

Fall 2024 MS Position Announcement - Utah State University

Position title: MS Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), Shorebirds as Environmental Sentinels

Position description: The GRA will focus on understanding how shorebird populations throughout the Intermountain West portion of the Pacific Flyway have responded to changing water supply. Research will focus on assisting in shorebird surveys and analyzing data collected by the Intermountain West Shorebird Survey, which has documented the abundance and distribution of shorebirds at 189 sites during spring/fall migration (see: <https://sagelandcollaborative.org/shorebirds>). Key aims include: 1) assessing how shorebird populations have changed in response to declining water availability; 2) understanding the importance of wetland habitat for shorebirds across spatial scales; and 3) modeling populations under projected water supply change to better manage shorebirds in the future. The chosen student will work with a partnership that includes the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and several non-profit organizations. They will also help conduct shorebird surveys in collaboration with volunteer birdwatchers and professional biologists. Interested applicants should note that the cover letter addressing motivations and qualifications will be the most important factor in choosing the finalist pool.

Supervisor: Dr. T.J. Clark-Wolf, Department of Wildland Resources and Ecology Center, Utah State University.

Stipend/Salary: \$22K plus benefits, full tuition/fees waiver, and field/travel stipend

Start date: August 2024

Minimum qualifications:

1. Undergraduate degree in Wildlife, Biology, Ecology, or related field by start date.
2. Excellent written, organizational, and personal communication skills.
3. Ability to work both independently and collaboratively.
4. Ability to meet deadlines.

Desired qualifications:

1. Some background/interest in statistics, GIS/remote sensing techniques, and the R coding language. Applicants without formal experience will be considered if they are highly motivated to learn.
2. Some background/interest in understanding and/or building shorebird identification skills and counting techniques.
3. Experience working collaboratively with volunteer birdwatchers and professional biologists.

How to Apply: Please submit a *single PDF* to t.j.clark-wolf@usu.edu titled "MSPosition_Shorebird_ApplicantLastName_ApplicantFirstName". For example, if your name is T.J. Clark-Wolf, your single .pdf will be titled "MSPosition_Shorebird_Clark-Wolf_T.J.pdf". This PDF should include:

1. A one-page cover letter that describes your motivations, qualifications and how this position advances your career goals.
2. A CV/resume that includes contact information (phone and email) for two references.
3. Unofficial transcripts from undergraduate education.
4. Scientific writing sample (such as undergraduate thesis, capstone project, or written product from undergraduate coursework).

Applicants who are members of racial or ethnic minorities, first generation college students, from a low-income background, or identifying as women or LGBTQIA+ are strongly encouraged to apply.

We will begin reviewing on February 19, 2024 and leave the position open until filled.

Utah State University is a Research I (Extensive Doctoral) land-grant institution with a student body of over 24,000, 8 academic colleges, a school of Graduate Studies, and diverse research programs. The main campus is located in Logan, a community of 100,000 people. Logan is 85 miles north of Salt Lake City in scenic Cache Valley, a semi-rural mountain basin with nearby ski resorts, lakes, rivers, and mountains providing many recreational opportunities. The area has a low cost of living and provides a high quality of life. [Learn more](#) about Logan, UT.

Utah State is committed to cultivating a [diverse, equitable, and inclusive community](#) where different perspectives, values, cultures, and identities are acknowledged, welcomed, and valued. We seek to recruit, hire, and retain people from all walks of life who will champion excellence in education, research, discovery, outreach, and service. We believe that promoting a strong sense of community and belonging empowers and engages all members of USU to thrive and be successful. [Learn more](#) about USU.

