



ECOSTUDIES INSTITUTE

A nonprofit scientific organization

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ecostudies@ecoinst.org

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: Avian Technician
Reports to: Avian Project Manager
Location: Olympia, Washington
Type: Full-time: hourly, non-exempt.
Period: Seasonal. 6 April 2025 to July/August. Exact dates TBD.
Benefits: Sick, vacation, holiday PTO, retirement*.
Hourly Rate: \$19.61 - \$23.40

Application deadline: 20 February 2026. **Applications are reviewed as received.**

**Retirement: All positions: employees can make personal contributions to retirement after 3 months, Ecostudies provides match after 6mo*

OVERVIEW SUMMARY

Ecostudies Institute (ESI) is hiring several seasonal Avian Field Technician positions to work on a field crew conducting a variety of bird monitoring and conservation projects in the South Puget Sound. Major responsibilities will include conducting line transect surveys, resighting color-banded birds, mapping territories, and locating and monitoring nests of Streaked Horned Larks and Oregon Vesper Sparrows (both ground-nesting imperiled grassland birds) on a multitude of sites including active airfields and training areas on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) military installation, with the potential for some off-base work. Some work off-base will include coordination with regional partners and private landowners. Additional ongoing projects crew members may be expected to support include but are not limited to: Western Bluebird nest box monitoring and translocations, targeted mist-netting of focal species, and surveying sites using conspecific attraction for Oregon Vesper Sparrows. All work is conducted in sites which may have other ongoing monitoring and research (butterflies, gophers, vegetation, etc.) by other ESI staff or partner organizations; therefore, a holistic ecological outlook is an important part of the job.

Successful applicants will have a keen interest in avian research and conservation, demonstrate excellent communication skills, be able to work independently and in a team setting, and be comfortable working on an active military base. Positions entail early mornings and long days with extensive walking (> 5 mi/day) in open landscape in sometimes adverse weather conditions. Access to a working personal vehicle for travel to and between survey sites is required; mileage between sites is reimbursed at the federal rate. Crew members are expected to collect and manage detailed data, be self-motivated, and communicate effectively with partners such as WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, JBLM, private landowners, volunteers, and the public concerning work done by ESI.

ABOUT ECOSTUDIES

Ecostudies Institute is a 501(c)(3) scientific non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of native species and their ecosystems. We achieve our mission through effective partnerships, sound scientific research, strategic land management and ecological restoration. At the core of our mission is a cooperative conservation model that strives to realize improved conservation outcomes by developing shared goals and vision through partnerships. These partnerships, in turn, encourage information transfer, advances in cutting edge restoration techniques, and the development of integrated range-wide conservation approaches. The organization is headquartered in Olympia, Washington with additional staff based in other locations in Washington and Oregon. Ecostudies currently employs over

40 permanent and seasonal staff.

HIRING EQUITY STATEMENTS

ESI values and seeks diversity and equity within the organization, and we encourage applications from all groups of people. We recognize that the strength of the organization is in our people, and we believe that every employee has the right to work in surroundings that are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Ecostudies does not and will not discriminate in employment and personnel practices, and our commitment to equal employment opportunity applies to every aspect of the employment relationship.

It is well-documented that Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), queer and transgender folks, women, and other marginalized groups often do not apply for jobs unless they feel they meet every qualification listed in the job description. We are most interested in finding the right candidate for the job and our organization. We encourage all passionate and interested candidates to apply and think broadly about your background and qualifications that could be transferable for the position. We are committed to working against the structural biases that continue to keep marginalized people excluded from the conservation, restoration, and wildland fire/prescribed fire fields, and to making sure our hiring practices are not reproducing those biases.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

While positions will have either a demographic or breeding bird survey primary focus, responsibilities may encompass any or all of the following.

- Resight color-banded birds using binoculars and spotting scopes.
- Map territories and locate and monitor outcomes of concealed ground nests using bird behavior cues; maintain high situational awareness to avoid trampling nests or vulnerable fledglings.
- Conduct standardized line transect and point counts, which may include roadside and off-road surveys.
- Identify common prairie vegetation species, particularly those used as nest host plants.
- Maintain detailed field notebooks including observations and daily activity logs.
- Daily data entry and regular QA/QC in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access databases.
- Operate and maintain equipment such as binoculars, spotting scopes, handheld GPS, and two-way radios.
- Use mobile apps for data collection including ESRI Survey123 and FieldMaps.
- Create georeferenced maps of nests in ArcGIS Pro for site managers and other personnel working in areas with demographic monitoring.
- Comply with training and protocols for working around military hazards including on active airfields near runways, taxiways, and parking areas for helicopters and planes; navigate in the presence of other military vehicles such as tanks; work around additional hazards including but not limited to artillery, razor wire, and unexploded ordnance.
- Hike 5-10+ miles daily over challenging terrain in open landscapes in all weather conditions, beginning before sunrise.
- Assist with mist-netting or other trapping methods for adult birds.
- Assist with banding nestlings.
- Determine Western bluebird nest box status; assist in prep and travel for translocations as needed.
- Interact professionally with other ESI staff and partner organizations, including military personnel, and be able to communicate the value and benefit of imperiled bird conservation and recovery.
- Work collaboratively with other ESI programs, resource agencies, consultants, and other conservation organizations.

- Complete administrative duties including tracking work hours, submitting timesheets, and recording reimbursable mileage.
- Other related duties as assigned to assist in meeting ESI's conservation goals.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Completion of or progress towards BA/BS/AS/Technical or vocational degree in science/natural resources-related field or at least three years natural resources or avian-related field experience.
- Ability to identify south Puget Sound grassland birds by sight and sound or quickly learn.
- Ability to hear high-frequency song of the streaked horned lark AND full-spectrum color vision to accurately record color-band resights.
- At least one season of experience with avian field techniques, which may include point count surveys, nest monitoring, or territory mapping.
- Experience working with or knowledge of natural systems; ability to recognize plant and animal species as required.
- Ability to follow provided protocols and instructions from colleagues.
- Ability to manage time and diverse activities under deadlines while delivering quality results.
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision and demonstrate a strong initiative in completing tasks.
- Ability to perform physical work, sometimes under adverse conditions or in inclement weather.
- Working knowledge of common software applications on computers and mobile devices (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, web browsers, Google products).
- Must have and maintain a valid state driver's license and safe driving record.
- Must have access to a working personal vehicle that can be used to drive to and from work locations daily (mileage reimbursable at the federal rate).
- Ability to pass a federal background check to qualify for a military base pass as a contractor.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Bird handling experience, particularly prior songbird mist-netting and banding, or nestling banding.
- Experience locating ground nests using behavioral cues; monitoring nests and determining nest fates.
- Familiarity with ESRI products such as ArcGIS Pro, Survey123, and FieldMaps.
- Prior experience working on a military installation.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Regularly works outdoors in natural and wildland areas, walking 5-10 miles per day in open landscapes in the summer which may include some inclement weather, often across uneven ground, carrying a spotting scope (~90%); occasionally works indoors in an office setting (~10%).
- Works in military training areas with nearby training activities including artillery and small arms fire, aviation and military vehicle driving training, razor wire, etc.
- May work on an active military airfield.
- Occasionally required to operate an Ecostudies Institute vehicle.
- Occasionally works in conditions involving recent use of herbicides, prescribed fire, or wildfire.
- Occasionally work in conditions with unexploded ordnance hazards requiring the use of protective gear.
- May work on working agricultural lands which may include being around large grazing animals, including cattle, horses, and goats.
- Frequently works independently and as part of a team.
- Occasional evening and weekend responsibilities which may include overnight travel.
- Occasionally lifts, positions, or otherwise moves objects weighing up to 50lbs.
- May assist with some prairie restoration work.

HOW TO APPLY:

Qualified applicants should submit a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three professional references in **one combined document**. In your letter, please indicate which positions you are interested in and include approximate availability to start. Individuals who are unsure if they meet all requirements are still encouraged to apply.

Email applications to Stephanie Augustine (avian@ecoinst.org) with the position you are applying to in the subject line. All applications will be acknowledged.

Ecostudies Institute is an Equal Opportunity employer. Personnel are chosen on the basis of suitability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, in accordance with federal and state law.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature of the work being performed by people assigned to this work. This is not an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities. Ecostudies Institute management reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet business and organizational needs as necessary.

This position description does not constitute an employment agreement between the Ecostudies Institute and the employee and is subject to change by Ecostudies Institute as the needs of the Ecostudies Institute and requirements of the job change.