GRASSLAND WILDIFE RESEARCH TECHNICIANS

NEAR LAMONI, IA

Send CV and cover letter to:
drenne3@illinois.edu

WHAT: Research technician, $14-16/hr depending on experience

WHO: Researchers from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

WHERE: Grand River Grasslands in Ringgold County, Iowa, and Harrison County, Missouri

WHEN: Start mid-May, exact start date flexible. 10-12 week duration.

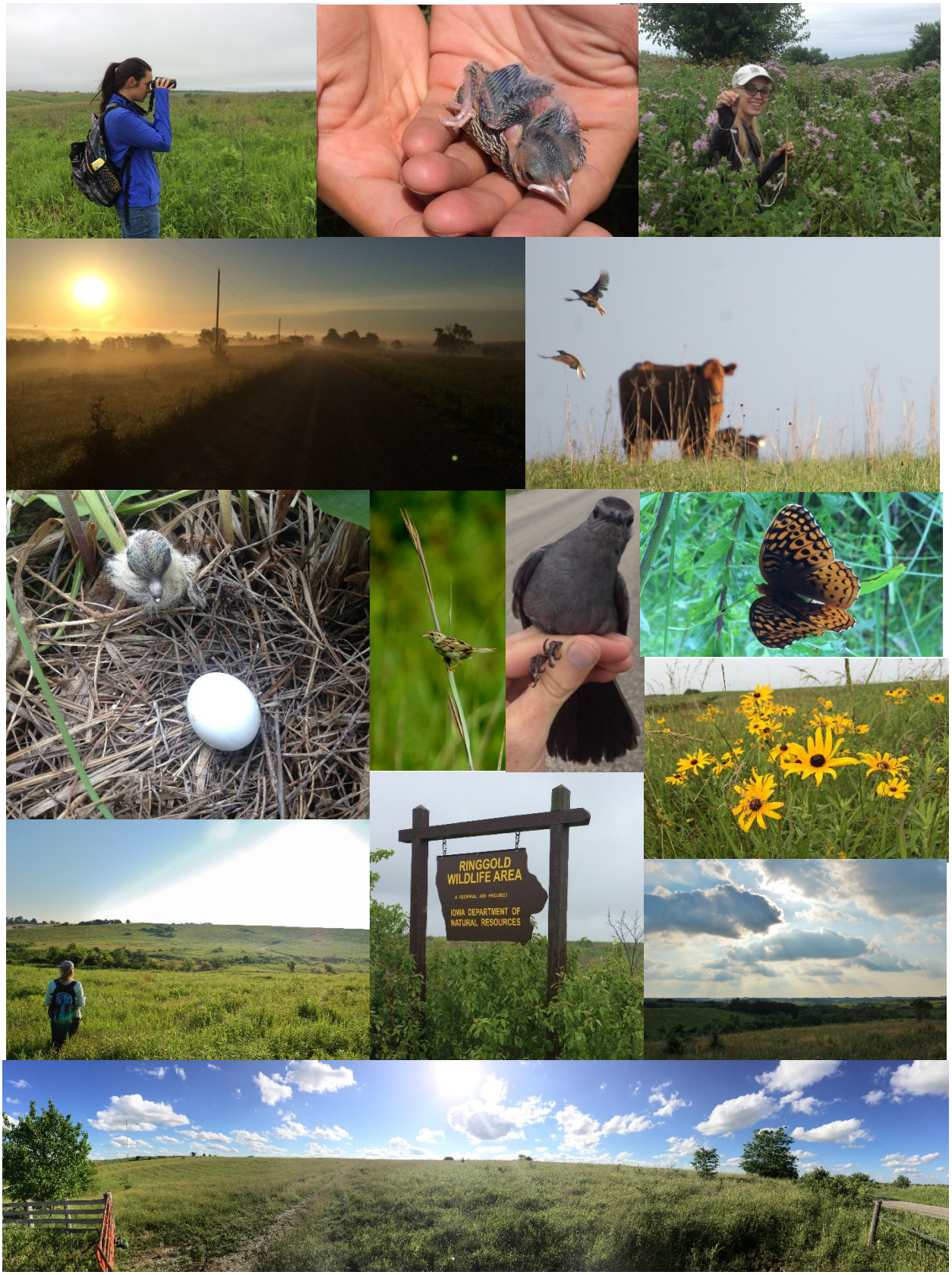
HOURS: 40 hours/week

WHAT WE PROVIDE: Housing, transportation to field sites, field supplies, training

SKILLS PREFERRED (some avian experience required):

1. **Avian techniques:** grassland bird identification, survey techniques
2. **Vegetation techniques:** prairie plant identification, forage biomass
3. **GIS:** basic understanding of GIS programs like ArcMap

Come work with us!



PROJECT INFORMATION

Study Region

The Grand River Grasslands (GRG) encompasses about 10,000 acres of rolling, glacial till plain on the Iowa-Missouri border. The region has been identified as the best known opportunity to restore a functional, deep-soil, tallgrass prairie landscape in North America. The GRG also has potential conservation value for migrating and breeding grassland birds. Our research team has been investigating how fire-grazing relationships influence wildlife and invertebrate communities in the region since 2006. Starting in 2014, we also began investigating how fire, grazing, and herbicide may be used to control an invasive grass.

Avian and Vegetation Response to Woody Vegetation Removal

This project is examining the effects of woody vegetation removal, mainly from the eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), on the grassland avian and vegetation communities. Encroachment via woody vegetation can turn a grassland into a forest ecosystem in less than 40 years and this encroachment extirpates grassland birds and herbaceous vegetation. Grassland birds are of major conservation concern, and less is known about the effects of woody vegetation removal on the bird community. To this end, we will be investigating how woody removal alters the avian communities by counting grassland birds on 8 pastures in the Grand River Grasslands. To quantify woody removal, we measure vegetation characteristics on these pastures. Our ultimate goal is to add value to working Midwestern agricultural landscapes that also support biodiversity. This will be useful for ecologists, mangers, and landowners alike.

Effect of Woody Vegetation Removal on the Heterogeneity of Shrubs and Small Trees

Woody vegetation removal is a key part of grassland management. However, this management usually involves the complete removal of all woody vegetation including shrubs. There are now 11 shrubland-dependent bird species of conservation concern in Iowa and land managers are now tasked with conserving both grassland and shrubland birds in the same places. This exposes shrubland birds to treatments typical of grasslands and the goal of this research is to identify how shrub height and heterogeneity is affected by woody removal and how that affects shrubland bird abundance. This information will be useful for ecologists, managers, and landowners.

Link: http://millerlab.nres.illinois.edu/pages/Restoration%20Ecology%20in%20a%20Working%20LandscapeProfile/restorationecologyworkinglandscape.html