Proposals for symposia and tools in ornithology should be a maximum of two pages (PDF; in English) and specify the following:

1. Type of events: Symposium (described here) and affiliated social (described in next section)

2. Title of event: Early Professionals Mini-Talk Symposium

3. Name, affiliation, and contact information for the organizer(s):

Sara Kaiser (Chair of AOS’s Early Professionals Committee), Smithsonian Institution, KaiserS@si.edu, (619) 540-9261)

Emma Greig (Cornell Lab of Ornithology), Scott Taylor (University of Colorado, Boulder), Christopher Tonra (The Ohio State University)

4. Name, affiliation, contact information, and talk titles (maximum 100 characters) for 5-6 invited speakers:

These individuals will be competitively selected at a future date, and will have to meet certain minimum requirements (e.g., have defended their PhD in the past 5 years, pursuing a research track, etc.). To successfully achieve these goals, we will need space on the website in which to post instructions for applicants and presenters, as well as an option during abstract submission. Please see below for how this was achieved during 2015:

<http://aoucos2015.ou.edu/?page_id=582>

In the past, the organizers of this event handled the selection of the participants, communicated with the selected participants, and handled as many of the logistics regarding the event as possible. We (Kaiser, Greig, Taylor, Tonra) would be happy to do so again.

5. Preferred duration (half or full day; morning or afternoon session for a half-day duration) and format (regular or lightning symposia): 1 hr, preferably the first day of the conference, late afternoon – to facilitate the affiliated social event (1.5 hours, see below).

6. A description (500 word maximum) of the objectives and topics to be covered during the event, including a brief explanation of the steps taken to achieve diversity in the line-up of invited speakers for the symposium:

Early professionals are eager to gain visibility for their work, and they also tend to be using some of the latest techniques while developing novel ideas; the symposium proposed here will showcase these recent advancements while also providing a mechanism for a large number of early professionals to advertise their science. We envision having a semi-formal event that occurs at a time that minimally overlaps with the normal talk schedule, for example during the late afternoon. During this event, speakers will have 4 minutes and 40 seconds to talk about who they are as researchers. This exercise will allow them to showcase themselves, force them to practice the critical skill of communicating their body of work quickly and effectively, and will draw large audiences due to the nature that their work tends to be at the forefronts of their fields. Scheduling this event in the late afternoon would also allow AOS’s Early Professionals Committee to sponsor a social event that could foster networking opportunities for participants (see event described in subsequent section). For last year’s Mini-talk Symposium at the NAOC, we sought to increase ethnic and racial diversity through recruitment and women and men were equally represented.

7. Rationale for why the symposium/tool talk is timely and why it would be interesting to a large number of attendees:

This will be the fourth year in a row that AOS’s Early Professionals Committee has organized this event, and it is quickly becoming an established component of AOS conference programming, similar to the Quiz Bowl. It has been highly successful in its previous iterations (Estes Park CO, Norman OK, Washington D.C.) for several reasons. First, it is an extremely high-energy event, and attendance has increased throughout the symposium as conference participants stopped by to investigate, and then remained for the rest of the symposium. Second, this event showcases not the results of a single study, but rather showcases the research capabilities, questions, techniques, and accomplishments of early professionals; those who are extremely motivated and engaged in some of the most cutting-edge ornithological research. We were therefore pleased to see that nearly half of the 2015 conference attendees (Norman, OK) were at the symposium – it was standing room only by the end, with dozens standing to watch, providing direct evidence that such an event is decidedly interesting to a large number of conference attendees. We had a similarly large audience at the 2016 NAOC (Washington, D.C.).

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1. Type of events: Social event (described here) and affiliated symposium (see above)

2. Title of event: Early Professionals Social

3. Name, affiliation, and contact information for the organizer(s):

Sara Kaiser (Chair of AOS’s Early Professionals Committee), Smithsonian Institution, KaiserS@si.edu, (619) 540-9261)

Emma Greig (Cornell Lab of Ornithology), Scott Taylor (University of Colorado, Boulder), Christopher Tonra (The Ohio State University)

4. Name, affiliation, contact information, and talk titles (maximum 100 characters) for 5-6 invited speakers: Open to all participants, with drink tickets/food vouchers for early professionals and senior scientist mentors. Based on costs, we hope to have this event be free, but requiring a ticket or an indicator on the name tag. During registration, individuals would simply click a box confirming their EP status or willingness to be a senior scientist mentor, and they would all receive a ticket/mark on their name tag that allowed them access to the event (or food/drink, based on specifics of the venue).

5. Preferred duration (half or full day; morning or afternoon session for a half-day duration) and format (regular or lightning symposia): The 1.5 hours immediately following the EP Mini-talk Symposium (1 hr, described above). In the past, this event has taken place in the same room/space as the Mini-Talk Symposium. Having this event during the first day will allow any mentoring relationships that are established (see below) to develop over the remainder of the conference. Very late afternoon – just prior to the break for dinner.

6. A description (500 word maximum) of the objectives and topics to be covered during the event, including a brief explanation of the steps taken to achieve diversity in the line-up of invited speakers for the symposium:

Following the Early Professionals Mini-Talk Symposium (wherein a select few early professionals present), there would be a social event wherein *all* early professionals who are attending the conference could come for food and beverage (AOS has previously provided a $6,500 budget for this event). At this event, there would be two main goals. First, all Mini-talk Symposium participants would have previously been assigned to a senior scientist. This senior scientist would serve as an informal mentor, observing the participating early professional’s mini-talk, and then meeting with that individual during the social to provide both specific feedback on the talk, as well as general advice on a career in ornithology. We piloted this aspect of the program during the Oklahoma meeting, and it went quite well. We further improved this component of the event during the NAOC last year. Secondly, all early professionals, regardless of participation in the Mini-talk Symposium, could network with their peers as well as members of the Early Professionals Committee of the AOS so that we can directly address their needs. Both types of social interaction work best during the “cocktail hour,” hence our request for a late-afternoon slot for the Mini-talk Symposium.

Please see (<http://aoucos2015.ou.edu/?page_id=582>) for how this event was advertised in 2015.

6. Rationale for why the symposium is timely and why it would be interesting to a large number of attendees:

Nearly all early professionals are eager for any sort of professional advice and networking opportunity, and yet very few events at conferences focus on this demographic. In fact, of all the societies at NAOC, only the AOS (to the best of our knowledge) has a committee dedicated to serving this group. This event is a targeted way to engage early professionals, and may be a key aspect of retaining membership as individuals progress from students to professional status.