LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN HEALTH SURVEY

VET TECH AND VETERINARY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (March-May 2020)

Texas Tech University

Agency: Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Location: western Texas and eastern New Mexico

Job Category: Volunteer Positions

Salary: Housing provided; transportation reimbursement negotiable

Start Date: 3/15/20

Last Date to Apply: 4/20/20

JOB DESCRIPTION

We are seeking volunteer veterinary technicians or veterinary students for a Lesser Prairie-Chicken Health survey that will be conducted in western Texas and eastern New Mexico from March 15 through May 1, 2020. The duration of the position is negotiable. Some travel compensation to region may be available if volunteer is able to assist for 1 week or more. A minimum of two mornings of volunteering for the project is required to volunteer.

Position will include assisting a post-doctorate researcher draw up to 3ml of blood from the jugular veins of live-captured birds.

This is a unique opportunity to gain experience monitoring wildlife diseases in an imperiled wildlife species, whose populations have significantly declined from historical levels. The fieldwork will occur during the breeding season of Lesser Prairie-Chickens, so volunteers will be able to observe lekking behavior, including breeding displays and vocalization of male prairie chickens. Other wildlife that may be seen in the study area include pronghorn, mule deer, roadrunners, burrowing owls, and jack rabbits.

Primary duties include:

1) Draw blood from the jugular vein of the captured birds, make blood smears, collect cloacal and mouth swabs, and assist with banding of the birds.
2) Label samples, make blood smears, and deposit blood into various collection containers.
3) Assist with collecting fecal samples from leks for detection of parasites.
4) Participate in Lesser Prairie-Chicken capture, which will include setting up and taking down walk-in funnel traps and drop nets.
Position will require waking up between 4:00-5:00 am each morning and sitting quietly in a blind or in the truck until 10:00-11:00 am to capture birds. Mornings can be chilly (30°F) and temperatures during the day can rise to 80°F. Hazardous wildlife in the region include rattlesnakes and stinging insects.

A field house with utilities, washer and dryer, running water, and air conditioning will be provided and will be shared with 1-2 other people. Beds and cots are available as well as a stove, oven, refrigerator, microwave, and freezer for cooking. The field house is located at the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located 21 miles from the town of Muleshoe, Texas, which has grocery stores as well as several fast-food chains. The study sites are within 1 hour of the field house. Transportation to and from the study sites is provided. A volunteer waiver must be signed in order to ride in the government vehicles.

**Qualifications:**

Training or education in the veterinary field is preferred. Successful applicants will:

1) Experience drawing blood from the jugular veins of birds, particularly chickens.
2) Be enthusiastic and be able to maintain a positive attitude for the duration of the position.
3) Be detail oriented with the ability to label samples accurately.
4) Be able to work as a member of team with others who may have different interests or backgrounds.
5) Be able to interact appropriately with collaborators and government employees as required.
6) Be able to follow instructions and detailed methodologies.

**To apply:** Please submit a cover letter with dates of availability and resume with 3 references and to Dr. Kristin Bondo, Natural Resources Management, (kristin.bondo@ttu.edu) by APRIL 15, 2020.

**To inquire:** Please contact Dr. Kristin Bondo, Natural Resources Management (kristin.bondo@ttu.edu)