

PhD Position; Demography and migratory ecology of Sprague's Pipit

We are recruiting a PhD student to lead research using the Motus animal tracking network to study the migratory ecology and demography of a grassland bird of high conservation concern, the Sprague's Pipit. The student will be co-advised by Dr. Clark Rushing at Utah State University and Dr. Andy Boyce at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Fieldwork will take place on and around the American Prairie Reserve in northcentral Montana. The student will lead a team of 3-4 interns/technicians each season as part of a larger Smithsonian grassland ecology research group. Fieldwork will involve nest-searching, capturing and tagging Sprague's Pipits and other grassland songbirds, re-sighting marked birds, and conducting point counts. The student may also assist with setup and maintenance of Motus towers in the project area. A large part of the student's work will center around the development of models to infer demographic rates (survival, movement, reproductive success) and population dynamics of Sprague's Pipits using multiple sources of data, including Motus detections. The student will have flexibility to develop their own lines of research within the larger project, provided they contribute to our knowledge on the ecology and conservation of Sprague's Pipit.

The student is expected begin classes in Fall 2021 at Utah State University in Logan, UT. The student would have the option of joining the project as a member of the field crew in May 2021 (paid) to gain familiarity with the ecosystem, study species and field techniques.

Utah State University is a Research I land-grant institution with 42 departments, 8 academic colleges, and diverse research programs. The main campus is located in Logan, 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

Qualifications: Master's degree in Wildlife Biology or a related field. Ideal candidates would have demonstrated experience with songbird nest-searching/capture/banding as well as mark-recapture modeling. Familiarity with grassland systems and MOTUS technology is desirable but not required.

To apply, please send the following materials via email to Dr. Clark Rushing (clark.rushing@usu.edu) *and* Dr. Andy Boyce (boycea@si.edu): (1) Cover letter explaining career goals, academic interests and relevant experience (2) CV/resume including contact information for at least 3 references.

Additional information is available here:

SCBI Grassland Ecology Program: <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/news/restoring-americas-prairie>

Utah State Wildland Resources Department: <https://qcnr.usu.edu/wild/>

American Prairie Reserve: www.americanprairie.org



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