

2025 Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ / New Jersey Osprey Project / Summer Field Technician

Introduction: Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ plays an integral role in the monitoring and management of breeding ospreys, now listed as a stable species in New Jersey. We have been working with ospreys since 2004 and over the past decade our leadership role has grown. While working in close partnership with the NJDEP Fish & Wildlife, each summer we coordinate surveys of nests during spring and summer months. The goal is to determine the number of occupied nests (new and existing) and the number of young produced to determine the overall size and health of the population.

Osprey surveys are conducted by specially trained volunteers (osprey banders) using a boat to access most nests. The most densely populated colonies are targeted, from Sandy Hook to Cape May and west along the Delaware Bay to Salem. Watersheds that we survey include Barnegat Bay, Great Bay, Absecon Bay, and Wildwood/Cape May. We also target surveys by land, using optics to under-represented areas including, Raritan Bayshore, Sandy Hook, Monmouth County and Salem County. Nests in other areas are surveyed by citizen scientists, where data is entered via Osprey-Watch.org.

Surveys occur in late June and early July, when most nests contain young that are around 3-4 weeks old. During a nest survey, nests (typically 12-16' high) are accessed using an extension ladder. Young are aged and banded (3-6 weeks old) and any unhatched eggs are collected. Photos of the young are taken. Any plastic marine debris in and around the nest is recorded and collected. The condition of the nest platform is noted and all data is recorded on data sheet. Before leaving the adults are scanned using binoculars for auxiliary bands and photographs are taken to help identify the breeding adult(s). Other survey methods of occupied nests include the use of sUAS, spotting scope and pole mounted cameras.

Finally, we also maintain hundreds of man-made wooden osprey nest platforms, where 75% of all ospreys nest in New Jersey, using a core group of volunteers. This includes repairing and replacing platforms during the non-breeding season from September to April.

Job Description: The role of this summer field technician with the New Jersey Osprey Project will be to assist the project leader. The day to day tasks will vary depending on the time of the osprey nesting season. In spring, they may be asked to help with the repair or replacement of nest platforms. This can be as simple as carrying equipment and tools or as hard as helping to physically lift a 300 lb. wood osprey platform. During the nesting season the field tech will assist with osprey surveys by boat and help navigate to locations, carry ladders, survey nests and record data. They will be trained on how to properly handle and band young ospreys, if desired. They will also be assigned to survey nests by land, using their personal vehicle to drive to nest sites and use optics to record sightings at nests. If there are emergency calls for entangled birds or problematic nests, the intern may have to help respond to these situations. Lastly, they will help enter data and summarize results for annual reporting.

Timeframe: Position will last for no more than 12 weeks and begin in mid-late May and end in mid-late July.

Hours/Week: Number of hours will vary per week, depending on tasks, and will not exceed 200 hours for the season. May be required to work early/late and weekends and holidays, as needed. **Pay:** \$16/hour with mileage being reimbursed for fieldwork.

Location: S. Ocean County. Housing not provided.

Duties:

- Communicate with volunteers/partners on seasonal updates, data collection, submittal
- Conduct outreach to promote volunteer opportunities, especially with citizen scientists using Osprey-Watch.org
- Assist with osprey nest surveys by boat (Summer – June/July)
- Conduct surveys of active osprey nests in underrepresented areas using optics (May - July)
- Record/organize/summarize data

Qualifications:

- Must have a driver's license and a vehicle for transportation
- Must be physically fit, able to carry heavy items and traverse uneven ground for long hours
- Experience and/or passion for photography/videography preferred
- No fear of heights or motion sickness
- High tolerance of dealing with adverse working conditions (biting insects, hot weather)
- Experience handling raptors (preferred but not required)
- Ability to work as a team or individual with little supervision
- Must be able to provide their own equipment, including boots, watershoes/Teva style sandals, and binoculars
- Ability to use a GPS and experience using Google Earth, ArcMap
- Competent in using Microsoft Word/Excel/Google Docs/Sheets
- Boating experience preferred

All applicants should send a cover letter with interest, qualifications and availability; resume and three references to Ben Wurst, Senior Wildlife Biologist, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ: ben.wurst@conservewildlifenj.org by March 14, 2025. Applications will be reviewed when received and position may be filled before closing date. A background check will be conducted on all final candidates.

CWF maintains a commitment at all organizational levels to provide equal hiring, training, compensation, promotion, transfer, layoff, and recall benefits to all individuals without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex/gender (including pregnancy), marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, familial status, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States or disability.