

## OPEN CALL FOR AVIFAUNA MONITORING TRAINING PROGRAM 2024

### Observatório de Aves da Mantiqueira - OAMA

#### PRESENTATION

OAMa is a non-profit institution that conducts research, online and in person science outreach activities, and professional training in the field of ornithology.

The Avifauna Monitoring Training Program provides excellent technical skill training in field ornithology, professional development, and enables the expansion of data collection at OAMa with the participation of volunteers and trainees. This approach is essential for the quality of the work developed and the data collected, as well as for the well-being of the studied animals.

Our training program is based on the Klamath Bird Observatory program, adapted to our local reality. It follows the guidelines of ICMBio/CEMAVE (Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation / National Center for Wild Bird Research and Conservation) and is in accordance with Brazilian environmental legislation. The program curriculum includes theoretical classes and practical activities focusing on bird banding techniques and the use of mist nets. The program requires exclusive dedication and temporary residence in southeastern Brazil.

This year we offer three trainee positions for an 8-week period. The full training includes a sequence of topics covered in theory and practice within a curriculum. The curriculum includes theoretical classes, practical exercises, written assignments, reading and discussion of scientific papers, and seminars presentations. It is worth noting that field activities may involve intense physical demand, such as long walks in mountainous areas with constant altitude variation, and the need to carry field equipment backpacks. Therefore, it is essential to have good physical fitness and enthusiasm for outdoor activities.

The training will take place in two locations. Part of the season will occur at the OAMa Field Station, and part at the [Instituto Alto Montana](#). Both locations provide housing, communal kitchen, and collective office space. Field activities will take place in the vicinity of the accommodations at both locations.

To participate in the training, it is necessary to register and go through a selection process consisting of sending a letter of intent, a recommendation letter, and participating in an interview.

## **OPEN POSITIONS**

This year we offer three trainee positions for the training program with residence from September 16th to November 8th. The total cost per trainee is BRL 2600,00 (around \$505,00) with the option to make payment in two installments of BRL 1300,00. This amount includes housing, transportation during the program, equipment and other materials, classes, and all assistance necessary for the trainee's development. However, are not included in the training cost the round-trip tickets to the OAMa Field Station, neither are the food requirements during the residency period.

## **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

To participate in the OAMa Avifauna Monitoring Training Program, the following basic requirements are necessary:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Successfully pass the selection process;
- Availability for an 8-week residency in full-time dedication mode in southeastern Brazil;
- Sign commitment, volunteering, and responsibility agreements;

It is essential to have good physical capacity and enthusiasm for high-demand activities. These activities may involve long walks in challenging terrain, significant physical effort, long periods of activity, early mornings, and carrying heavy equipment.

## **APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

Candidates interested in the training program must apply for the selection process by May 31st. The application should be submitted by filling out this [form](#), which includes a request for a letter of intent, along with information for two reference

contacts. The letter of intent should be no more than two pages in A4 size, Arial font, size 12, single-spaced, with 2.5 cm margins. In this letter, we want to learn a bit about you (name, region of residence, age, experience in ornithology, fieldwork, and volunteering), why you would like to participate in the program, and what are your expectations. The reference contacts should be individuals who know you professionally, such as teachers, mentors, colleagues, and supervisors.

We will contact each applicant via email between June 14th, 2024, and June 16th, 2024. Those selected in this first phase will be invited to a video interview between June 17th, 2024, and June 19th, 2024. During this conversation, we will provide more details about the program, get to know the applicant better, their expectations, experiences, and limitations. During the selection process, we will contact the references, and after the conversation, we will get in touch again to communicate the results. The selection process will be concluded by June 24th, 2023.

We are looking for proactive, dynamic, enthusiastic, well-disposed individuals with good teamwork experience and engaged in fieldwork, birds, and conservation.

## PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The OAMA's avifauna monitoring training program encompasses a theoretical curriculum aimed at providing a robust education for field ornithologists who are inquisitive and ethically responsible, with a broad vision, carefulness, and a focus on collecting quality and safe data. In addition to field practices, the curriculum includes a study routine, discussion activities, readings, and content production on the following topics:

- Well-being, ethics, and bird safety;
  - Monitoring methodologies and protocols;
  - Capture-mark-recapture (bird banding);
- Natural history of birds:
  - Topography and anatomy;
  - Annual cycle of birds (molt, reproduction, and migration);
  - Molt analysis and age classification using the WRP method;

- Data collected during bird banding at OAMa:
  - Cloaca protuberance and brood patch;
  - Fat accumulation;
  - Plumage and molt;
  - Skull ossification;
  - Measurements;
- Species identification:
  - By sight;
  - By vocalization;
  - In the hand;
- Sampling design and data quality;
- Utility, ethics, and how to use bird banding data.

## ACTIVITIES AND DEMANDS

To promote technical training in field ornithology, activities of avifauna monitoring are carried out, complemented by the study of theoretical material. Field activities encompass the practical part of the training, focused on learning the monitoring methodologies used by OAMa, with a focus on bird banding in the understory. The program aims to make trainees capable of executing these methods with agility, efficiency, and safety. The training also includes a theoretical curriculum based on banding manuals, books, and scientific articles in the field of ornithology, professional council resolutions, and environmental legislation to provide support and complement field training.

The routine is divided between field activities, data management activities, preparation and maintenance of materials and equipment, trail and study area maintenance, theoretical classes, seminars, development of communication materials for society, and study time. Weekends will be reserved for rest and free time.

Field activities start early, before sunrise. Some days may have longer activities (exceeding 10 hours), while others will be shorter. It is important to have

the physical fitness and endurance for trails and similar tasks. The routine may vary in some weeks according to activity demand and weather conditions.

→ It is the responsibility of all trainees to:

- ◆ Participate in field activities;
- ◆ Organize materials;
- ◆ Enter data;
- ◆ Study, read, and complete proposed exercises;
- ◆ Prepare and present at least one seminar;
- ◆ Provide support during field activities;
- ◆ Maintain materials;
- ◆ Engage in communication about monitoring activities (e.g., posting bird capture bulletins on OAMA's Instagram);
- ◆ Participate in organizing and cleaning shared living spaces used by trainees (dormitory, bathroom, and kitchen);
- ◆ Prioritize collective space organization;
- ◆ Prioritize the safety of everyone in the team, including oneself;
- ◆ Maintain the good condition of materials and equipment;
- ◆ Uphold the good reputation of the organization and represent OAMA appropriately during your stay, adhering to the organization's principles and values.

→ It is the responsibility of OAMA to:

- ◆ Provide updated and appropriate study material;
- ◆ Offer training and supervision in the proposals;
- ◆ Be available to answer questions and assist with whatever is necessary regarding the proposed activities;
- ◆ Prioritize the safety of everyone in the team, including oneself;
- ◆ Prioritize the organization of collective space;
- ◆ Ensure the good condition of materials and equipment in use.

## EXPECTATIONS

The expectations for the long-term training are that, by the end of the two months, the trainee will be able to fulfill the following skills:

- Recognize, handle, and organize all materials for field activities practiced at OAMa;
- Set up and store nets efficiently and swiftly;
- Handle and manipulate birds of different sizes safely and swiftly;
- Extract birds from mist nets independently and in total safety;
- Collect all banding data correctly, understanding the significance of each;
- Classify the age of birds using the WRP method;
- Identify local bird species during banding (with the assistance of guides and vocalization references);
- Perform bird banding activities and complementary methods of sampling and avifauna monitoring under supervision;
- Discuss environmental legislation and national regulatory standards regarding the methods employed.

## LODGING LOGISTICS

During the program, trainees will reside at the Alto Montana Institute, located in Itamonte/Minas Gerais, and at the OAMa Research Station in Bocaina de Minas/Minas Gerais. Both locations have shared rooms, office space, and a communal kitchen available. Bedding and towels will be provided by OAMa.

The Alto Montana lodging and the Research Station have shared kitchen spaces with common stoves, wood stoves, refrigerators, and all basic kitchen utensils. Each trainee is responsible for their own meals and for organizing and cleaning their space. Organization, cleanliness, and maintenance of work areas and daily use are mandatory. Transportation for grocery shopping and other needs is provided periodically by OAMa, facilitating transportation for everyone.

We highlight that failure to meet obligations and lack of commitment to tasks may result in an early termination of the training, without refunding the costs. Dedication and commitment to all tasks and responsibilities mentioned are essential.

## SCHEDULE

Activity	Date
Opening of registrations	13/05/2024
Closing of registrations	31/05/2024
Announcement of selected candidates for interviews	14/06/2024
Announcement of final selected candidates	24/06/2024
Training start date	16/09/2024
Training end date	08/11/2024

## CONTACT

If you have any questions, please email us at [contact@oama.eco.br](mailto:contact@oama.eco.br) with the subject "TRAINING PROGRAM - INQUIRY". Learn more about OAMa at [www.oama.eco.br](http://www.oama.eco.br).