MS Research Assistantship – Mammal Community Responses to U.S.A.-Mexico Border Wall – University of Arizona

Start Date: August 12, 2024
End Date: December 2026
Salary: Approximately $33,170 (12-months) with benefits and tuition waiver each year for two years (24-months)

Position Description:
Drs. Javan Bauder and Jesse Alston are recruiting an MS graduate student to study the responses of terrestrial mammals to the U.S.A.-Mexico border wall in southern Arizona, U.S.A., and northern Sonora, Mexico, to develop recommendations for mitigating border wall impacts on mammals in the borderlands. This is a collaborative project between the University of Arizona, National Park Service, and El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve. The successful applicant will work with the principal investigators at the University of Arizona and project partners to develop and implement a camera trap study to collect occurrence and activity data on various mammal species and use statistical models to examine the influence of border wall proximity, anthropogenic features and activities, and landscape characteristics on these mammals.

The student will enroll in the University of Arizona’s School of Natural Resources and the Environment beginning in August 2024 and begin field work in early 2025. Field sites will include Organ Pipe National Monument and El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve, with some potential to expand field work into adjacent protected areas. The student will be expected to develop a robust sampling design to evaluate border wall impacts on the region’s mammals, deploy and monitor camera traps, process images, and store camera data according to best practices. The student will be supported through research assistantships through the School of Natural Resources and the Environment for two academic years and two summers. We anticipate working with the student to obtain additional support (either through research and/or teaching assistantships) and research funding. With help from the principal investigators, the student will apply for the necessary federal, state, and university permits, manage and analyze data, hire and supervise field crews of technicians, undergraduate students, and/or volunteers, write permit reports and peer-reviewed publications, apply for additional research funding, and assist in general project logistics. The student will also be responsible for ensuring that project deliverables (i.e., thesis proposal, annual reports, draft manuscripts) are delivered to the National Park Service by the appropriate deadlines.

Qualifications:
An enthusiasm for learning and problem solving, a strong interest in applied research to inform management and conservation of native wildlife, an eagerness to develop skills in quantitative ecology and scientific writing, and excitement for field-based research are required. Fluency in Spanish is also required, and portions of final interviews will be conducted in Spanish. The successful applicant will have a Bachelor’s degree in biology, wildlife resources, or a related field, a GPA > 3.0, strong organizational skills and attention to detail, and strong communication skills. Ideal applicants will have previous experience with fieldwork in northern Mexico, deploying and maintaining camera traps, working in the field under adverse conditions (e.g., long hours, extensive hiking, extreme heat, thunderstorms, venomous animals), supervising field assistants, and operating 4x4 vehicles over rough terrain. Previous experience with data management and analytical software (e.g., Excel, R, ArcGIS) is beneficial but not required.

Applicants should send a cover letter, CV, and contact information (including email addresses and phone numbers) of three references to Dr. Javan Bauder at jbauder@arizona.edu. Please send complete applications by November 19, 2023.

Dr. Javan Bauder, Assistant Unit Leader, Arizona Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
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