

Graduate Research Assistantship Bird Community Response to Forest Disturbance

Project Title:

Assessing the Responses of Breeding Birds to Weather-Related Forest Disturbances at Multiple Spatial Scales

Project Description:

I have an M.S. research assistantship available for a project investigating the effects of forest disturbance on bird communities in Arkansas and the surrounding region. This project is part of a broader study seeking to integrate data from the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program and USGS Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) Program to assess the impacts of natural and anthropogenic disturbance events on the abundance of forest birds. The objective of this project is to evaluate the feasibility of using a Before-After, Control-Impact (BACI) design to identify changes in forest bird community structure resulting from recent weather-related disturbances (e.g. ice damage) in Arkansas. BACI designs use sampling of control and impact sites through time, where the impact sites are those affected by a given disturbance event and the control sites maintain ecological characteristics sufficiently similar to the impact sites prior to the disturbance. This design provides replication within the before and after time periods and is a viable alternative to traditional experimental designs for detecting cause-effect relationships in complex systems. The student will have the opportunity to work with personnel from a variety of state and federal agencies (Arkansas Game and Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service).

Benefits and Location:

This position starts August 15, 2009 and is funded for two years position. It includes an annual stipend of \$15,000 and paid tuition. The Assistantship is within the School of Forest Resources located at the University of Arkansas at the Monticello (UAM) campus. UAM occupies a rural setting in southeastern Arkansas and is part of the University of Arkansas system. The School of Forest Resources (SFR) is the headquarters of the Arkansas Forest Resources Center, a University of Arkansas Center of Excellence.

Qualifications:

Preferred applicants should be highly motivated with a good attitude, strong work ethic, and attention to detail. Well developed oral and written communication skills are desired. The ideal candidate will have knowledge of forest ecology and forest breeding birds, strong quantitative skills, and experience with GIS (ESRI ArcGIS suite) and database management (specifically using MS Access). Applicants should possess a B.S. in Wildlife Biology, Forestry, or related field with a 2.7 overall undergraduate GPA or 3.0 GPA in the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate courses and satisfactory GRE scores (verbal+quantitative ~1000).

To Apply:

Send a cover letter, resume with 3 references, copy of college transcripts, and GRE scores to Dr. Todd M. Fearer. Applications by email are encouraged (send application materials as attachments). To facilitate consideration, interested applicants also should apply for graduate

admission to UAM (<https://www.uamont.edu/forms/admissions/admissionsform2.asp>) and submit the SFR Graduate Application (http://www.afrc.uamont.edu/sfr/graduate_forms.htm).

For additional information contact (email preferred)

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