Avian Agro-Ecology Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Wildlife, Fish, & Conservation Biology- University of California, Davis

Application review begin date: May 15, 2017

Start dates are flexible, but expected around the Fall of 2017.

SUMMARY:

We are seeking a Postdoctoral Researcher with expertise in agro-ecology, community ecology, and/or conservation biology to join Daniel Karp's lab in the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at the University of California, Davis. The appointment will be for one-year with the possibility of extension based on performance.

The postdoctoral researcher will join a collaborative and interdisciplinary team of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates focused on exploring strategies to manage birds and bird-mediated ecosystem services on strawberries fields in California agro-ecosystems. The team is based at UC Davis (Prof. Daniel Karp), UC Berkeley (Profs. Kathryn De Master), UC Riverside (Prof. Erin Wilson Rankin), Washington State University (Prof. William Snyder), and the University of British Columbia (Profs. Jiaying Zhao and Kai Chan), and is supported through the United States Department of Agriculture's BENRE program area.

Birds are increasingly viewed as pests and potential foodborne disease vectors in farmlands. Yet birds also benefit growers by consuming pests. The core aims of this project are to: (1) identify pest, disease vector, and beneficial bird species and quantify their net economic impact on strawberry crops, (2) determine how farms could be co-managed to achieve conservation, food safety, and production goals, and (3) explore how farmers' values and attitudes towards birds influence farming practices. Through our socio-ecological approach and by disseminating findings in workshops and with decision-support tools, this project has great scope for changing practices and reframing grower attitudes towards birds.

The project postdoc, with advice and mentorship from Karp and other project personnel, will be responsible for the execution of ecological field research including: bird and insect censuses across 20 farms, nest monitoring, and exclosure experiments. The postdoc will also coordinate a mist-netting program to obtain bird fecal samples, which will be used to build bird diet profiles though DNA meta-barcoding. In the field, the postdoc will oversee undergraduate assistants and work with a project coordinator to recruit and maintain relationships with growers. Two 3-month field seasons in the California Central Coast are anticipated. The postdoc will be additionally responsible for (1) helping coordinate monthly project meetings, (2) data management, (3) statistical analysis and modeling of ecological field data, (4) preparation and submission of academic manuscripts, and (5) development and dissemination of outreach materials.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- A Ph.D. in Ecology or a closely related field.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills and an ability to work both independently and collaboratively with researchers, growers, and practitioners from different backgrounds.
- Experience designing, planning, and executing ecological field research.
- Demonstrated ability to follow through on project deliverables and communicate findings in high quality peer-reviewed journals.
- Strong statistical skills and demonstrated proficiency with R or another statistical program.

- Strong attention to detail, evidenced by prior research.

The following qualification are preferred but not required:

- Prior experience working in agro-ecosystems and/or interfacing with growers.
- Prior experience managing large-scale field projects and mentoring students.
- Experience in bird identification and ornithological field methods such as mist-netting, point-count censuses, and/or nest searching.
- Demonstrated ability and/or desire to integrate results across interdisciplinary teams.

SALARY:

Salary and benefits are consistent with UC Davis policy and applicant experience. Salary for a 1st year Postdoc is $48,216

TO APPLY:

Please apply by preparing: (1) your CV inclusive of publications, awards, and field experience, (2) a cover letter discussing your qualifications, research interests, and motivations for this position, (3) a 1-2 paragraph summary about your commitment to and/or experience with furthering diversity in the sciences, (4) a 1-2 paragraph statement regarding your interest in and/or experience with engaging growers and interdisciplinary research teams, and (5) contact information for 3 references. Send all materials to dkarp@ucdavis.edu with the subject line: "***Post-doc USDA BENRE application.***"

For more information about research in Daniel Karp's lab, visit: http://karp.ucdavis.edu.