



JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Audubon Conservation Ranching Ecologist
Location: Helena or Remote in Montana
Salary: \$45,000-\$50,000, depending on experience
Benefits: Medical, Dental, Vision, Simple IRA w/match, Vacation

About the Organization

Founded in 1976, Montana Audubon is an independent, statewide conservation organization whose mission is to promote appreciation, knowledge and conservation of Montana's native birds, other wildlife, and natural ecosystems and to safeguard biological diversity for current and future generations. In our vision for the future, we seek to create an environment in which all of Montana's native bird species have healthy, sustainable populations, ensured by long-term habitat security. Montana Audubon uses bird science, conservation education and engages in public policy work to protect our state's incomparable wildlife and landscapes.

Summary of Position

We are looking for an Ecologist to join our team! The ACR Ecologist will work with ranchers, partners, and Audubon staff to support the expansion of the Audubon Conservation Ranching (ACR) program in Montana, supporting private landowners who implement bird-friendly land management actions. The Ecologist will assist in the recruitment of ranches and ranch certification; development of regional certification protocols and ranch-specific Habitat Management Plans; coordination of avian and grassland monitoring and data management; delivery of agreements and technical assistance for grazing system projects; collaboration with state and federal agency partners, peer organizations and NGOs; and will collaborate with Montana Audubon staff working on the ACR project in Montana. The candidate will represent Montana Audubon at events to promote and educate the public on Montana Audubon's ACR programs, grassland bird conservation, and grassland management practices. The ideal candidate will bring an enthusiasm for birds, rangelands and conservation.

This position will be a direct report to the ACR Manager and will work closely with Montana Audubon staff, the National Audubon ACR staff, and our conservation partners.

Competitive applicants will have many of the following characteristics, including:

Knowledge of Birds and Bird Habitat

- Ability to identify 150+ avian species that breed in Montana by visual and aural detection methods.
- Background and experience in point counts, avian habitat, habitat management and associations, habitat improvement projects, and an understanding of management implications.

Knowledge of Ranching and Rangeland Ecology

- Knowledge and appreciation of ranching culture, range management, and sustainable ranching practices.
- Familiarity with common grassland management activities and grazing systems in the Northern Great Plains.
- The ability to identify plant species and habitat types in grassland, shrubland and conifer communities.

Communication and Interpersonal skills

- Strong interpersonal skills for communicating and working with landowners, state and federal agency partners, peer organizations and NGOs.
- Strong ability to foster and maintain working relationships with landowners.
- Comfortable participating in local outreach events to share expertise, and planning and participating in landowner workshops and other educational events.

Grant and Project Management

- Ability to provide excellent technical services to agricultural producers participating in conservation programs, including providing timely access to financial assistance programs for enrolled ranches, through Audubon, local, state, and federal financial assistance opportunities.
- Ability to communicate program goals and work with landowners to develop plans for each project.
- Able to support grant reporting related to Audubon conservation work, including writing reports.
- Proficient at completing project-related administrative tasks and maintaining detailed records.

Data Collection and Field Skills

- Experience collecting and managing high quality data, with a proven track record for accurate data collection, entry, and management.
- Working knowledge of ArcGIS, GPS, and other GIS technology.
- Skilled in navigating with GPS, topographic maps, and cell phone travel apps.
- Competent driving vehicles on remote, unmaintained road systems.
- Physical capability to hike an average of ~3–5 miles a day, carrying essential gear, food, and water; experience hiking off-trail in remote, densely vegetated, steep and/or rugged landscapes in tough weather conditions.

- Comfortable working within landscapes where potentially hazardous animals (i.e., dogs, bears, mountain lions, moose, cattle, bison, rattlesnakes, and biting insects) may occur.
- Willingness to work independently in remote areas.
- Enthusiasm for vehicle-based and backcountry camping.
- Adherence to field safety protocols and use of good judgment in the field.
- Enthusiasm for fostering a culture of safety.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or advanced degree in wildlife biology, range management, ecology, natural resources management, wildlife management, or related field. An equivalent combination of education and experience will also be considered.
- At least three years' experience with similar work. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in avian identification, monitoring and habitat management.
- Ability to work independently and pro-actively. Creativity and curiosity are a plus!
- Experience working with local agencies and organizations to help ranchers secure cost-share and incentive program funding to implement improved rangeland management practices.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills, including public speaking. The ideal candidate will be able to effectively communicate with a wide range of individuals (e.g. conservation partners, private landowners, volunteers, and local community members).
- Strong project management skills, including but not limited to, setting and implementing effective goals and objectives, problem-solving, time management, contract and grant management, creating and maintaining collaborations with other organizations, developing public awareness activities, preparing reports, etc.
- Experience with project leadership and data management.
- Experience fostering inclusive and collaborative work environments is valued. Candidate must be able to work both autonomously and with a team.
- Must have a valid Driver's License. ACR staff are expected to use their own vehicles for most work and are reimbursed based on mileage.
- Must be comfortable and willing to work occasional weekends and evenings with extensive day travel and occasional overnight travel, as necessary.

Applicants must possess: A Valid driver's license with a clean driving record. Suitable hiking, camping, and backpacking gear. An AWD or 4WD capable vehicle is helpful.

To Apply

Please email a single PDF that includes a one-page cover letter describing your interest in this position and summarizing your qualifications, a resume or CV, and 3 references (names and contact information) to jessicafrench@mtaudubon.org. Please reach out to Jessica French with any questions.

Montana Audubon is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, creed, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability or status as a U.S. veteran.