



The INSTITUTE for BIRD POPULATIONS



Backcountry Avian Point Counts in Pacific Northwest National Parks 2026

We have openings during spring/summer 2026 on our backcountry point count crews at North Cascades National Park, Olympic National Park, and Mount Rainier National Park.

PROJECT DATES: May 1 - August 3 (Exact start date TBD)

TRAINING: The field season will begin with an intensive training session (up to 3 weeks) in visual and acoustic bird identification skills, point count techniques, tree and plant identification, backcountry orienteering and safety, and wilderness camping skills. These skills will be honed further throughout the field season. Field technicians will acquire substantial expertise in western bird identification, general natural history, and backcountry living, while exploring one or more of the beautiful, rugged national parks in the Pacific Northwest. Field crews should have a good knowledge of the songs and calls of Pacific Northwest birds before the training period begins and will participate in online review sessions of bird songs prior to the in-person training period.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Working in teams of two, field technicians will hike into the backcountry for up to seven days at a time. On a typical day, they will wake up before dawn and spend the morning conducting point counts (solo) at each point count site. The afternoon will then be spent breaking camp, backpacking to the beginning of the next day's point count transect, and setting up camp once again. Work will be extremely physically demanding, sometimes involving backpacking 15 miles or more per day with a

heavy pack, and requiring substantial off-trail travel. A 3-day break will usually follow each backcountry session. Please note that this schedule will not apply during the intensive three-week training period. There will be substantial car travel to trailheads and between parks, and will be done using personal vehicles. Some computer data entry will also be required. Technicians must be flexible, as schedule will sometimes change in order to accommodate weather and other factors.

REQUIRED SKILLS and EXPERIENCE: We are looking for candidates with prior birding experience and familiarity with the songs and calls of western montane birds, as well as a strong desire to learn more about western montane birds and natural history, and a willingness to face the rigors of fieldwork with good humor. These rigors include (but are not limited to!) physically demanding work, long work days that may begin well before dawn, wet, cold weather, heat waves, mosquitoes, occasional contact with bears, and less-than glamorous housing with possibly no cell service and shared bedrooms. Successful candidates must be in excellent physical condition, must have backpacking experience, must be comfortable with off-trail hiking and orienteering (training provided), and must be able and willing to put a substantial amount of time into studying bird songs before arriving to the training session.

EQUIPMENT: Field technicians are expected to provide their own binoculars and backpacking gear, including hiking boots, tent, sleeping bag, raingear, etc. A personal automobile is highly recommended.

COMPENSATION: These full-time (40 hrs./week) IBP seasonal staff positions pay \$20/hr. (before payroll taxes), and do not include fringe benefits. We will additionally provide free shared housing and reimbursement of project-related mileage in personal vehicles

MORE INFORMATION: For more information about this IBP program, please see our [Birds of the Pacific Northwest National Parks Webpage](#).

TO APPLY: Please email a resume, cover letter, and the names, phone numbers and email addresses of up to three references to [Mandy Holmgren](#), Biologist (mholmgren AT birdpop DOT org). Professional references are preferred, but one reference may be a character reference. Many times references are slow to reply- we encourage submitting more references so that your application can be quickly processed.

IBP is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

IBP complies with federal and state disability laws and makes reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. If you require reasonable accommodations for completing an application or participating in the application process, please call 707-789-3224 or email IBPhumanresources@proton.me for assistance.

