



The INSTITUTE for BIRD POPULATIONS



SEASONAL BIOLOGIST – Avian Point Counts and Yellow-billed Cuckoo surveys 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 and assist with Yellow-billed Cuckoo surveys on our Southern Colorado Plateau Network Avian Monitoring project.

PROJECT DATES: Early April – mid-August 2023.

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 conduct playback surveys for Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Petrified Forest NP

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

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 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.

During the second portion of the season, the seasonal biologist will conduct playback surveys for Yellow-billed Cuckoos at pre-defined survey points along riparian habitat at Petrified Forest NP, working closely with other IBP staff. These surveys will involve navigating to backcountry sites before dawn, on foot or potentially using ATVs, and surveying sequential points through 11 AM. Along with permanent IBP staff (Harrison Jones, Steve Albert), the seasonal biologist will conduct four replicate surveys of all points in YBCU habitat between July 1st and August 15th. In between field visits, 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.

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 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. Cuckoo surveys will tentatively involve 2-5 days of survey work every couple of weeks, with data entry on the biologist's own schedule in between.

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 with public restrooms and (sometimes) showers, with occasional backcountry camping required. Lodging in Flagstaff or Holbrook will be provided from early July to mid-August, if needed.

COMPENSATION: This position is considered seasonal IBP staff and will receive payment of \$3,300 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.