



ENDANGERED SPECIES DATA AND POLICY INTERNSHIP

Overview

Data can transform how we restore rare wildlife—how fast we do it, how efficiently we do it, and how big of a difference we make. The Endangered Species Data and Policy Internship offers a unique opportunity to help conserve endangered species by improving our understanding of how the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) is implemented and using that knowledge to find radically innovative or extraordinarily mundane ways to improve outcomes for wildlife. The research will focus on questions that are highly relevant to current efforts to shape the future of the ESA, including [regulatory](#) and [legislative](#) reforms. The intern will gain valuable skills in researching science and policy issues; understanding how the ESA is implemented; communicating effectively in writing and verbally; and creating online visualizations of the research results. We prefer candidates who can work in our Washington D.C. office at least two days a week but will consider remote work arrangements. The internship is open throughout the year, and we request a minimum commitment of three months. The internship is unpaid, but we can help the intern seek funding or academic credit.

Background

The [Environmental Policy Innovation Center](#) (EPIC) focuses on developing and implementing innovative, pragmatic solutions to increase the speed and scale of conservation. Put simply, we seek more and faster wildlife recoveries. Our [Biodiversity Conservation Program](#) has several initiatives to better understand how the ESA is implemented, to develop new ideas for improving ESA implementation, and to implement those ideas through partnerships with federal and state wildlife agencies, other conservation organizations, universities, and the private sector. The intern will advance these initiatives by working closely with endangered species experts on research projects. We are also open to pursuing project ideas the intern proposes.

Current research priorities include the following:

- Evaluating the performance of various ESA conservation plans, including habitat conservation plans and safe harbor agreements, and developing recommendations to improve performance.
- Developing a detailed understanding of why some ESA species are recovering while others are continuing to decline, and evaluating the effectiveness of ESA tools such as critical habitat designations and section 7 consultations.
- Evaluating the science and policy standards used in ESA listing and delisting decisions, and tracking whether the federal government applies the standards differently over time, particularly under the Trump administration.
- Evaluating patterns in ESA critical habitat designations and developing regulatory and legislative ideas for improving how critical habitat is designated and used.
- Researching ESA funding patterns and developing scenarios for how to prioritize funding using a recent funding allocation tool that EPIC helped develop.

Most of these research projects involve evaluating government documents and data on how the ESA is implemented. These resources include Federal Register publications, species recovery plans, five-year status reviews, section 7 consultation documents, and ESA conservation agreements. All of the research tasks will involve quantitative analysis, and some may also involve geospatial analysis. The intern will gather, analyze, and synthesize the data and convey the results in written and visual work products. We will work with the intern to determine the specific projects he/she pursues based on the person's expertise and interests.

Where feasible, we will work with the intern to publish the results of his/her work.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate is passionate about conserving endangered species, has strong research and analytical skills, and demonstrates exceptional writing and verbal communication abilities. Below are the required and the additional preferred qualifications for the position.

Required qualifications

- Experience gathering, organizing, and analyzing large datasets.
- Formal training in data analysis and tools, and familiarity with data visualization tools.
- Ability to write clearly and concisely.
- Ability to work independently, including knowing when to seek help.
- Exceptional analytical strength and creativity.

Preferred qualifications

- Working knowledge of R for statistical computing or other comparable programmatic languages.
- Working knowledge of data visualization tools such as Tableau or R Shiny apps.
- Working knowledge of GIS tools, such as ArcGIS.
- Basic familiarity with the ESA and other wildlife conservation programs.
- Innovative, creative thinker interested in building better policies to conserve wildlife.

Location

The internship is located in our Washington, D.C. office in Gallery Place/Chinatown. We will consider remote work arrangements for especially well-qualified candidates.

Compensation

The internship is unpaid, but we can help the intern seek funding or academic credit.

Applying

Qualified candidates should send an email to jake@policyinnovation.org with “Endangered Species Internship” in the subject line. Please include a resume and a cover letter (specifying your availability for the internship). You may also provide any supporting documents we should consider in evaluating your candidacy (*e.g.*, class report). Because of the potentially large number of applications we may receive, we can respond only to candidates we interview. Candidates we interview will be asked to provide a self-edited writing sample. Thanks for your interest in the internship.