

## **Title: Field Conservation Internship**

Field Conservation Internship: Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (Off-grounds: Lake County, IL)

### **General Summary**

One field conservation internship is available for a regional snake conservation project. The intern will conduct surveys for smooth green snakes and their nests in Lake County, IL sites with occasional work in neighboring counties as needed. Some amphibian disease sampling work may also be assigned. Field work for the internships will occur 5 days per week (generally M-F although this may vary during hatching season) spanning 13-15 weeks from early May through September 2018 (allowing some flexibility of start and end dates).

### **Duties & Responsibilities**

The Field Conservation intern will be trained to conduct coverboard surveys for snake populations, monitoring snakes via mark-recapture, assisting with smooth greensnake nest monitoring, *ex situ* nest incubation, monitoring of snake headstart release sites, and conducting disease surveillance. Field work will take place in multiple grassland preserve sites outside of Chicago. The intern will gain valuable skills with reptile field sampling techniques, mark-recapture studies, disease surveillance, and applied conservation projects that combine *in situ* conservation efforts with *ex situ* headstarting approaches.

### **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

- Handling, catching, identifying, measuring and marking small non-venomous snakes via coverboards, drift fences, and visual encounter surveys
- Handling, capturing, identifying, and swabbing snakes and amphibians for disease surveillance
- Monitor nests in field sites with accurate notes and assist with some nest incubation
- Traveling between field sampling sites in personal vehicle and decontaminating sampling gear between sites
- Maintain accurate data sheets and field notes
- Recording environmental conditions
- Conducting vegetation surveys
- Data entry into Microsoft Excel/Dropbox
- Deploying data loggers

### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Because these positions are based at multiple field sites, applicants **must have a personal vehicle** for use for travel to and from field sites. The ideal candidates will be comfortable working in the outdoors with little shade, and with abundant biting insects, ticks, and poison ivy. The ideal candidate will effectively communicate with the Curator of Herpetology and forest preserve agency personnel regarding project details. Intern must be able to effectively communicate about the field projects with the public as the field sites are forest preserves with hikers, bicyclists, etc. The intern may participate in Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum-related activities as necessary, but the internships are primarily field-based. The intern will perform other duties related to the field project as assigned. There may be occasional travel to other counties to assist other field interns with snake survey work. Field housing may be available through the forest preserve district for \$250/month.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES**

Must be able to lift and carry at least 35 lbs. (wooden or rubber cover objects) through habitat by foot; basic knowledge of local fauna or willingness to learn; must be willing to work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, rain, heat, cold, etc.; must be tolerant of insect bites (because of its toxicity, DEET-based repellents cannot be used when working with reptiles and amphibians); proficiency with Microsoft Office Excel and Word; flexibility regarding meetings, and situations as they arise; **must be willing to work independently** or as part of a two-person team; training will be provided for all internship activities.

## **Qualifications & Requirements**

### **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- B.S. in biology, ecology, or a natural resources related field (with relevant course work)

### **PREFERRED EXPERIENCE:**

- Previous experience working with wildlife and/or conducting scientific research; preference for those that have field-based wildlife handling experience; have conducted or assisted with wildlife ecological studies, including, snake monitoring or amphibian sampling; possess knowledge of Illinois fauna, particularly reptiles and amphibians

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Must possess a valid driver's license
- Must be comfortable with snakes
- A strong work ethic and a good sense of humor are ideal

**TO APPLY:** Send a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references as a single pdf file to [fieldinternship@naturemuseum.org](mailto:fieldinternship@naturemuseum.org)