

## Ulf Johansson, the second winner of the Eva de la Gardie Residency



Ulf Johansson is the second winner of the Residence Eva de la Gardie. Since 1998, he has been working as the curator of the bird collection of the National Museum of Natural History of Sweden ([Naturhistoriska riksmuseet](#)). He also does a lot of research on the evolution of birds. Today, he tells us more about his stay in France in November 2017.

**How did you hear about the Residency and why and how did you apply?**

I had been discussing a project with Jerome Fuchs of the [Museum national d'Histoire naturelle](#), who I met in Moscow during a conference a few years ago, but we never had the chance to really start it. So, when I received the information about this residency, it was a perfect time to get this project rolling. The application on itself was very simple.

**When you went to Paris, who did you met and what did you do?**

I first met with Jerome Fuchs, from MNHN.

Our research focus is on the mass extinction that occurred 66 million years ago and that, for instance, killed the dinosaurs (Cretaceous–Tertiary extinction). Our main focus is “how could birds survive the mass-extinction and how many of them did survive?”.

We wanted to test, using a phylogeny and biogeographic data, if it was possible to determine if it is due to a geographic component in the chance of surviving the mass extinction, i.e. “did all the bird groups that survive live in the same region?”. Similar studies had already been done using mainly recent data, but we wanted to include as much of the fossil data that are available as possible. Without including the fossils, these analyses are deemed to be biased, but what we found out was that the fossil data in fact include another bias.

So what we are doing now is the same analysis as we have planned, but finally we discuss the method limitation rather than hoping to find the answer to this distribution pattern. The project, the data and the method are the same but the results we focus on will be different.

Then, I went to Montpellier where I met a person who worked in my research field. He has now drifted away from what he did in the past but we discussed possible research collaborations in the future. I also wanted to meet a researcher from Toulouse to discuss a project I have about tropic

birds, but he was away while I stayed in France. But going to France made me finally contact him, and even if we didn't meet, we are now in touch.

[What would be your feedback, after Paris and your residency there, was it an asset, do you see things differently?](#)

I learned a lot about methods. Jerome's experience, and having a chance to get instant feedbacks, helped a lot. Working in another environment is also very important. You then have the chance to benefit from the other person's experience, to do things differently. That's the good thing about my stay. I would really like to go back. You realize that the training you get in one place is very different from another. And both are good.

### **More information**

[Eva de la Gardie](#)

[Ulf Johansson.](#)