Volunteer - Tundra Nesting Birds at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge - Alaska

\*\*COVID-19 Disclaimer: Due to the on-going uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, any and all aspects of current field plans are subject to change at any time.\*\*

**Job Description:** We are currently accepting applications for volunteers on a project studying the breeding ecology and limiting factors of tundra nesting birds (including shorebirds, passerines, waterfowl, loons, and larids) along the Beaufort Sea coast. Work will occur at a remote research camp (<https://medium.com/usfws/extreme-bird-nerding-ac3e81f20ab3>) in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) at the Canning River Delta (<https://www.facebook.com/arcticnationalwildliferefuge/videos/canning-river-bird-camp/553735712101186>) and several helicopter-accessed sites. This region offers amazing birding (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1619148>) and arctic wildlife viewing opportunities (such as this video shot from camp <https://www.facebook.com/arcticnationalwildliferefuge/videos/vb.138283512868883/463000250397206>). In addition to increasing our understanding of tundra nesting bird breeding ecology, primary objectives include assessing the efficacy of remote monitoring tools (time-lapse cameras, temperature loggers, and audio recorders) and using electronic data collection (ArcGIS Collector and Survey123). The positions will begin in early to mid-May with training in Fairbanks. Fieldwork will commence in late May/early June and continue through late July. After the field season, there will likely be opportunities to continue working through September to assist with stowing field equipment and data organization.

This is a collaborative project, and the crew will include scientists and technicians from Manomet Inc. (<https://www.manomet.org>), USFWS Migratory Birds and ANWR (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/arctic>) and graduate students from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Institute of Arctic Biology (<https://www.iab.uaf.edu/>). Fieldwork will involve setup and maintenance of a remote camp; nest searching; trapping, measuring, and banding shorebirds and waterfowl; and monitoring nests with temperature loggers and time-lapse cameras. Interns will also assist with other work at the camp, including outreach (<https://www.arcticbirdfest.com/>), lemming, arctic fox, and botany projects. Field interns typically work 6-7 days/week while in the field. Pre-season training and preparations, and post-season work will be based out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge office in Fairbanks, Alaska.

**Working Conditions:** Work will occur at our remote field camp at the Canning River Delta, and other helicopter-accessed sites, on the ANWR tundra from late May through late July. There will not be opportunities to take leave during that period. Conditions will generally be cold, windy, and buggy. Access to the site is only by small single engine aircraft or helicopter. Camp life will be remote and primitive (tents only, bucket toilet). During periods of bad weather, staff can be cut off from any outside help for several days. Field assistants will be required to carry firearms in the field for bear protection. Excellent physical condition is necessary to meet the strenuous demands. Crews will be exposed to long days hiking (up to 15+ miles per day) in waders over uneven tundra and wetlands carrying a heavy backpack; wading through icy ponds to access nests; cold, wet, windy weather (daytime highs in early June are generally around freezing and winds usually a constant 15-25 mph); and LOTS of mosquitoes. If being wet, cold, and uncomfortable; sleeping in a small backpacking tent; working with the same people for 2 months; and walking in damp waders for 8+ hours a day sounds miserable, you will not enjoy this job! If working in this remote wilderness area sounds like an exciting challenge - consider applying!

Candidates should have a strong interest in avian ecology AND/OR remote monitoring tools (cameras, ARUs, data loggers), a desire to live in a remote field camp of 6-8 people mostly cut off from the outside world, and the ability to maintain a positive attitude working in a very isolated setting with a small group under difficult field conditions.

We are also seeking applicants with a background in data management (how are your SQL skills?), electoral engineering (help us build a better camera to monitor tundra nesting birds!), and computer science (e.g., coding skills for post-season camera and temperature analysis).

Eligibility:

* US Citizen or in possession of applicable work visa.
* Available early to mid-May to late July.
* Ability (physically, mentally, and legally) to carry and use a firearm for bear protection.
* Willingness and desire to spend 8 weeks at a remote field camp with little contact to the outside world.
* Willingness, physical ability, and desire to hike in waders over uneven terrain carrying a 30 lb pack for 15 miles+ per day, 7 days a week, for 8 weeks.
* Willingness and ability to adhere to strict health and safety guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Desired Qualifications:

* An interest in birding and experience using eBird.
* Background in bioinformatics and coding.
* Experience tinkering with electronics (e.g., soldering skills, building Raspberry Pi projects, etc)
* Experience working with breeding shorebirds
* Experience working with breeding passerines.
* Experience working with breeding waterfowl.
* Experience with Tiny Tag and iButton temperature loggers and time-lapse cameras for monitoring nesting birds.
* Experience developing, troubleshooting, and using ESRI Survey123 and Collector for data collection.
* Experience working with data in ArcGIS Pro.
* Experience working in the Arctic or other remote areas.
* Experience living and working in remote field camps for extended periods where work conditions are hazardous and there is no immediate access to medical assistance.

Benefits:​

* Airfare to/from Fairbanks, and travel to/from field sites will be purchased by the government
* Housing is provided.

Hiring process:

To apply, please email a cover letter describing your qualifications for the position, resume, unofficial transcript, dates of availability, and three professional references in a single document to Sadie Ulman (sadie\_ulman@fws.gov). Name the single document: last name\_first name (i.e., Smith\_John.docx). Please title the email, “Tundra Nesting Bird Position Volunteer”. We encourage interested individuals to send their packet now as applications will be reviewed as they are received and we plan to hire these positions as soon as possible.