

Call for Artists - Iona Island Bird Observatory

Project Overview

WildResearch is seeking an artist to create a mural for the inside of the Iona Island Bird Observatory (IIBO) banding hut. The mural will be featured as part of a *Stories in Flight* event in January 2026 and installed inside the hut. *Stories in Flight* is a public education and stewardship project led by youth conservationist, Paula Gomez Villalba. Paula is a Latina settler who grew up on Muisca traditional territory in Colombia and on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory in Richmond, B.C. She's passionate about supporting connections and relationships of care between communities and nearby ecosystems.

IIBO operates within Iona Beach Regional Park in Richmond, BC, on the unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation. Located in the Fraser River estuary, this landscape of wetlands, dunes, and floodplain forests provides essential stopover habitat for millions of migratory birds.

This call for proposals is open to artists who are members of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷəł̓əm (Kwkwetlem) Nations.

Design Guidelines

Create a 4' high x 7' wide illustration in a flexible, colourful style that keeps the featured species recognizable. Our hope is that the mural celebrates the diversity of wildlife on Iona Island through Indigenous art and incorporates həńqəmiñərn̓ words for different birds and plants.

Possible species and/or elements:

- Birds: Marsh Wren, Pacific Wren, Bewick's Wren, Rufous Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, Swainson's Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Violet-green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow
- Plants: Osoberry (Wild Plum), Red Elderberry, Pacific Dogwood, Tall Oregon Grape, Coastal Strawberry, Nootka Rose, Broadleaf Cattail
- Other Wildlife: Coyote, Common Garter Snake, Blue-eyed Darner dragonfly

Compensation

The total budget for the mural is **\$1,800**, inclusive of artist fees, design and creation, and materials (paint, wooden panels, sealant). The mural can be created off-site at the artist's convenience. Installation will take place later, coordinated by project staff.

Alternative mediums, such as a digital illustration printed on vinyl, can be discussed.



Timeline

December 22, 2025 – Submission deadline (end of day)

December 29, 2025 – Artist selection

February 15, 2026 – Design completion and delivery

End of February 2026 – Stories in Flight event featuring mural, exact date to be determined

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Interested artists should send an email to paula.go@icloud.com. Please include a brief bio and examples of relevant work.

About WildResearch

WildResearch's mission is to build, train, and educate a community that contributes meaningfully to conservation science.

The Iona Island Bird Observatory (IIBO) is our flagship program, where spring and fall migration monitoring takes place to understand which birds rely on the area. As a small, volunteer and place-based program, IIBO connects Metro Vancouver residents directly to the land through hands-on bird monitoring, stewardship, and public education.

Our volunteer network includes many students, youth, and individuals from diverse backgrounds—many of whom may not otherwise have access to field-based learning opportunities.