

## Why birds go bump in the dark: a sensory ecology approach to understanding and addressing gillnet bycatch

### Supervisors

Dr Steve Portugal (Royal Holloway University of London, Host Institution)

Dr Alex Bond (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), CASE Partner)

### Project description

Every year, millions of waterbirds die through drowning as a result of being caught in gill nets.

The aim of this project is to (a) describe the sensory ecology and visual field characteristics of waterbirds that have demonstrated a propensity for getting caught as bycatch in gillnets, (b) undertake dive tanks experiments to determine dive behaviour, (c) determine the visual acuity of key species, to ascertain their visual capabilities over distance and (e) provide practical suggestions and solutions to the problem, based on findings (e.g., net panel designs).



### NERC DTP

This project is part of the London NERC DTP (see link below), to start September 2017. Applicants need a 2.1 degree in biology (ecology, zoology) and preference will be given to students with a relevant Master's. Internal closing date is **December 15<sup>th</sup>** via CV and Cover Letter to Dr's Portugal and Bond. The London NERC DTP closing date is early January 2017. Feedback and support will be provided to the applicant in advance of the London NERC DTP submission.

### Project enquiries

For enquiries, contact Dr Steve Portugal (Steve.Portugal@rhul.ac.uk, [www.sjportugal.com](http://www.sjportugal.com)) or Dr Alex Bond (Alex.Bond@rspb.org.uk, [www.alexanderbond.org](http://www.alexanderbond.org)). This project will require travel both nationally and internationally, and a full clean driver's license is essential.



To find out more about the London NERC DTP – please visit:  
<https://london-nerc-dtp.org>.

(Photos: S. Portugal, G. Martin, A. Bond, J. Morkunas)