Nature Foundation
SINT MAARTEN

INTERNSHIP POSITION

Bird Conservation

Type	On-site, full-time (40 hours/week)
Benefits	Housing on the premises provided along with USD 300/month stipend
Timeline	Mid-March 2027 through mid-August 2027 (5 months) *Five-month internship periods are strongly preferred, but applicants proposing alternate timelines will be considered.*
Nationality	Local, Dutch or French, or American applicants preferred due to visa requirements
Application deadline	15 January 2027

Background

Since 1997, the Nature Foundation Sint Maarten has operated as a non-governmental, non-profit organization working to improve the conditions for the conservation, management, and restoration of Sint Maarten's biodiverse natural ecosystems and wildlife. Sint Maarten is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean. It encompasses the southern side of the island of Saint Martin, while the northern part of the island constitutes the French overseas collectivity of Saint-Martin. English is the predominant language on Sint Maarten, though Dutch is also spoken, as well as French on Saint-Martin. Tourism is the primary economic driver on the island, which supports a seasonal industry of mega yachts, cruise ships, sailing boats, and other tourists. The main coastal ecosystems found include beaches, rocky shores, coastal lagoons, salt ponds, and mangroves.

Description

The Bird Conservation Internship is a research-focused position supporting the Nature Foundation's ongoing bird monitoring initiatives. The intern will primarily work on a comparative analysis between the bird populations on the Dutch and French sides of the island of Saint-Martin, with a specific focus on map development and data interpretation. The intern will also contribute to monitoring projects and is expected to conduct potential analysis of audio recordings and assist with site visits and environmental assessments. Finally, the intern will also assist with monthly pelican counts and the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) landbird surveys, a short-term but intensive fieldwork activity. The intern will also improve existing educational materials and outreach programs related to bird conservation and advance public understanding of the need for bird conservation. The role may involve delivering presentations or talks, designing posters and other graphics, writing social media posts, and occasionally supporting bird tours.

Responsibilities

- **Research fieldwork (60%)**
  - Carry-out weekly shore and waterbird survey in the main wetlands on the Dutch and French side of the island
  - Assist with DCNA landbird surveys and help coordinate the bird monitoring efforts for a two-week period in March/April
  - Conduct monthly pelican counts
- **Data analysis (20%)**
  - Carry out literature review and summary of previous local studies and reports
  - Analyze bird data and compare populations on the Dutch and French sides, with an emphasis on map-based visualization using R and GIS software
- **Education and communications (10%)**
  - Create social media posts and press releases related to bird conservation
  - Record and report on findings in a policy-friendly and accessible manner
  - Support school presentations, tours, 30th anniversary activities, etc.

- **Miscellaneous (10%)**
    - Support additional Nature Foundation activities such as emergency response, shark tagging, site maintenance, and other research programs
    - Aid in writing literature reviews, policy briefs, grant proposals, and more
    - Assist with routine maintenance and inventory of organizational equipment

Qualifications

Age and Education

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be a current student or recent graduate working toward a bachelor's or master's degree, or a recent bachelor's graduate within 1 year, in biology, ecology, environmental science, ornithology, or a related field

Experience and Skills

- Experience carrying out fieldwork in moderately difficult terrain and conditions
- Experience in supporting research studies or other data-collecting endeavors
- Strong interest in or experience with Caribbean marine and terrestrial ecosystems
- Proficiency in data processing and analysis using R or another program
- Proficiency in spatial analysis using ArcGIS or QGIS
- Ability to work in fast-paced, dynamic environments
- Self-motivated, reliable, and capable of both independent work and teamwork
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Experience in community outreach and education is an asset
- Familiarity with bird identification, especially species native to the Caribbean region, is an asset (training will be provided)

Language, Nationality, and Location

- Oral and written fluency in English

- Ability to legally reside on St. Maarten for the internship duration
- Local, Dutch, or American applicants are preferred due to visa requirements
- Proficiency in French, Dutch, or Spanish is a plus

Other

- Valid driver's license is mandatory; ability to drive manual is highly desirable
- Willingness to work early mornings and occasional evenings for wildlife surveys
- Ability to safely lift and move heavy items (up to 20 kg or 44 lbs)
- Holding a diving certificate is an asset but not required

Apply

Students and recent graduates interested in participating should submit their application by **15 January 2027** via email at **gaia@naturefoundationsxm.org.** The application should include the following contents:

- Up-to-date curriculum vitae/résumé (PDF)
- Cover letter/letter of motivation with available start and end dates (PDF)

Please ensure that the subject line reads "Application: Bird Conservation Intern".