



## MARSH BIRD MONITORING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

**Assateague National Seashore Spring/Summer 2015**

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS** to assist us in surveying secretive marsh birds (rails and bitterns) in tidal marshes at Assateague National Seashore. This effort is a long-term monitoring program for the detection of secretive marsh birds on northeast National Park lands.

**ABOUT THE PROJECT:** In the spring of 2014, the Northeast Coastal and Barrier Network's Inventory & Monitoring program began monitoring secretive marsh birds at Assateague National Seashore. Birds that nest in tidal marshes are generally difficult to detect. Population trends for these species are often unknown, but many are thought to be declining and are therefore recognized as species of conservation concern. Tidal marsh habitats are a unique and characteristic part of the northeast landscape and are under increasing pressure due to climate change.

**DUTIES/WORKING ENVIRONMENT:** Responsibilities will include conducting distance-sample point counts and broadcast surveys for secretive marsh birds at pre-determined survey points located in tidal marshes. Ancillary information on vegetation and environmental characteristics will also be gathered during survey visits.

The ground can be uneven and vary from fairly dry to wet and muddy conditions, as the tide rises the marsh surface becomes inundated in many areas, making it difficult to see the occasional holes and channels that must be traversed. In tidal creeks and pannes the sediment is often unconsolidated.

**QUALIFICATIONS/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:** Previous experience with bird survey techniques is helpful but not required. Volunteers must be able to accurately identify marsh bird species by sight and sound and be able to navigate to a pre-determined survey point using a handheld GPS unit and detailed field maps. The ability to carefully follow detailed survey instructions is absolutely necessary to ensure data quality; training will be provided in advance and support will be available for any questions that arise throughout the entire field season. Note that navigating in salt marshes can be physically demanding; volunteers must be in good physical condition.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** All volunteers are asked to commit to at least 5+/- monitoring points (one morning) per month or to all the points over 3-4 days each month. The points must be surveyed 4 times between 1 April and 30 July, with at least 10 days between visits. Surveys must be conducted at sunrise and ending no later than 10:30 a.m.

**OTHER:** All equipment (detailed instructions, field maps, datasheets, GPS unit, clinometer, MP3 player and sound recordings) and training will be provided. **Deadline for submitting a resume or contacting me is March 15st.**

**Personal vehicle that is able to go off-road would be necessary if a Park vehicle cannot be used on a particular day.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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