



## **Position Announcement with Wild Bird Foundation of America**

### **Expedition Researcher**

Title: Expedition Researcher

Reports to: Research Director

Project: The Great Spine of Africa Expeditions

Duration: Annual contract (with possibility of renewal)

Start date: 01 January 2023 is preferable but negotiable

#### **Background**

The Wild Bird Foundation of America (WBFOA) is a corporation registered under United States of America law, and is an approved 501(c)(3) which seeks to understand and protect Africa's key water sources through actions informed by science and effective storytelling. By 2030, WBFOA aims to explore, study and protect 1 million square kilometres, 100 million hectares, of unprotected African wilderness in partnership with local communities, governments and NGOs. Central to this effort will be understanding the watersheds, including a series of self-propelled source navigations of the Zambezi, Congo and Nile Rivers and their major tributaries.

#### **Job Overview**

The Expedition Researcher is required to conduct active river based expeditions as part of and potentially leading research and expedition teams. The role requires supporting the research departments of the WBFOA and its related organizations in fulfilling its science and research objectives across the major river basins of Sub-Saharan Africa; Nile, Okavango, Congo and Zambezi. The Expedition Researcher is required to travel regularly within Sub-Saharan Africa, including but not limited to Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Congo, DRC, South Sudan for field work, expeditions, meetings and conferences. The Expedition Researcher will spend approximately half of their time away from home conducting river based expeditions and other field work.

### **Responsibilities and Duties (not in order of priority)**

1. In cooperation with the Research Director and Operations Director, coordinate all research activities. Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:
  - Arrange travel, accommodation and amenities for visiting researchers.
  - Ensure all required documents for visiting researchers including indemnities, contracts, medical questionnaires, personal information etc. are completed before embarking on any research activities.
  - Ensure that relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are adhered to.
  - Ensure adequate resources (food, vehicles, medical equipment, etc.) are issued for field trips.
  - Ensure that team members taking part in the research activities are properly informed at all times with regard to the above.
2. Conduct specific research and monitoring tasks primarily on river expeditions but also on ongoing and repeat field work. Initially these may include:
  - River baseline health surveys
  - Hydrological monitoring
  - Bird, wildlife and human activity observations and survey recording
  - Structured biological surveys (e.g. OKASS sampling)
  - Other opportunistic sampling of ecological health indicators
3. In the absence of senior staff, take on the role of expedition leader when embarking on expeditions and field trips with visiting researchers. Specific duties and responsibilities in this regard will be communicated in due course. Chain of command during expeditions and field trips will always be articulated to team members well before the trip.
4. Have weekly meetings with research team on all research projects and developments.
5. Training and capacity building of other team members whilst on expedition in terms of research and data collection.
6. Maintain / repair all research equipment and ensure broken items are reported, replaced and delisted / listed accordingly on the inventory.
7. Store and manage biological or other scientific samples until they can be exported to the necessary destinations of the specialists. Ensure the relevant processes for importing/exporting research samples are maintained and adhered to.
8. Assist the Research Director with producing technical reports to government (research permit updates and other requested reports).
9. Assist with the compilation of all reports following field work and expeditions.
10. Assist in planning and event-managing potential symposiums to create more awareness of the project.
11. Prepare proposals for research as listed in the Research Permit of the applicable country.

12. Identify new research topics that pertain to the WBFOA objectives and develop project proposals. Plan and prepare proposals for new targeted research projects.
13. Assimilate information on developments, new opportunities and partnerships in and around the Nile, Congo and Zambezi river basins and plan how the WBFOA can network around these opportunities. Investigate other potential collaborating research camps.
14. Assist in the scientific supervision and mentorship of interns, scholarship / bursary recipients and other collaborating students.
15. Conduct data analysis and prepare scientific papers in collaboration with research department. Published papers may also be submitted to international conferences.
16. Assemble, categorise and maintain updated library of relevant research papers and reports.

### **Required Qualifications, Skills and Competency Requirements**

- MSc or PhD in an appropriate field (Conservation, Natural Resources, Ecology, Environmental Sciences etc.)
- Experience in remote and difficult field work environments
- Strong GIS capabilities
- Experience or interest in hydrological and climatological monitoring and modeling.
- Confident IT skills and proficiency with MS Office, GIS, as well as Google Workspace tools such as Google sheets and Google docs.
- Strong numerical and data analysis skills and ability.
- Confident driver with a valid Driver's License & 4x4 driving experience.
- Must enjoy the outdoors and be comfortable camping in the wild
- Physical strength and fitness and be able to perform physical work in rugged terrain while in the field.
- Strong verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills.
- Highly accurate worker with a strong attention to detail.
- Good time management.
- Willingness to represent the project in a highly professional but approachable manner to ensure success in your collection of required information and data in your engagement with relevant people in the region.
- Proactive, enthusiastic and someone that uses their initiative and responds timeously to issues as they present.
- Able to work both independently and as part of a culturally diverse team.
- Hands-on, aware and motivated to achieve both personal work and team work deliverables for the various projects with a natural willingness to support and assist the team wherever needed.
- Research and technically minded with an adaptive and forward thinking approach to your work.
- Willingness to be set and meet work goals and to be held accountable for your personal collection and compilation of research work.

- Unafraid of change and a willingness to quickly adapt to changes with a flexible approach to your work
- Valid passport for travel around Sub-Saharan Africa.

**To Apply:** Interested candidates should send the following to [rainer@wildbirdtrust.com](mailto:rainer@wildbirdtrust.com) and [david@wbfoa.org](mailto:david@wbfoa.org) with 'Expedition Researcher' in the subject line by December 1, 2023.

1. Resume
2. Contact information
3. Three references would be valuable
4. Cover letter outlining interest in applying for the post, along with relevant experience, qualifications, skills and salary requirements.
5. Please take careful note of the required specifications, skills & experience before submitting your application.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.