



# Bringing the Museum's Fossil Bird Collections into the Twenty-First Century

## Collections

### Project Summary

This project will involve working on the Museum's collection of Moa (Dinornithiformes) specimens alongside Life collections staff. This will include:

- Digitising the collection, making it available through Collections Online
- Rehousing the collection in protective storage
- Labelling the collection
- Re-curating the collection (tidying it up!)

This will ensure that this collection of important subfossil material can be accessed by researchers and the public in future.

### Project Detail

The Museum holds a collection of fossil and sub-fossil bones of extinct birds, including the Moa and Dodo. Moa were flightless birds endemic to New Zealand, the largest species of which were up to 3.6m high and weighed up to 230kg. The Dodo was a flightless bird that lived on the Island of Mauritius. The digitisation and re-curation of this collection is an important task that will help preserve the specimens for generations to come.

**Full training will be provided** so that the student can:

1. Photograph the specimens to a high standard
2. Research the taxonomy and history of the specimens in order to database them
3. Create custom museum-grade boxes from correx and plastazote to house the specimens
4. Create museum labels for the specimen boxes
5. Re-curate the collection including performing remedial conservation on damaged specimens, labelling the specimens, and transferring them to new storage
6. Write a 500-word report of the project
7. Stretch goal: Extend the project to the Museum's world-famous Dodo collections (*Raphus cucullatus*)



## Selection Criteria

### Essential

- Excellent attention to detail with an organised and methodical approach
- Commendable manual dexterity, with ability to reliably manipulate and handle fragile material
- Ability to concentrate for long periods on tasks with repetitive elements
- Strong self-motivation and ability to work independently without close supervision and as part of a team
- Good communication skills

### Desirable

- Strong interest of working in a museum setting
- Basic understanding of taxonomy
- Familiarity with Microsoft Office applications

## Outcomes for the Student

This project provides particularly valuable experience for students interested in a career in museums:

- Experience in the organisation, handling, and management of natural history specimens
- A more in-depth knowledge of Moa (Dinornithiformes), their taxonomy and history
- Improved knowledge of museums and collections care as well as documentation
- Experience in digitisation of museum specimens with use of specialist museum collections management software
- Full training on the use of the Collections Management System EMu
- Good organisational, documentation and IT skills

## Reasonable Adjustments

The museum is committed to making reasonable adjustments to its summer placements to make sure that students with disabilities or health conditions are not substantially disadvantaged. If you are concerned about meeting the selection criteria for a project of interest, or completing relevant tasks, please get in touch with [ella.mckelvey@oum.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ella.mckelvey@oum.ox.ac.uk) before submitting your application to discuss possible adjustments to the project.

## General Enquiries

To find out more about this project, please email [ella.mckelvey@oum.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ella.mckelvey@oum.ox.ac.uk)