



The INSTITUTE for BIRD POPULATIONS



ASSISTANT CREW LEAD – Avian Point Counts in Four Corners National Parks

We have one opening for an experienced field biologist to act as assistant field crew leader for avian point counts in national parks of the Four Corners region of the Southwest, including Grand Canyon NP, Mesa Verde NP, and Petrified Forest NP.

PROJECT DATES: Early April – mid August 2024.

TRAINING: The field season will begin with a three-week intensive training session in the identification of Southwestern birds by sight and sound and project protocols for conducting multi-species point counts. The seasonal biologist should ideally be able to identify most southwestern birds by sight and sound prior to the start of training and will assist the crew lead with teaching songs and calls to the rest of the crew. The whole crew will be expected to attend online review sessions in the months leading up to training.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The responsibilities for this position will be two-fold. First (April to early July), the seasonal biologist will act as assistant crew leader for a long-term bird monitoring study across national parks on the Southern Colorado Plateau. After the conclusion of these point count surveys, the seasonal biologist will help collect automated recording units (ARUs) deployed at national parks

and enter point count data from the field season into an Access database (early July to mid-August).

During the first portion of the field season, primary duties will involve conducting point count surveys on National Park Service lands, including Bandelier NM, Canyon de Chelly NM, Grand Canyon NP, Mesa Verde NP, Petrified Forest NP, and Wupatki NM. The seasonal biologist will act as assistant crew leader under IBP's Southwestern Avian Ecologist (Harrison Jones). Work will consist of week-long visits to national parks, travelling from Flagstaff, Arizona using a combination of personal and rental vehicles. On a typical day, the seasonal biologist will wake up before dawn and spend the morning conducting multi-species distance surveys (point counts) while recording habitat characteristics and survey conditions. Habitat types surveyed will range from desert grassland and shrubland, to pinyon-juniper woodland, to montane conifer forest. Surveys will be conducted solo on off-trail transects and will involve a mix of establishing new survey transects and revisiting previously established sites. The afternoon will then typically be spent completing data sheets and scoping out the next day's surveys sites. In addition, the seasonal biologist will work closely with the crew lead to organize field gear and completed data sheets and assist with field season logistics (backcountry permits and itineraries, camping arrangements, survey schedules). Work will be physically demanding, involving several-mile off-trail hikes into survey sites and very occasional short (1-3 day) backpacking trips to remote survey sites.

After point-count surveys are completed in early July, the seasonal biologist will help collect ARUs from study sites at Wupatki NM, Petrified Forest NP, and Grand Canyon NP, working closely with other IBP staff. This work will involve short off-trail hikes and carrying field gear, removing metal poles using a shovel, and carrying field equipment. In addition, the seasonal biologist will enter point-count field data into an Access database. Technical support and office space in Flagstaff (if desired) will be provided by the Southern Colorado Plateau Inventory and Monitoring program. Note that housing will not be provided for data entry, and this work can be done remotely.

REQUIREMENTS: Applicants with previous experience leading and teaching field crews, managing field logistics, and working in backcountry conditions will be strongly preferred. We are looking for a candidate with prior birding experience and familiarity with the songs and calls of Southwestern birds, ranging from desert scrubland to montane conifer forest. Prior point count experience is mandatory, and additional experience with avian field work is highly desirable. Other requirements include the ability to work closely with IBP staff as part of a tight-knit team, and to share communal living spaces with the field crew. Survey work will be distributed across national parks in three states (Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado) on the Colorado Plateau, requiring substantial car travel and a

willingness to lead a nomadic life from early April to late June. The biologist will be initially based out of the Flagstaff Arizona area and communal housing will be provided. A willingness to face the rigors of fieldwork with good humor is important. These rigors include physically demanding work traversing steep topography; long workdays that begin well before dawn; both cold and hot weather; strong UV rays; venomous snakes; potential contact with elk, bison, and other large mammals; and less-than-glamorous housing. Successful candidates must be in excellent physical condition and must be comfortable with off-trail hiking and orienteering (training provided). Previous experience with backpacking and wilderness camping are strongly desired. A personal vehicle is a requirement for this position.

SCHEDULE: Typically, 7 days on and 3 off for the point count work, though the exact length of hitches and days off will be slightly shorter or longer based on the number of survey transects at a park. Please note that this schedule will not apply during the intensive three-week training period. The seasonal biologist may also be asked to help with logistical tasks immediately before and after field hitches. Collecting ARU units will likely consist of 2-3 days of work, while data entry will be conducted on the biologist's own schedule.

EQUIPMENT: The seasonal biologist is expected to provide their own binoculars, hiking boots and camping gear for car camping (tent, sleeping bag, folding chair, etc.). The seasonal biologist is also expected to supply backpacking gear (pack, backcountry camping gear) if they have relevant experience. A large communal cooler, folding tables, water jugs, and communal camping stove will be provided by IBP.

ACCOMMODATIONS: A large communal rental house will be provided in or near Flagstaff Arizona for the full duration of training and first portion of the field season (early April to early July). Sleeping arrangements may involve shared bedrooms; we will accommodate requests for same-gender roommates where possible. Field accommodations will involve car camping in public campgrounds within national parks with public restrooms and (sometimes) showers, with occasional backcountry camping required.

COMPENSATION: This position is considered seasonal IBP staff and will receive payment of \$3,400 per month (before payroll taxes). We will additionally reimburse project-related travel mileage and campground fees but will not provide fringe benefits.

TO APPLY: Please email a resume, cover letter, and the names, phone numbers and email addresses of up to three references to Mandy Holmgren, Biologist (mholmgren AT birdpop DOT org). Professional references are preferred, but at least one may be a character reference. Many times, references are slow to reply

– we contact all submitted references and encourage submitting more references so that your application can be processed more quickly.

IBP values diversity and encourages people from all backgrounds to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration regardless of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.