

Mule Deer Field Technician

University of California, Davis (State) | <https://smithlab.faculty.ucdavis.edu/>

Details

Application Deadline:

07/14/2025

Published:

04/02/2025

Starting Date:

between 7/14/2025 and 7/21/2025

Ending Date:

between 10/10/2025 and 10/17/2025

Hours per Week:

40

Salary:

\$2,823 to \$3,670 per month

Education Required:

High School Diploma

Experience Required:

at least 1 year

Location:

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (Thousand Oaks, California)

Description

Position Description

Two field technician positions are open to conduct field research related to the movement and foraging ecology of California mule deer in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, California. Under the supervision of Dr. Justine Smith (UC Davis) and Dr. Seth Riley (National Park Service) the field technicians will assist in conducting two field efforts to study mule deer responses to fire: 1) capture and GPS collar deployment on mule deer using Clover traps and free-darting; 2) fecal sample collection along transects. Capture-related activities include setting and regularly monitoring baits, camera traps, and Clover traps, tracking and glassing for deer to select trapping locations, repairing Clover traps, and communicating actively with other participating team members from agency partners. Additional activities include mortality investigations, sample curation and storage, and data entry. Applicants will preferably have experience in ungulate captures, particularly with Clover traps, and GPS collar deployment.

The field technicians are expected to work closely in a small team, start early in the morning, and spend long days hiking off-trail in rugged and hot conditions. They will work outdoors in rugged terrain in various weather conditions, including remote field

areas. They may be exposed to high temperatures (>90 F), steep and shrubby slopes, poison oak, and ticks. The landscape also supports a population of mountain lions. The field technicians must be able to lift 40 lb, withstand varied weather and environmental conditions, and adhere to a Field Safety Plan to minimize personal risk.

The ideal candidates will have strong problem-solving, interpersonal, and communication skills, as well as the ability to work both independently and as part of a team. They will also have demonstrated the attention to detail required to successfully collect, organize, and store data, as well as to communicate critical project needs, changes, or challenges to senior staff and faculty in a collaborative setting.

Housing and a field vehicle will be provided for field technicians for the duration of the position.

Duties

- Execute studies in consultation with the PIs and other project scientists.
- Glass for mule deer to select trapping locations.
- Assist with baiting, setting, and monitoring Clover traps.
- Assist with mule deer captures using Clover traps and free-darting, including deployment of GPS collars.
- Conduct vegetation and fecal collection transects, including sample collection, labeling, organization, and storage.
- Comply with protocols for data collection, entry, security, and remote backups.
- Develop with the PI and collaborators a daily schedule of activities.
- Maintain field equipment and make repairs as needed.
- Be involved in animal use protocol reporting and compliance.
- Maintain active and effective communication with the PI and agency partners.

Qualifications

Basic qualifications (required at time of application)

- High School Degree/GED
- Field experience conducting ecological research
- Active driver's license
- Backcountry safety and navigation skills, including Leave No Trace principles
- Ability to lift and maneuver 40 pounds throughout the day and hike ~5 miles/day
- Ability to traverse rough and uneven terrain in various weather conditions
- Ability to sit and observe animals through binoculars for several hours at a time
- Experience following data collection and storage protocols
- Strong organizational and communication skills
- Ability and willingness to adhere to field safety guidelines
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Ability to think critically and troubleshoot problems
- Proficient in the use of basic hand tools
- Provide own, reliable, transportation to and from work site
- Commitment to a safe, equitable, and inclusive work environment

Preferred qualifications (other preferred, but not required, qualifications for the position)

- A Bachelor's degree in biology, conservation, ecology, wildlife or similar degree in a discipline relevant or related to the research conducted in the unit hiring the appointee.
- Experience capturing ungulates
- Experience deploying GPS collars
- Experience setting Clover traps
- Experience tracking animals with radiotelemetry
- Experience working in remote field locations
- Knowledge of GPS equipment and GIS software
- Basic first-aid or wilderness training and certifications
- Experience driving off-road using 4WD
- Chemical immobilization training and knowledge of laboratory safety

Application Requirements

- Curriculum Vitae / Resume
- Cover Letter
- 3 References (contact information and relationship only)

Contact

Justine Smith
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