

Weddell Seal Project Technician 2025

Project Description:

The Erebus Bay Weddell seal population study in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica was initiated in 1968 and represents one of the longest intensive field investigations of a long-lived mammal in existence. This long-term study is a 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 our 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 climate change and the commercial exploitation of Antarctic marine resources.

Job Description:

We are looking to hire up to 5 technicians for the 2025 field season. Technicians will participate in all aspects of the project including tagging animals, conducting population surveys, and collecting genetic samples. The job is very physically demanding, and heavy lifting (>40lbs) is required. Work is conducted on sea ice, and travel is primarily by snowmobile. Weather conditions are commonly cold and windy. Our crew will either live at McMurdo Station, the main base of the U.S. Antarctic Program, or at a small field camp on the sea ice approximately a 1-hour snowmobile drive from McMurdo Station.

Qualifications:

Recently graduated students with a B.S. or M.S. degree are welcome to apply. Current students who are close to graduating and have relevant field experience will also be considered. Applicants must be able to work both independently and as part of a research team, be detail-oriented, be in good physical condition, be comfortable handling animals, and be willing and able to thrive in a small, remote field setting. Demonstrated field experience is required, and experience working in cold weather is especially relevant. ***To be selected for a position, it is very important for an applicant to have demonstrated their ability to work in challenging conditions with a positive attitude.***

Terms of Employment:

The field season starts at the beginning of October and ends in mid-December. Assuming good weather, technicians can expect to have one day off every 10-14 days and to be outside between 40-60 hours a week. Technicians are paid at least \$15/hr, and overtime rates apply after 40 hrs/wk. Transportation, international health insurance, and room and board are covered during employment. Each participant must meet with a physician and dentist in early June to have requisite testing done and must follow-up diligently to be physically qualified by the U.S. Antarctic Program by the end of July. In recent years, the U.S. Antarctic Program has required participants to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and may require that again in 2025. Technician positions are contingent on support from the U.S. Antarctic Program and the National Science Foundation.

How to apply:

If you are interested, please send a cover letter, resume or CV, and contact information for three references to Parker Levinson via email (parkerlevinson@gmail.com) with the subject line "Weddell Seal Technician Application – FULL NAME". PDF files are easier to read, but either .doc or .pdf files will be accepted. In your cover letter, please clearly detail your qualifications for this position and how this position will benefit your career. Attention to detail is critical to this position, and applications will be scored accordingly. If you have any questions about what the position entails or the hiring process, email Parker Levinson (parkerlevinson@gmail.com).

All applications must be received by 11:59pm MST Sunday, April 6, 2025. Hiring decisions will be made by mid-May.