



# The INSTITUTE for BIRD POPULATIONS



## **Avian Point-Count Technicians in Four Corners National Parks**

Spend your summer doing field work in the beautiful National Parks of the Southern Colorado Plateau! We are looking for field technicians to conduct breeding bird point-count surveys as part of a long-term monitoring plan for the National Parks.

**PROJECT DATES:** Early April – early July 2024

**TRAINING:** The field season will begin with a three-week intensive training period focusing on field safety and implementation of unlimited-radius point counts with distance sampling. Field crews should aim to have a good knowledge of the songs and calls of southwestern birds before the training period begins and will participate in online review sessions of bird songs prior to the in-person training period.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Primary duties will involve conducting point-count surveys on National Park Service lands, including Bandelier NM, Canyon de Chelley NM, Grand Canyon NP, Mesa Verde NP, Petrified Forest NP, and Wupatki NM. Habitat types surveyed will range from desert grassland and shrubland, to pinyon-juniper woodland, to montane conifer forest. Work will consist of generally week-long visits to national parks, travelling from Flagstaff using a combination of personal and rental vehicles. On a typical day, surveyors will wake up before dawn and spend the morning conducting

multi-species distance surveys (point counts) while rapidly recording habitat characteristics and survey conditions at each count station. 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 possibly scoping out the next day's surveys sites. Work will be physically demanding, involving several-mile off-trail hikes into survey sites, often with steep topography, and very occasional short (1-3 day) backpacking trips to access survey sites far from roads.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Previous ecological fieldwork in rugged environments, prior ear birding experience, and/or familiarity with the songs and calls of southwestern birds are strongly preferred. An interest in learning about avian natural history and ecology in the Four Corners region is also desirable. Survey work will be distributed across national parks in three states (Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado) on the Colorado Plateau, requiring substantial car travel and willingness to lead a nomadic life for a few months. Technicians will be 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 is a plus. A personal vehicle is highly desirable but not strictly required.

**SCHEDULE:** Typically, 7 days on and 3 off, 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.

**EQUIPMENT:** Volunteer technicians are expected to provide their own binoculars, hiking boots and camping gear for car camping (tent, sleeping bag, folding chair, etc.). Technicians with backpacking experience should also bring their gear for backcountry camping. 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 the field season. Sleeping arrangements may involve shared bedrooms; we will accommodate requests for same-gender roommates where possible. Field accommodations will involve car camping in public and private campgrounds within national parks that include public restrooms and (sometimes) showers, with occasional backcountry camping required.

**COMPENSATION:** Surveyors will be considered seasonal IBP staff and will receive payment of \$2,600 per month (before payroll taxes). We will additionally provide training, shared housing in Flagstaff, and reimbursement of project-related mileage for personal vehicles.

**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.