

RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN DRC (BONOBO DATA COLLECTION)

JOB DESCRIPTION

We are seeking a motivated research assistant for bonobo and ecological research at Kokolopori, Democratic Republic of Congo. The candidate will be responsible for ecological and behavioral data collection on bonobos of multiple communities and the collection of various forms of bonobo (urine and feces) and ecological samples, including but not limited to behavioral, ecological, camera trap, and botanical data and sample collection. The work consists of daily walks in the forest following habituated bonobos with local trackers, as well as ecological surveying and sampling. The candidate will collect data on electronic devices such as GPS and android devices.

The research assistant will be accommodated in the Kokolopori Research camp, which is located in an extremely remote area with no running water or electricity outside of basic solar power. The candidate will work closely together with a team of international and local field assistants. Exact distribution of duties will be done according to the background of the candidates. Additional information about the field site Kokolopori is available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kokolopori> and <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/kokolopori/KBRP> .

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential requirements:

- (1) previous field experience in the tropics including behavioural data collection
- (2) proficiency in both English and French (written and spoken)
- (3) physically and mentally fit, able to spend long periods of time away from developed areas and be comfortable with minimal living conditions (no plumbing, electricity, or housing) in extremely remote locations (work consists of daily follows of bonobos through dense forest; average daily walking distance 10km, as well as living in a small group in remote and challenging conditions),
- (4) practical and technical skills necessary to navigate dense tropical forest without prominent landmarks (e.g. familiarity with a compass and GPS)
- (5) the capacity to live with a small team of international and local assistants for extended periods of time
- (6) able to work in a team and communicate well with other team members and remotely with project managers
- (7) strong motivation to take on and multi-task multiple simultaneous responsibilities
- (8) demonstrate tolerance to customs and practices of local communities

Beneficial qualifications (please indicate these clearly in your application):

- (1) Experience with cybertracker (application construction and use)
- (2) Experience with camera trap, wildlife, and/or ecological surveying
- (3) Experience with macronutritional research
- (2) Familiarity with informal botanical identification, and/or sample collection
- (3) Proficiency in MS Excel, GIS, BaseCamp or MapSource

SALARY/FUNDING

500 USD / month

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- Food (mix of mainly local food and the occasional western food item)
- Lodging (in tents) at the field site
- Airfare for one domestic return flight from Kinshasa to the field site and back
- Contribution of up to 1000 US Dollar towards an international return flight (reimbursement ONLY AFTER SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A 12 MONTH TERM OF APPOINTMENT)
- Expenses for Visa (reimbursement ONLY AFTER SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A 12 MONTHS TERM OF APPOINTMENT)

Please note that expenses during the stay in Kinshasa on the way in/out of Congo can only be partially covered by the project

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Twelve months starting around November 2020. As the COVID Pandemic is still ongoing and travelling safely is a priority concern, we are seeking candidates who are flexible in the timing of initial start dates. Depending on COVID travel restrictions, the candidate must be available for a three-week training period either remotely or in-person for prior to the start of their 12-month field stay.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be sent via email by **September 1st, 2020** to **BOTH** Dr. Erin Wessling ([ewessling \[at\] fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ewessling@fas.harvard.edu)) and Dr. Martin Surbeck ([msurbeck \[at\] fas.harvard.edu](mailto:msurbeck@fas.harvard.edu)). Please include in your application your CV, a cover letter highlighting your interest and qualifications, and the names and contact information of at least two references.