Research Associate

University of Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit

Position Dates: April 1, 2022 - Dec 30, 2026

Minimum Requirements:

1. M. S. in Wildlife Biology, Wildlife Management, or Ecology.
2. B. S. in Biological Sciences
3. Experience using Program R to manage large, complex datasets and conduct data analysis.
4. Experience working in remote areas and supervising seasonal wildlife technicians.
5. Experience and willingness to euthanize bighorn sheep.

Preferred Requirements:

1. Experience using Program R to conduct spatial analysis of GPS data.
2. Familiarity of bighorn sheep ecology and disease-related issues.
3. Experience working on collaborative, interagency research projects.
4. Demonstrated experience coordinating a research project, to include attention to deadlines, details, and communication.

Position Overview:

 The research associate will be work on a new bighorn sheep population ecology research project. The purpose of this project is to test the efficacy of management actions designed to improve performance of struggling bighorn sheep populations. In the Highlands Mountains of southwest Montana, we will evaluate the effects of test and removal of *M. ovipneumonia* (*M. ovi*) positive animals and mineral supplementation on lamb survival and population growth. We will collect two years of baseline information on the five sub-herds that comprise the Highland Mountains bighorn sheep metapopulation to 1) monitor disease exposure of individuals, 2) monitor lamb survival, and 3) estimate connectivity of sub-herds. After two-years of baseline data collection, we will implement a test and removal strategy in two of the sub herds, a mineral supplementation strategy in two sub herds, and no management intervention in the remaining sub herd. The efficacy of management treatments in increasing lamb survival, increasing population growth, and reducing *M. ovi* detections will be monitored for an additional two years. We expect results of this management experiment are applicable to the management of struggling bighorn sheep herds across Montana and the intermountain west.

The research project is co-directed by Dr. Dan Walsh (University of Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit) and Dr. Kelly Proffitt (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks). The research associate will be located in Dr. Proffitt’s office located at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Bozeman. During the April-August field season, the research associate will be expected to spend 2-5 days per week in the field, staying at field camp located near the study site.

The research associate will be involved in project management, fieldwork, and data analysis. The research associate will be responsible for data acquisition and management which will require experience using Program R to manage data, conduct analyses, produce standardize maps and reporting documents. The research associate will coordinate annual and final reporting which will require excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to coordinate with multiple agency and University staff. Experience using Program R to develop and conduct spatial and/or demographic analyses of wildlife telemetry data using Program R is required. The research associate will conduct fieldwork and supervise a 3-4 person field crew during spring and summer. Experience working independently in remote areas, hiking 7-10 miles per day off trail with a pack, and interacting with private landowners is required. Routine planned travel may be required.

Salary: $40K per year plus benefits

To apply please email cover letter describing qualifications, resume and contact information for 3 references to Dr. Kelly Proffitt at kproffitt@mt.gov.