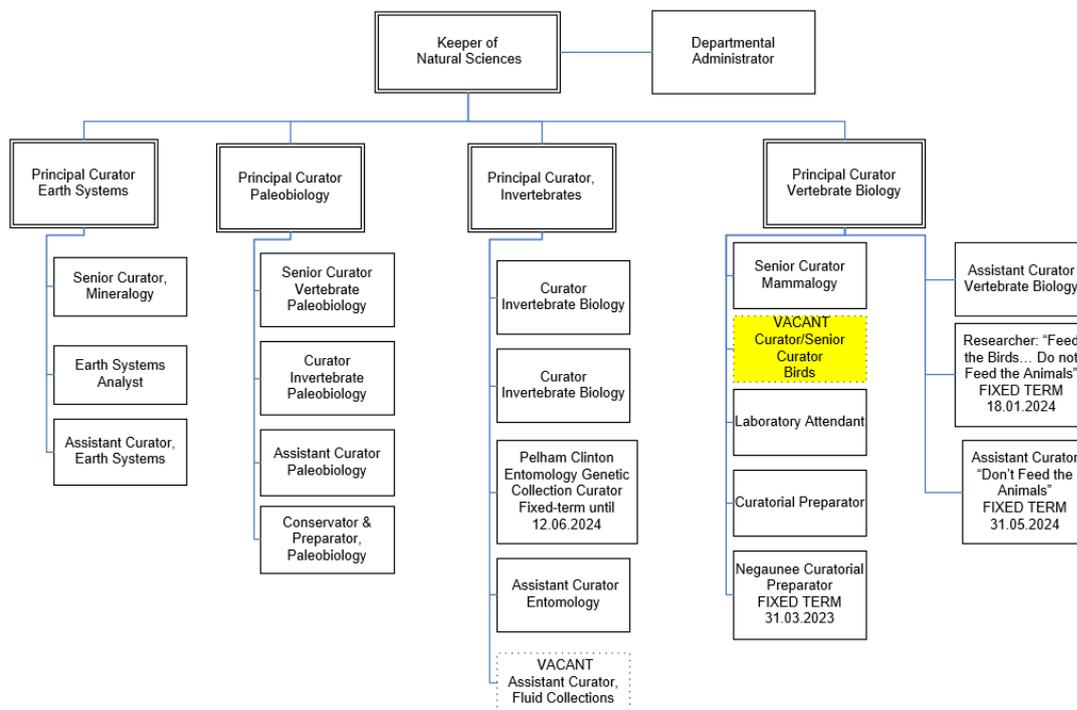
- To manage multiple priorities

- To manage the bird collections, extend their accessibility, and develop further specialist knowledge
- To resolve problems and develop solutions within National Museums' guidelines

Other Requirements, e.g. Multi-site Working, On Call, etc:

Must be willing to travel as the duties require, e.g., other National Museums' sites, courier duties, fieldwork, or as a representative of National Museums to external bodies

Organisational Chart:



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Curator of Birds		
Department: Natural Sciences	Section: Vertebrate Biology	
Directorate: Collections	Grade: 4	Hours: 37 (net)
Knowledge	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
A relevant first degree, or equivalent experience in zoology or biological sciences or similar	Essential	Certificate
Developed knowledge of and enthusiasm about bird collections and / or ornithology	Essential	Application / Selection Event
Knowledge of and commitment to best practice standards in collections management	Essential	Selection Event
Postgraduate qualification in Museums Studies, Heritage Management or equivalent	Desirable	Certificate
Knowledge of potential health & safety issues relevant to the specialist area	Desirable	Selection Event
Understanding of database application to museum or similar collections	Desirable	Application
Skills	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
ICT skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and databases	Essential	Application / Certificate
Driving licence	Desirable	Licence

Experience	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
Proven relevant experience in museum or similar environment	Essential	Application
Experience of undertaking research	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Experience of dealing with public enquiries and visitors	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Some experience of preparing and presenting material for public presentation in lectures, exhibitions or publication	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Experience of database application to museum or similar collections	Desirable	Application
Experience of supervising volunteers	Desirable	Application / Selection Event

National Museums Scotland has a Competency Framework with six competencies. Individuals for this job are expected to demonstrate competence in all six; these will be assessed from the Application Form, and, if you are invited to attend, at the Selection Event.

Competency	Level	Detail
Building Relationships Works effectively and professionally as part of their team and co-operates with others across the organisation; collaborates and networks externally for specific outcomes and projects; forms partnerships, nationally and internationally for mutual benefit.	2	Collaborates with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands other National Museums Scotland departments and priorities and how these relate to their own area of work. • Promotes and raises awareness of own role and department, internally or externally. • Encourages co-operation between, people, departments, sites and directorates. • Considers and sees different perspectives on issues, between people, across departments or organisations for mutual benefit.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with external stakeholders and organisations to deliver our objectives.
Competency	Level	Detail
<p>Communications & Engaging</p> <p>Uses communication and interpersonal skills flexibly across all channels of communication, to engage, influence, persuade and negotiate ensuring a shared understanding and commitment to act.</p>	2	<p>Engages and Influences others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates regularly, accurately, timely and appropriately. • Facilitates two – way communication, encouraging dialogue and exchange both throughout and outwith the organisation. • Adapts own style of communication to suit different people’s needs. • Demonstrates empathy and understanding in all communications. • Confidently influences others, rather than manipulating or imposing ideas.
<p>Focussing on your Customers</p> <p>Places the customer at the heart of what they do, engages, listens and responds to deliver exemplary service, creating an outstanding experience; supporting a culture of service excellence, both internally and externally.</p>	2	<p>Is proactive in understanding customer needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests and receives feedback from customers in a constructive and positive way. • Anticipates customer concerns and reactions; and pre-empts these by addressing them upfront • Is able to assess quickly what a customer wants and gets straight to their needs. • Offers a ‘bespoke’ service and solution to the customer, meeting any special requirements. • Responds, calmly, tactfully and firmly when dealing with difficult situations to resolve the issue.
<p>Improving & Innovating</p> <p>Builds personal, professional and organisational capability by keeping up-to-date, being creative, sharing ideas, taking risks, looking inside and out to continuously improve National Museums Scotland.</p>	2	<p>Seeks opportunities to continuously improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seizes opportunities and acts quickly before they are lost. • Thinks creatively and solves problems collaboratively • Facilitates and plans in opportunities for staff and stakeholders to contribute their ideas and suggestions. • Accesses networking and expert groups, benchmarks other organisations. • Maintains and shares a network of useful external contacts to facilitate learning and idea generation

Competency	Level	Detail
<p>Leading & Managing</p> <p>Sets direction and standards to drive individual, team and organisational performance by involving, supporting, developing and enabling staff and others to effectively contribute to the present and the future of National Museums Scotland.</p>	1	<p>Manages tasks and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates work based on knowledge, skills and available time and resources, providing clear instructions and specifications. • Recognises the achievement and performance of others and gives them credit. • Provides others with regular feedback and coaches in a constructive manner. • Motivates by making people feel valued and important in interactions and by celebrating successes. • Encourages an open, safe and approachable environment by listening and not judging.
<p>Planning for Success</p> <p>Ensures effective delivery and completion by realistically planning and prioritising tasks and managing workload; develops and manages plans, programmes and projects, in consultation with stakeholders and within existing priorities, people resources and budgets.</p>	2	<p>Develops and implements plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and implements plans for delivery, building in flexibility to cope with last minute demands. • Takes into consideration the impact of actions and decisions on others and puts in place measures to minimise them. • Consults with relevant stakeholders to ensure the output, the outcome and the plan to meet their needs. • Prioritises own workload to meet conflicting demands. • Thinks ahead to identify potential obstacles and proactively solves issues to minimise the impact on delivery.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Senior Curator of Birds		
Department: Natural Sciences	Section: Vertebrate Biology	
Directorate: Collections	Grade: 3	Hours: 37 (net)
<p>Purpose of Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be responsible for the curation and development of the bird collections, in line with National Museums' objectives ▪ To develop specialist knowledge, including research activity, about the bird collections and enable the widest possible access to them, in line with National Museums' objectives ▪ To manage resources 		
<p>Key Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be responsible for the curation of the bird collections, aiming to achieve best practice in line with National Museums' policies and procedures. This covers activities relating to acquisitions, loans, collections care and documentation ▪ Support and advise the Head of Section ▪ Articulate collection requirements and implications for forward planning ▪ Take delegated responsibility as required for projects with staff and budget responsibilities ▪ Enable public access to the collections through dealing with enquiries and visitors, and organising study visits / conferences ▪ Represent National Museums and the collections in the academic and cultural sectors as required, and give professional advice ▪ Develop and contribute to projects using the collections, such as exhibitions and preparation of material for publications and educational activities ▪ Contribute to outreach activities such as National Programmes of National Museums ▪ Contribute to lifelong learning, such as Learning & Programmes activities, to reach a wide variety of audiences 		

Key Responsibilities cont:

- Undertake, as required, digitisation projects in line with National Museums' plans
- Develop, through an agreed programme of research and its dissemination, increased specialist knowledge of the bird collections and ornithology to improve understanding of the collections among a wide audience
- Develop knowledge of potential funding sources and develop funding bids for further approval
- Supervise volunteers supporting curatorial work, to ensure their contribution is focused and recognised
- Ensure compliance with legislative frameworks (e.g., health & safety) and any special requirements of the collections (e.g., toxic chemicals), in liaison with the line manager and other National Museums' staff
- Commit to good health & safety and access practice and ensure familiarity with National Museums' health & safety and access policies, procedures and guidelines

Expected Outcomes:

- Contribution to curatorial and management activities
- Extended knowledge of bird collections and related subjects
- Knowledge applied and disseminated in research and public programmes
- Management of collections in line with National Museums' standards
- Effective management of staff and volunteers as required
- Effective management of resources

Reports To:

Head of Section

Facts and Figures:

Budget: On occasion, delegated responsibility - also responsible for seeking and drafting external funding bids

Staff Managed: May be one or more, plus volunteers and contractors where appropriate

Indirect Staff Managed:**Facts and Figures cont:**

Other: Responsibility for a section of the national collections of birds of historical importance, financial value, and scholarly significance

Thinking Skills (Judgement / Decisions Made):

- Judgement and interpretation of the bird collections to analyse their strengths, care requirements, context and potential development and / or research direction
- Knowledge and external context to inform daily work and subsequent recommendations (e.g., where / how to publish? Whom to borrow from? Why acquire? Who might fund?)
- Application of National Museums' collections management policies and procedures
- Communication and organising skills, internal and external
- Recognition of issues which require upward referral
- Dealing with project management issues on a day-to-day basis

Communication and Contact:**Internal:**

- Line manager, Head of Department and other curators and preparators
- Collections Management department
- Conservation & Analytical Research department
- Director of Collections
- Exhibitions & Displays department
- Learning & Engagement department
- Estates department
- Facilities Management department
- Human Resources and Finance departments

External:

- Visitors and enquirers
- Other museums and related organisations
- Potential sponsors, donors and vendors
- Borrowers and lenders

Communication and Contact cont:

External cont:

- Media
- Volunteers

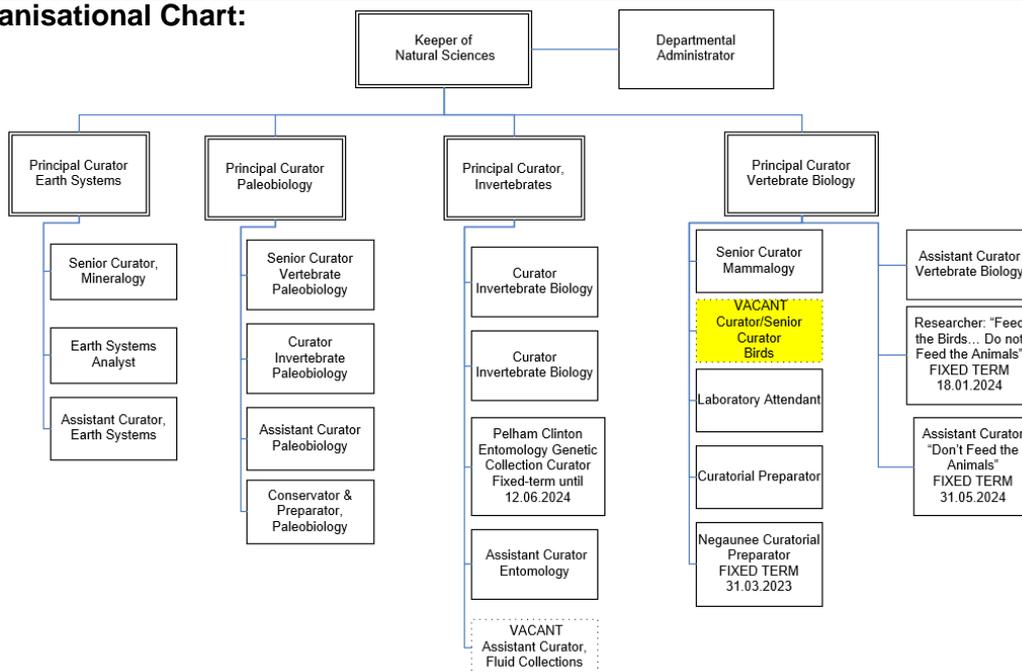
Most Challenging Parts of the Job:

- To manage multiple priorities
- To manage the bird collections, extend their accessibility and develop further specialist knowledge
- To find solutions for collections issues within National Museums' policies and procedures

Other Requirements, e.g., Multi-site Working, On Call, etc:

Must be willing to travel as the duties require, e.g., other National Museums' sites, courier duties, fieldwork, or as a representative of National Museums to external bodies

Organisational Chart:



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Senior Curator of Birds		
Department: Natural Sciences	Section: Vertebrate Biology	
Directorate: Collections	Grade: 3	Hours: 37 (net)

Knowledge	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
A relevant first degree or equivalent experience in zoology, or biological sciences, or similar	Essential	Certificate
Knowledge of relevant external bodies and individuals	Essential	Selection Event
Knowledge of interpretation of collections by different means to a variety of audiences	Essential	Selection Event
Developed knowledge of, and enthusiasm about bird collections and ornithology	Essential	Application / Selection Event
Understanding and knowledge of best practice standards in collections management	Essential	Selection Event
Postgraduate degree or equivalent experience in zoology, or biological sciences, or similar	Desirable	Certificate
Postgraduate qualification in Museum Studies, Heritage Management or equivalent	Desirable	Certificate
Knowledge of potential health & safety issues relevant to the specialist area	Desirable	Selection Event

Skills	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
ICT skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and databases	Essential	Application / Certificate
Driving licence	Desirable	Licence

Experience	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
Proven relevant experience in museum or similar environment	Essential	Application
Experience of, and commitment to, collection management good practice in museum or similar collections	Essential	Application
Experience of preparing and providing material for public presentations in lectures, exhibitions or publication	Essential	Application / Selection Event
Experience of project management in collections, exhibitions and research work	Desirable	Application
Experience of working on projects involving other people and inter-disciplinary relationships	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Experience of undertaking research for dealing with museum objects or enquiries	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Records of intellectual and practical contribution to exhibitions	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Record of publication in area of specialism and / or public presentations to a variety of audiences	Desirable	Application / Selection Event
Experience of working with volunteers	Desirable	Application / Selection Event

National Museums Scotland has a Competency Framework with six competencies. Individuals for this job are expected to demonstrate competence in all six; these will be assessed from the Application Form, and, if you are invited to attend, at the Selection Event.

Competency	Level	Detail
Building Relationships Works effectively and professionally as part of their team and cooperates with others across the organisation; collaborates and networks externally for specific outcomes and projects; forms	3	Develops, establishes and manages collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps others understand other National Museums Scotland roles and functions internally or externally. • Helps makes connections for people, putting people in touch to facilitate cooperation and collaboration. • Proactively manages the delivery and the expectations of internal and external senior

<p>partnerships, nationally and internationally, for mutual benefit</p>		<p>stakeholders, in terms of responsibilities, outputs and outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands conflicting outlooks and demonstrates a willingness to find common ground. • Builds and maintains a strong external network and looks for opportunities for external collaboration and partnership.
<p>Communicating & Engaging</p> <p>Uses interpersonal skills flexibly to communicate, influence, persuade and negotiate to ensure a shared understanding and commitment to act</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Influences and persuades in complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates with credibility and authority presenting a compelling point of view. • Keeps lines of communication open at all times for feedback and exchange. • Considers the needs of National Museums and its staff and stakeholders in determining appropriate communication and channels. • Delivers difficult messages constructively to staff, customers and others when required. • Influences and persuades senior stakeholders and gains commitment of others to
<p>Focusing on your Customers</p> <p>Places the customer at the heart of what we do; engages, listens and responds to deliver excellent service; creates an outstanding experience and supports a culture of service excellence, both internally and externally</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Manages customer relationships and service levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively finds out what our diverse customers groups want by research, testing and evaluation. • Analyses the customers' needs and takes action to enhance and improve customer service. • Develops and effectively manages a network of existing and potential customers internally or externally. • Ensures customer focused processes, frameworks and systems are in place and operating effectively. • Supports internal customers in meeting the expectations of their customers.
<p>Improving & Innovating</p> <p>Builds personal and organisational capability to think creatively and continuously improve National Museums Scotland, to enable it to excel and lead within the sector</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Facilitates organisational learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors the external environment for emerging trends and opportunities and shares this information. • Initiates changes which contribute to continuous improvement. • Constructively listens to all ideas and suggestions, feeding them in to planning processes and explains when this is not feasible. • Positively manages resistance and blocks to change and innovation through engaging with others. • Proactively manages the impact of innovation and change on staff and stakeholders.

<p>Leading & Managing Sets direction and standards to drive individual, team and organisational performance by involving, supporting, developing and enabling staff and others to effectively contribute to the present and the future of National Museums Scotland.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Manages tasks and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates work based on knowledge, skills and available time and resources, providing clear instructions and specifications. • Recognises the achievement and performance of others and gives them credit. • Provides others with regular feedback and coaches in a constructive manner. • Motivates by making people feel valued and important in interactions and by celebrating successes. • Encourages an open, safe and approachable environment by listening and not judging.
<p>Planning for Success Realistically plans tasks, programmes and projects in consultation with stakeholders and existing resources; making decisions for effective delivery.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Develops and Implements plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and implements plans for delivery, building in flexibility to cope with last minute demands. • Takes into consideration the impact of actions and decisions on others and puts in place measures to minimise them. • Consults with relevant stakeholders to ensure the output, the outcome and the plan to meet their needs. • Prioritises own workload to meet conflicting demands. • Thinks ahead to identify potential obstacles and proactively solves issues to minimise the impact on delivery.

General Information – Curator/Senior Curator, Birds

Salary

The salary range is £33,111 to £41,785 per annum. Salary on appointment will be subject to qualifications and experience and will normally be within the bottom quarter of the pay range. Pay, including pay progression, is reviewed in negotiation with the recognised trade unions, with an annual settlement date of 1 April.

Where an internal candidate successful applies for a post which is the same grade as their current post, they will transfer to the new post on the same salary with pay progression as normal.

Hours

Normally a five-day week of 37 hours, excluding lunch breaks. Normal hours of attendance are Monday to Thursday 08:30 to 17:00, Friday 08:30 to 16:30. As an alternative, a flexible working system is in operation. We are happy to talk flexibly about how you might wish to carry out this role.

Location

On a regular basis, this post is based at the National Museum of Scotland site at Chambers Street with travel to the National Museums Collection Centre and other Museum sites as required.

Probation

New employees are on probation for a period of six months from date of appointment.

Colleague Benefits

Full details of the range of benefits available to colleagues, including our excellent pension provision, can be found [here](#).

Selection Process

Please contact applications@nms.ac.uk if you would like support in completing your application.

We use a competency-based selection process. If you are invited to a selection event you will be asked to participate in activities that will enable us to assess your performance against our Competency Framework. You'll have the opportunity to let us know about any support or adjustments that will help you take part. Details of our competencies can be found in the Person Specification.

Pre-employment Checks/Eligibility to Work in the UK

Any offer of employment will be made subject to:

- receipt of references which are satisfactory to National Museums Scotland and cover the full three-year period prior to the date of appointment.
- a Basic Disclosure Scotland check, the result of which must be satisfactory to National Museums Scotland. The cost will be refunded.
- completion of a health and wellbeing form, which is satisfactory to National Museums Scotland. We ask you to complete this so that we can put in place any support you need, including reasonable adjustments, during your onboarding and induction periods and your ongoing employment with us.
- Receipt of documentation confirming eligibility to work in the UK.

It is anticipated that this selection event for this post will take place in person on Friday 14 April 2023.

