

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS (GS 04-09)

Where: Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska

When: late-Spring (April/May 2026) through early Fall (August 2026)

How many: Up to 4 positions available

Project Description:

Seeking field-savvy, experienced field biologists to assist with a variety of biological science projects at Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve in southcentral Alaska. Wrangell–St. Elias is the nation's largest national park, spanning 13 million acres, and including 9 of the 16 tallest mountain peaks in North America. The park supports abundant populations of Dall's sheep, salmon, shorebirds, landbirds, eagles, bears, and moose. It features a strong moisture gradient, from coastal rainforest and mountain peaks to cold, arid interior lands, and supports intact and natural ecological processes, with a backdrop of human use of natural and wild foods.

The park also provides opportunities for wildlife viewing, mountaineering, backcountry travel, and the harvest of wildlife, fish, and plants. The theme of this biological science opportunity is to assess microplastic pathways to shorebirds, bald eagle nesting ecology, caribou population and tracking surveys, Dall's sheep population surveys along a snow gradient, and wildlife community dynamics across different visitor access trails. Work will occur across the park's landscape. Research assistants will be involved in all of these projects, if available, for the full 6-month appointment.

Project Areas:

Project #1: Quantify and explore the health impacts of microplastic pollution on shorebirds.

Project #2: Estimate variations in bald eagle foraging dynamics, focusing on salmon, across different river reaches, and identify factors influencing foraging patterns.

Project #3: Determine changes in abundance, distribution, and demographics of caribou.

Project #4: Perform distance sampling surveys for Dall's sheep populations along a strong south-to-north snow gradient.

Project #5: Use camera traps to evaluate occupancy of wildlife communities across trail types for subsistence, motorized recreation, hiking, and route finding.

Why Apply:

These positions are a great steppingstone to a career in wildlife and large landscape conservation. Working in southcentral Alaska offers a unique opportunity to learn and practice subsistence lifestyles including salmon fishing and preservation, along with berry picking. Candidates will interact with people from rural Alaskan communities. Applicants will also be exposed to other conservation-based work in large landscapes including trails management, guide permitting, subsistence, aviation, and visitor use protection.

Opportunities for job shadowing and networking will be available. Opportunity to grow professionally is guaranteed.

Qualifications:

Candidates must be comfortable in remote Alaskan backcountry settings, on both land and water, and with aviation (fixed-wing and helicopter). Duties include hiking on steep, uneven terrain, rafting in glacial-fed waters wearing dry suits, and working in occupied brown bear habitats (training provided). Applicants must be able to work long hitches, make independent decisions, comfortable in extremely remote settings, and be a positive team member. Flexible time off will be provided before and after missions.

Preferred (but not required) qualifications include:

- Biological field experience (wildlife, ecology, or related fields), especially in remote Alaska
 - Experience driving and maintaining trucks, ATVs, watercraft
 - Wilderness First Aid or Responder preferred (but training also provided)
 - Aviation, and glacial water rafting experience
 - Professional writing and analysis skills preferred
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Location:

Housing is provided at one of the field stations within Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve, located 3 hours east of Anchorage and 1.5 hours north of Valdez. Applicants will live and work at a biological field station in close quarters with a small team, in either a shared bunkhouse or small cabin.

Compensation:

\$21.85 to \$43.04/hour (GS-04 to GS-09), plus a 3% cost-of-living allowance.

To Apply:

Submit your application between **December 8–12, 2025** at the following link:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/job/851763800>

For questions, contact:

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