

## Field Assistant Position

**Project: Demography of Weddell seals in Erebus Bay, Antarctica**

**Dates: Oct 1 – Dec 15, 2009**

**Location: Erebus Bay, Antarctica**

### **Project Description:**

The Erebus Bay Weddell seal population study in eastern McMurdo Sound, Antarctica was initiated in 1968 and represents one of the longest intensive field investigations of a long-lived mammal in existence. Over the 40-year period of this study a total of 19,174 animals have been tagged with 191,706 resighting records logged in the current database. This long-term study is an extremely valuable resource for understanding population dynamics of not only Weddell seals, but also other species of both terrestrial and marine mammals with similar life-history characteristics. Knowledge of the mechanisms that limit and/or regulate Weddell seal populations and the specific bio-physical linkages between climate, oceans, ice, and Antarctic food webs can provide important contributions to understanding of pinniped population dynamics, as well as contribute more generally to theoretical understanding of population, community, and ecosystem patterns and processes. Such knowledge can be readily applied elsewhere to enhance the ability of natural resource managers to effectively maintain assemblages of other large-mammal species and the ecological processes that they facilitate. Continuation of this long-term study may also contribute to an understanding of the potential detrimental impacts of human activities such as global climate change and the commercial exploitation of Antarctic marine resources.

### **Job Description:**

Field assistants and interns will participate in all aspects of the project including handling and tagging adult and young seals, conducting population surveys, and physically weighing animals. Heavy lifting is required. Living quarters are in a remote field camp approximately 13 miles from McMurdo station on the sea ice. Work is conducted on sea-ice, in sub-zero temperatures, and travel is primarily by snowmobile. Option to travel through New Zealand and southern hemisphere before returning to the states.

### **Qualifications:**

Applicants must be able to work both independently and as part of a research team. Must be in good physical condition, be willing to live in a small, remote field camp, and be willing to work in a cold, and sometimes harsh environment (temperatures as low as -20°F and high winds). Demonstrated field experience in winter conditions is preferred. Must have a general medical and dental exam to physically qualify for Antarctic deployment.

### **Pay:**

Monthly stipend: Internship (1) \$500.00 per month, Field Assistants (2) \$1000.00 per month  
All expenses, including airfare, room and board will be paid from US departure to US return. Initial medical and dental exams will also be covered.

### **How to apply:**

Please send cover letter, resume and contact information for 3 references to:

Jen Mannas  
Ecology Department  
310 Lewis Hall  
Bozeman, MT 59717

or

[jennifer.mannas@myportal.montana.edu](mailto:jennifer.mannas@myportal.montana.edu)

\*email preferred

**All applications must be received by April 1, 2009.**