

FLORIDA GRASSHOPPER SPARROW CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP AT WHITE OAK

White Oak conserves and sustains some of the earth's rarest wild animals through innovative training, research, education, breeding, and field programs that contribute to the survival of wildlife in nature. The conservation programs span 700 acres along the St. Mary's River in northeast Florida, surrounded by over 17,000 acres of mixed forest and wetlands that make up the beautiful White Oak property. Founded in 1982, White Oak leads professional efforts to improve veterinary care, develop holistic animal management techniques, and better understand the biology of critically endangered species by providing excellent care and managing conservation programs for over 30 species of imperiled wildlife in large, naturalistic habitats.

The Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*) is one of the most endangered birds in North America. In a cooperative effort with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Tall Timbers Research Station, captive breeding and reintroduction protocols were first established with a close relative, the Eastern grasshopper sparrow (*A. s. pratensis*). Beginning in 2016, with less than 30 known breeding pairs left in the wild, White Oak utilized these protocols to initiate conservation breeding of the Florida grasshopper sparrow. The unique 'hands-off' management style has resulted in captive-bred offspring that exhibit natural wild behaviors suitable for release. Beginning in 2019, White Oak's breeding program success resulted in reintroductions to the wild which continue to occur.



White Oak is seeking a qualified applicant with a strong passion for avian conservation to assist with all aspects of the avian team, with specific focus on the grasshopper sparrow program. The *Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Conservation Internship* provides participants a strong ex-situ conservation experience with the potential to assist with in-situ efforts as well. Interns will have the unique opportunity to utilize field-related skills in the management and husbandry of captive breeding populations designated for release. The internship requires the development and execution of a sparrow-focused project and commitment to the selected schedule and work duties.

Provided Skills and Experiences (experiential and observation):

- General husbandry- feeding, cleaning, and observation in large enclosures with natural social groupings
- Bird introductions and management
- Rigorous daily data management and reporting
- Transport (in-house and external)
- Veterinary care
- Avian capture and hand restraint
- Artificial incubation and hatching
- Egg management and candling
- Potential for hand-rearing passerines
- Pre-release conditioning
- Non-chemical fire ant control methods
- Prescribed fire techniques and participation
- Observation skills and advanced knowledge of sparrow behavior
- General reintroduction techniques
- Identifying avian vocalizations
- Diet preparation and insect management
- Identifying individuals via color bands
- Sample collection
- Enclosure landscaping and maintenance
- Camera trapping and video monitoring
- Research and scientific management basics

Application Information:

The *Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Conservation Internship* is a 40 hour a week, paid internship. The selected candidate will receive a \$1,460 taxable monthly stipend and free housing at White Oak for the duration of the internship. Interns will share an apartment with another intern of the same gender. The work schedule will include weekends and holidays. Due to the unpredictable nature of conservation work, the applicant must have a flexible schedule and availability to work a daytime or afternoon/evening shift as needed. White Oak provides transportation to and from the Jacksonville airport (for initial pick-up and final drop-off only). Interns have access to select White Oak amenities including a fitness center and swimming pool. Housing for pets and/or spouses is not available. White Oak reserves the right to terminate internships at any time. There will be no guarantee of employment at the end of the internship. To avoid conflicts, the selected candidate will not be eligible for job openings at White Oak during the internship period.



Grasshopper Sparrow Internship Sessions				
Session	Apply	Review	Start Date*	End Date*
Breeding Season	January	February	Mid-March	Early September
Fall & Winter	June	July	Mid-September	Early March

*Session dates may alter slightly

Eligibility Requirements

- Previous avian experience required, passerine handling and mist-netting experience preferred
- Ability to identify color bands on small birds from a distance and identify soft/quiet sounds
- Ability to take detailed notes and keep up with intensive data management regularly
- Willingness and ability to adapt to ever-changing conditions and responsibilities
- Enrolled in, or recently graduated (less than 3 years) from college or high school
- Ability to lift 50 lbs. without difficulty, work in adverse weather conditions including Florida's summer climate, and remain on feet for long periods of time
- 18 years old or over, have proof of a valid driver's license and health insurance, and pass a drug test upon starting. Must be eligible to work in the United States at the time of application
- Ability to work both independently and in a collaborative team environment, with strong oral and written communication skills
- Willing to learn new skills and make the most of the experience, self-motivated, strong initiative

How to Apply

All candidates will submit in ONE document a resume/CV, a list of 3 professional reference's contact information, and a cover letter explaining their career goals and how the internship will help them achieve those goals. Only electronic submissions will be accepted (.doc, .docx, or .pdf only). Please send application materials to training@white-oak.org with the subject line: '*Grasshopper Sparrow Internship Application*'. Applications materials must be submitted within the application period for consideration.