



BECOMING A
BTO YOUTH
REPRESENTATIVE
IN NORTHERN IRELAND

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY



WHAT IS BTO YOUTH?

BTO studies the bird populations in the UK with data collected by tens of thousands of volunteer birdwatchers. To make sure that young people are well-represented in the organisation and the work we do, we set up the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The panel wrote a youth engagement strategy and set up the Youth Representative scheme. Whereas YAP is a strategic group who come up with new ideas and plan our wider work, Youth Representatives organise events for young people in their own communities, helping them to access nature and birdwatching. BTO Youth's vision for the future is that of:

'A diverse, vibrant community of young birders supported by BTO, with accessible, youth-led opportunities inspiring young people to engage with nature and science.'



What are our values?

Anyone who is part of BTO Youth, as staff or as a volunteer, agrees to a set of values on how we treat each other and the world around us. As individuals and as a group, we are:

- ▶ **Inclusive & accessible:** we respect, welcome and include anyone to the BTO Youth network and remove barriers to nature and birdwatching
- ▶ **Youth-led:** all the work we do is created, organised and hosted by young people; they are at the heart of our decision-making
- ▶ **Helping people grow:** we help young people to learn and develop their skills
- ▶ **Collaborative & transparent:** we work together, both within our teams as well as with partner organisations and we listen to everyone's opinions
- ▶ **Innovative & dynamic:** we have a creative, original and bold approach to engaging young people in nature
- ▶ **Celebrating nature:** we welcome people who connect with nature in whatever way feels most comfortable to them and support them in connecting with nature in new ways



What does being a Youth Representative look like?

Being a Youth Representative looks different to everyone, because it will depend on where you are based, how much time you can commit, and what your interests are. Typically, Youth Representatives attend online meetings and training, organise events (both online and in-person), and join the BTO staff team for events and activities.

There are also different working groups which tend to meet at least once a month, and regular catch-ups, but you don't have to attend all meetings. We have working groups on topics such as mental health, our online series Birding 101 and Nature Natters, and creating new projects.

Alongside this, Youth Representatives organise events in their own communities. These can be guided walks, film screenings, arts events, mindfulness walks, but also online events or creating social media content.

We offer a variety of training courses, and also organise an annual get-together over a weekend, so we can all meet in person and spend time together as a team.



"It would be almost impossible to describe the momentous impact BTO has had on my life. For me the events, both online and in-person and just meeting loads of new people have been incredible."

Keir, Youth Representative for London

Who are we looking for?

We're looking for motivated young people who want to join a community and make a difference. You should apply if you:

- ▶ Are **between 16 and 24** years old
- ▶ Live in **Northern Ireland** for at least eight months per year
- ▶ **Speak and understand English** well
- ▶ Are **passionate about nature** (but you don't need to know everything about birds!)
- ▶ Are able to organise **at least two events per year**, in-person or online, with the support of our staff
- ▶ Have an **open mind** and are **respectful** of all people, even if they are different, or think differently, to you
- ▶ Want to **help other young people** find their connection with nature (but you don't need experience in working with young people!)
- ▶ Are **available to join virtual meetings** on Zoom at least once a month, and in-person meetings at least once a year (all expenses are covered)

By applying, you commit to being a Youth Representative for at least one year if you are successful, with the option to stay longer if you want to (until you turn 26).

What do we offer you?

This is a volunteer position, which means there is no pay for this work. However, we will:

- ▶ Cover **all your expenses**, including meals, transport, accommodation, and training
- ▶ Offer you **extensive training**, from First Aid and networking, to bird ID and public speaking
- ▶ Opportunities to **represent BTO at events**, such as conferences, exhibitions, fairs, university events, and more
- ▶ Give you **1:1 support**; ranging from finding opportunities in topics you are interested in or need help with, to help with applying for jobs
- ▶ **Provide references** for you on job applications or university applications
- ▶ **Access to BTO and its partners**, giving you the chance to connect to a wide network of people, jobs and other opportunities in conservation

"Knowing that together we can create a safer environment for other budding birders and wildlife enthusiasts is what motivates me."





"Being part of BTO Youth means belonging to a community who have a shared passion for both nature and youth engagement: a community who value the opinions of everyone and are open to innovative ideas."

Emma, Youth Advisory Panel member and BTO Trustee

How can you apply?

To apply, record a video of yourself answering the questions below. You can be as creative as you like in this video; it's not an interview, so it can be relaxed or fun! The deadline for applications is **11.59pm 5 May 2024**. The questions we would like you to answer are:

- ▶ **If you had the support of the BTO Youth team, what kind of events would you like to organise?**
- ▶ **Looking at our values, is there one that is important to you? If so, why?**
- ▶ **Tell us about your favourite bird or animal?**

If filming a video is a barrier to you, you can submit written responses to these questions instead.

Send your video to youth@bto.org with your name in the subject line and fill in the [online application form](#). Please make sure your video is no longer than ten minutes.

We'll let you know within two weeks of the deadline whether you've made it through to the next round, which will be a short 15 minute interview with someone from our staff team, and one or two people from the current Youth Advisory Panel. We expect those interviews to take place in the week of 13 May 2024.



Who are we?

BTO Youth staff team



Faye Vogely (she/her)
Youth Engagement
Manager



Chris Marais (he/him)
Youth Engagement
Coordinator



Rachael Griffiths (she/her)
Youth Engagement
Officer



Samuel Levy (he/him)
Seasonal Youth
Engagement Officer

Youth Advisory Panel



The Youth Advisory Panel consists of Adam, Alicia, Chloe, Emma, Esther M, Esther R, George, Haydn, Katie, Karmannye, Kit, Megan, Rosie and Samuel. Read their bios on [our website](#).

Youth Representatives



Our Youth Representatives are Alex, Benjamin, Carla, Ciera, David, Emily, Georgina, Hannah C, Hannah W, Holly, Humphrey, Imogen, Iris, Jasmine, Johana, Jose, Josh H, Josh S, Lucy, Mya, Niamh, Ramandeep, Rhys, Sian and Socks. Read their bios on [our website](#).

Inclusivity statement

To ensure we give an opportunity to those least presented in the birdwatching sector at the moment, we will guarantee an interview to anyone who identifies as being from an under-represented background (e.g. those from a visible minority ethnic group, those with a disability, those without formal school qualifications, or those from the LGBTQIA+ community; this is not a complete list so it is your choice whether fill in that you are part of an under-represented group). This is as long as you meet the basic requirements.

"I loved being able to talk about birds with other people my age that actually care and now I have the opportunity to go to Bird Camp!"

Birding 101 participant





Image credits

Faye Vogely, Alicia Hayden, Children Nature Network

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