

**Job Title:** Avian agroecology technician

**Description:** We are seeking 1-2 seasonal field technicians from mid-March through June 2026, with possible extension of work until July, to assist PhD student Karen Gallardo Cruz within the Karp Lab at UC Davis on a study examining the effects of tractor noise on barn owls in vineyards. Specifically, our project will explore how farm noise affects the behavior of barn owls and their rodent prey in vineyards. We will experimentally play tractor noise and track its effects on rodent boldness/abundance as well as on owl hunting in vineyards. We will also test an 'audio lure' that farmers may use to concentrate owl hunting in problem areas. This project is a collaboration between UC Davis (Karen Gallardo Cruz, Prof. Daniel Karp, Prof. Gail Patricelli), Cal Poly Humboldt (Prof. Matthew Johnson), and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (Prof. Clinton Francis).



The field technician will work collaboratively to monitor barn owl nest boxes, quantify nestling growth, use GPS devices to track the movement of parent birds, monitor rodent boldness/abundance with camera traps and non-toxic bait stations, and conduct night-time surveys of owls with night-vision binoculars. Additionally, the field technician will assist in capture of parent birds to collect morphometric measurements, as well as fit/remove GPS tags via backpack harnesses. Other duties will include entering data, setting up/taking down heavy electronic equipment for noise experiments and nest box cameras, climbing tall orchard ladders to work with owl nest boxes, and other related tasks. Much of the fieldwork will occur at night-time, though there will also be daytime work. All fieldwork will occur in vineyards surrounding Lodi, CA. Field training will be provided to help the technician become familiar with established protocols and methodologies, but prior raptor-handling experience is a plus. A field vehicle and housing will be provided throughout the field season.

**Minimum qualifications:**

1. Some prior experience conducting ecological field work.
2. Willingness to handle wildlife (barn owls, specifically).
3. Able to tolerate heights, loud noises, night work, inclement weather, and irregular schedules.
4. Comfortable working with minimal supervision, as well as part of a team.
5. Able to follow standardized protocols and carefully record and enter data.
6. Able to lift objects up to 50 lbs, carry them a short distance without assistance, and be able to carry heavier objects with assistance (to set up equipment for noise experiment).
7. Self-directed, with professional and clear communication skills to coordinate with supervisor.

**Preferred qualifications:**

1. Prior bird handling experience, ideally with raptors or other large birds.
2. Some prior data management experience (data entry and cleaning/review processes).
3. Experience with bird banding and/or GPS tagging.
4. Driver's license and clean driving record (to operate provided university vehicle and drive between work locations when needed).

**Duration:** mid-March 2026 through mid-June 2026, with a possible 2-week extension of work until July 2026.

**Wage:** Approximately \$20-\$23 per hour depending on prior experience. This is a full-time (40 hours per week), limited-term appointment through the University of California, Davis. Housing will be provided, and the successful applicant will be expected to relocate to the study region for the duration of the appointment.

**To apply:** Email to Karen Gallardo Cruz ([kgallardo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kgallardo@ucdavis.edu)) a single document (PDF preferred) with the subject line “Avian agroecology technician” including:

- (1) a cover letter describing previous research experience (ideally with birds), interest in this position, description of how you meet the qualifications, and, briefly, why this position fits into your career goals;
- (2) a resume or CV;
- (3) contact information for two references

**Closing date:** First review date will be October 15<sup>th</sup>. Applications afterward will be considered thereafter on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

The Karp Lab is committed to maintaining a supportive, inclusive, and safe scientific environment in the laboratory and the field. Applicants will receive field safety standards and training.

*The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. For the complete University of California nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy see: <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/NondiscrimAffirmAct>*