

Birmingham Audubon Walter F. Coxe Research Grant Application Guidelines

Mission statement

Birmingham Audubon promotes conservation and a greater knowledge of birds, their habitats, and the natural world.

About the grants

Birmingham Audubon's Walter F. Coxe Research Grants provide up to **\$2,500 per award** to support scientific research directly applicable to the exploration and conservation of Alabama's plant and animal life. While priority is given to field-based projects performed at Alabama localities and/or by researchers at Alabama-affiliated institutions, other applicants working on research applicable to conservation issues in our state are also encouraged to apply.

While most awards go to support research by graduate students, exceptional undergraduates and individuals without access to traditional research funding are also encouraged to apply. All applicants are welcome to discuss the general suitability of a project idea with our staff (info@birninghamaudubon.org) prior to submission. In general, Walter F. Coxe research funding is intended to serve as seed money for the initiation of larger projects, or for the facilitation of applications to major funding agencies. We generally anticipate funding several projects per year, depending on the merit of proposals received; the selection committee considers each project on its own merits, and makes its final decisions within two to three months of the annual submission deadline (**15 December**).

How do I apply?

Please read the following instructions carefully before submitting your application. Each application should be written in language aimed at scientifically literate members of the lay public, and must include:

- a project title, the name and contact information (mailing address, phone, email) of the applicant, and the name and contact information (mailing address, website) of the institution through which the work will be performed;
- a brief (up to one page) description of the significance of the project and its relevance to wildlife and/or conservation issues in Alabama;
- a concise (two- to three-page) description of the project and its methods, with illustrations if appropriate;
- a brief (up to one page) reference list citing the relevant scientific literature;
- a detailed budget featuring itemized justification and a list of any additional secured funding sources necessary for the completion of the project;
- a brief (up to one page) description of the applicant's qualifications and research interests;
- two letters of recommendation—one from the student's academic advisor and another from someone independent of the proposed project.

Applications must be submitted electronically, preferably as a single PDF, to info@birninghamaudubon.org. In the subject line of the email, please include your last name, and the words "Coxe Proposal" (e.g., Doe, Coxe Proposal). All applicants will receive an acknowledgement of submission via email.

How can Walter F. Coxe funds be used?

Walter F. Coxe Research Grants may only be used to cover direct research expenses such as those associated with:

- research and field supplies;
- essential, but otherwise unavailable, minor equipment;
- essential travel to visit field sites, including but not limited to institutional and commercial car rentals.

Please note: If applying for car-based travel funds, applicants *must* provide an estimate of how many miles they will travel during the course of the funding period, as well as the source of the estimate (e.g., Google Maps, Rand McNally Mileage Calculator), and the anticipated total fuel (ATF) expenses for which they are seeking reimbursement. To calculate the ATF, use the estimated miles to be traveled, the national average gas price at the time of the application

(available from the AAA website: <http://gasprices.aaa.com/aaa-gas-cost-calculator/>), and the average fuel efficiency (in miles per gallon) of the vehicle to be used:

$$\text{ATF} = [(\text{total estimated miles})/(\text{miles per gallon})] * (\text{AAA national gas average})$$

Any durable equipment purchased with these funds must remain with the applicant's academic institution, as property thereof, and must be made available for future research projects at that institution.

What types of expenses are *not* covered?

Walter F. Coxe funding may *not* be used to cover salaries, stipends, indirect costs (i.e., overhead or "facilities and administrative" expenses), publication expenses, thesis printing, conference attendance, personal items (such as clothing), or basic field equipment (such as binoculars or cameras).

As an accountability measure, it is Birmingham Audubon policy to make awards payable, when possible, through institutions, although again note that Walter F. Coxe funds may not be used for indirect costs. Many departments have small discretionary funds through which such awards can be administered; if necessary, please contact our Partnership & Policy Director (chrisoberholster@birminghamaudubon.org) to discuss the logistics of payment.

How are awards decided?

A selection committee appointed by the President of Birmingham Audubon will review applications and make funding recommendations within two to three months after the submission deadline. The committee's recommendations will then be reviewed by the Birmingham Audubon Board of Directors, with whom any final funding decisions rest. The final amount of any given award may be adjusted at the discretion of Birmingham Audubon, and awards may be contingent upon the applicant obtaining any necessary additional financial support.

All proposals will be judged according to the following criteria:

- the importance of the project, and its relevance to Alabama's wildlife and/or conservation issues
- the scientific merit and methodological quality of the project
- the appropriateness of the budget, as outlined in the proposal
- the perceived ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed work
- the potential of Walter F. Coxe funding to contribute to a larger project, or to act as seed money for future funding

How do I report my findings?

All Walter F. Coxe Grant recipients must report the results of their research in writing to Birmingham Audubon *within two years of the award*. Reports should:

- be written in clear language aimed at scientifically literate members of the lay public;
- be between two and three pages in length;
- include essential references;
- include one to two tables or figures, as appropriate.

Recipients should submit their reports in either Word or PDF format to info@birminghamaudubon.org. If publications result from Walter F. Coxe-funded research, recipients are *strongly encouraged* to send bibliographic references and reprints/PDF files to Birmingham Audubon. Any publications or presentations resulting from Walter F. Coxe funding *must* acknowledge Birmingham Audubon and the Walter F. Coxe Research Fund by name. Recipients who move during the course of a project or prior to submitting their reports, should notify our staff and provide updated contact information. Recipients also agree, if asked and if schedules allow, to present their findings at a Birmingham Audubon-sponsored meeting, with modest travel expenses associated with such a presentation to be covered by Birmingham Audubon.