



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area

Spring/Summer

SEEKING:

Volunteers to assist us in surveying coastal breeding birds (terns, oystercatchers, cormorants, gulls, herons, and eider) on the Boston Harbor Islands. This effort is part of the Park's long-term monitoring program.

ABOUT THE PARK:

The Boston Harbor Islands national park area (BOHA) includes 34 islands and peninsulas situated within the large "C" shape of the Greater Boston shoreline. The islands are rich in natural and cultural resources, and are managed by a unique, 13-member Partnership. Visit BostonIslands.com for more information.

ABOUT THE PROJECT: The National Park Service, the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, and the University of Rhode Island have begun developing a long term monitoring program for coastal birds breeding in the Boston Harbor Islands. In 2001-2003, researchers from the University of Rhode Island conducted an inventory of coastal breeding birds and documented species and colony locations within the park. Many of these are species of conservation and/or management concern, like Least Terns, American Oystercatchers, and Snowy Egrets. In 2007, researchers piloted a volunteer monitoring effort that will help the park track and manage this important resource. The first year of the study began in Spring 2008.

DUTIES/WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Responsibilities will include: estimating nesting pairs and/or counting nests of a variety of species using both boat-based and ground-based survey methods; accurately recording data onto field data sheets; recording location information using field maps and gps units. Training is provided.

QUALIFICATIONS/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Previous experience with bird survey techniques or waterbird monitoring is helpful but not required. Field work takes place in variable weather conditions and involves small boat travel and hiking over rough and variable terrain. Exposure to the elements include risks associated with outdoor activity, walking through ungraded trails through dense foliage and areas of high density nesting. Fact sheets about some potential health risks will be provided. A 26-foot landing craft is used to access the islands; boat rides can often be bumpy and landings are sometimes precarious; sure footing and appropriate footwear are necessary. Work is physically demanding. Volunteers must be physically able to negotiate uneven, graded pathways and be prepared for several hours of walking in remote locations of the park. Please be aware that because many of the islands are in remote locations, cellphone reception may be erratic and emergency response time is significantly slower than at mainland locations.

TIME COMMITMENT:

All volunteers are asked to participate in a 2-hour training session in advance of the field season, and will then have the opportunity to sign up for scheduled field days. Spaces are limited only 4 volunteers go out each day. We strive to make consistent teams, so individuals with greater availability may be given preference. We do our best to accommodate those with less availability. The boat for field work departs from UMASS Boston and are scheduled from 7am – 12pm each day, though end time may vary. Although a draft field schedule is planned in advance, weather and field conditions are variable so this schedule is subject to change.

OTHER:

All materials (datasheets, gps, equipment, etc.) will be provided, however volunteers may wish to bring their own binoculars. Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for variable weather conditions and rugged walking. We recommend wearing covered and comfortable shoes, long pants, hats, dressing in layers and bringing raingear as appropriate. Remember to also bring water, snacks, insect repellent and sunscreen are recommended. There are no restroom facilities on most islands, please plan accordingly.

TO APPLY OR FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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