



Óliscoll
Téicneolaíochta
en Áilteannaigh
Atlantic
Technological
University



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht



MSc Postgraduate Research Opportunity

MSc Project Title:	Improving conservation value of Corncrake sites: The contribution of various early and late cover (ELC) types and quality to invertebrate diversity and abundance.
Project Duration:	2 year funded MSc position
Organisation:	Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
Location:	Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC), ATU Galway City, Dublin Road, Galway.
Stipend:	€18,000 per annum
Responsible to:	Project supervisors Dr. James Moran, Dr. Joanne O'Brien, Dr. John Carey

Purpose of the Role

The EU LIFE funded Atlantic Crex project (Improving Corncrake conservation status in Ireland by the enhancement of the SPA network and surrounding farmland) is coordinated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and includes partners from Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fota Wildlife Park and Atlantic Technological University (Galway).

The overall objective of the LIFE Atlantic Crex project is to improve the conservation status in Ireland of the Corncrake by the enhancement of the SPA network and surrounding farmland. This project will take place on 8 project sites (in 9 SPAs and adjacent supporting farmland) which are predominantly privately owned. Adjacent supporting farmland is critical to the project as approximately 85% of the population occurs within the SPAs and associated hinterland.

1. Malin Head Catchment (including SPA IE0004146)
2. Fanad Head Catchment (including SPA IE0004148)
3. Marblehill to Meenlaragh Catchment (including SPA IE0004149)
4. Inishbofin & Inishdooley Catchment (including SPA IE0004083)
5. Tory Island Catchment (including SPA IE0004073)
6. West Donegal Catchment (including SPA IE0004230)
7. The Mullet Catchment (including SPA IE0004227, IE0004093)
8. Inishbofin, Omev Island and Turbot Island Catchment (including SPA IE0004231)

The Corncrake (*Crex crex*) is listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and its breeding grounds extend from Ireland to Asiatic Russia in the northern hemisphere. The Corncrake winters in southern and eastern Africa, migrating northwards to arrive on its breeding grounds from early April onwards and departing again in August and September. On account of the large decreases in both numbers and range, it is on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI) list

The contribution of high quality Early and Late Cover (ELC) to successful Corncrake breeding is well known but the ecological mechanisms which underpin its contribution is not understood. The effectiveness of ELC establishment in the project will primarily focus on its effect on Corncrake numbers, but there is a requirement to measure its effect on species groups which predicate the ecological integrity of the site. This MSc will measure the contribution of various ELC cover types and quality to conserve and increase invertebrate diversity and abundance. This will inform project objectives (e.g. the ELC scorecard) and act as a demonstration project that encourages complementary research within similar projects. The MSc will disseminate findings through peer reviewed articles, projects reports, conferences and seminars, as well as Knowledge Exchange Groups.

Applications are invited for a 2 year funded MSc position at Atlantic Technological University based in The Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC), Dublin Road campus Galway www.mfrc-gmit.ie.

Key Responsibilities

- Work with the EU LIFE Atlantic Crex team across all partners
- Carry out invertebrate sampling, identification and analysis
- Habitat surveys and collection of data on site characteristics
- Present results at national and international conferences
- Complete MSc Thesis

Qualifications/Requirements:

- Must hold a BSc (honours, minimum 2:2, but 2:1 or higher is desirable) in biology, zoology, agricultural science, environmental science or ecology or related discipline (**Note:** those in their final year of their degree and expected to achieve qualifications before project start date may apply. Exam transcript with desirable qualification must be provided before September, if successful)
- Full clean driver's license.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Good interpersonal, oral and written communication skills.

Project Duration: 24 months

Conditions:

- €18,000 Stipend per annum.
- Postgraduate fees for EU students will be covered by the project *(see below)
- In addition, any necessary travel and material costs incurred during the project will be covered.

Please Note: Candidates from outside the EU are eligible to apply, but will be expected to provide evidence of sources of additional funds to cover excesses associated with Non-EU fees.

If either English or Irish is not the applicant's first language, evidence of English language proficiency is required for registration. Please refer to web link: [English Language Requirements | ATU - Atlantic Technological University \(gmit.ie\)](http://English Language Requirements | ATU - Atlantic Technological University (gmit.ie)) to view the minimum English language proficiency standards for entry to ATU

Project Start Date: September 2022

Application Closing Date: 12 noon Wednesday 1st June 2022

Interviews are *expected* to take place on Monday 13th June 2022

Applicants should submit their:

- Curriculum Vitae (to include 2 referees)
- a copy of transcript of results and
- a one-page Personal Statement to: ResearchOffice@gmit.ie

Applications must be submitted to the Research Office e-mail address only. Please ensure all documents are emailed as a single Word or PDF file.

The Personal Statement should not exceed 1 page and include:

- How you meet the requirements of the position
- Why you would like to pursue this Masters research programme

For further information, please email Dr. Joanne O'Brien (GMIT) Email; joanne.obrien@gmit.ie,
Dr. James Moran (GMIT); james.moran@gmit.ie.

Data Protection Statement

ATU takes very seriously its legal obligations as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Irish Data Protection Act 2018 to safeguard and protect your personal information in our possession. The personal information which you disclose to us in this form will only be used to assess your suitability; administer and register you for this scholarship. We will not keep your personal information for any longer than is necessary for those stated purposes. **For more details, please refer to ATU's Student Privacy Statement:** <http://www.gmit.ie/general/student-privacy-statement>

** In lieu of fees the appointed scholar will undertake two hours of academic development activities per week during the academic year through participation in teaching support, tutorial provision, and/or practical demonstration.*