JANUARY 2015

Position Announcement: Principal Investigator: Ecologist—Fisheries focus

The Prince William Sound Science Center (www.pwssc.org), a non-profit research and education institution located on the shores of Prince William Sound in Cordova, Alaska (www.cordovachamber.com and www.cityofcordova.net), is seeking a highly motivated scientist for a fisheries-related research position focused on pelagic fish assessment and systems ecology. This individual will join a multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional team studying and monitoring various aspects of the ecosystem dynamics of Prince William Sound, the Copper River watershed and the northern Gulf of Alaska.

Background: This position requires a highly motivated fisheries ecologist to conduct basic and applied research in the Prince William Sound and northern Gulf of Alaska region. PWSSC's mission is to advance the understanding and sustainable use of ecosystems in the northern Gulf of Alaska region through research and education. Our research improves understanding of the physical and biological mechanisms affecting diversity, productivity and ecosystem function in Prince William Sound, the Copper River watershed, and northern Gulf of Alaska.

Prince William Sound (PWS) is located in the northeast corner of the Pacific at 60° N and includes an intricate network of glaciers, temperate rainforests, fjords, barrier islands, wetlands, and freshwater, estuarine and marine systems. PWS has 4900 km of shoreline and is surrounded by the Chugach Mountains that reach 4,300 m and contain the most extensive system of tidewater glaciers in North America. Most of the land area is in or adjacent to the Chugach National Forest. Of the five PWS communities, only Valdez and Whittier have highway access to the main road system. Access to Cordova is by boat or plane. Alaska Marine Highway System ferries and an airport that receives daily commercial airline traffic serve the community. Commercial salmon fisheries are the cornerstone of the local Cordova economy. Herring, Pacific cod, sablefish, halibut, shrimp, crab, and razor clams are among either current or historically important fisheries within Prince William Sound. The Sound is important for subsistence and sport fisheries of these and other species.

Qualifications: PhD in ecology, fisheries science, marine biology, aquatic sciences, biostatistics, environmental science or related field. Strong quantitative and analytical skills (statistics or modeling excellence preferred). Command of acoustic survey techniques and acoustic data analysis (especially using Echoview). Able to design and conduct research projects as an individual and as part of a team. Insight and ability to apply diverse and appropriate field, laboratory, and analytical approaches to hypothesis-driven ecological research. Existing peer-reviewed publication record. Supervisory experience. Willing and able to perform field work as well as train and manage field staff in remote locations, including at sea, during harsh weather conditions. Demonstrated ability to engage and communicate scientific information to stakeholders of various backgrounds in various settings.

The successful applicant will be expected to: apply acoustic survey techniques in the field and perform acoustic data analysis (especially using Echoview); work independently as well as in collaboration with other researchers; publish research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals; write proposals to generate funding for future work; seek and solidify collaborations with researchers at PWSSC and other organizations; submit timely reports; contribute content to other publications and various media outlets; and communicate results to both peer and lay audiences.

The ideal applicant will be organized, self-motivated, independent, proactive, collegial, have a proven ability to produce tangible results from significant or difficult tasks, have excellent communication skills, be able to work as part of a research team, and complement the research interests of existing personnel. Travel may be required.

Responsibilities include:

This position is funded through ongoing research projects in which the successful candidate is required to participate, including overseeing all aspects of research and implementing research projects designed to address management objectives and uncertainties as related to commercially relevant fisheries populations in the region. Coordinating and conducting data collection in the field. Supervision of both permanent and temporary staff (field crew members, technicians, and the like). *Copies of the proposals funding this position are available upon request.*

The herring research conducted by this investigator is in support of a multi-year, multi-institution survey effort focused on herring populations in PWS. Knowledge of Pacific herring or other forage fish populations is desirable. Through two funded herring research projects, the PI is responsible for working with other Herring Research and Monitoring team members to collect and process fish from both scientific and community-based fishing efforts. The position is supported by an existing technician, with whom this investigator will work to carry out program objectives. For more information:

http://pwssc.org/research/fish-2/pacific-herring/
http://pwssc.org/exploring-changes-in-herring-energetics-over-winter-months/

This position's herring research involves contributing to herring stock biomass estimates through the use of hydroacoustic surveys. Close collaboration is required with colleagues conducting sample verification through capture techniques and the use of remotely operated technology. The stock biomass estimates this investigator is responsible for contributing to through hydroacoustic surveys are a primary input into an actively managed age-structured assessment (ASA) model that is the forecasting tool used by the management agency responsible for this fish stock. Regular spring surveys of adult spawning areas are required. This investigator will also conduct annual fall surveys of bays containing age 0, age 1, and age 2 herring to enable recruitment forecasting or indexing. Analysis of these data plus additional data from previously conducted juvenile herring surveys is required for synthetic collaborations with peers.

Depending on funding, this position may be responsible for additional research related to an Alaska Department of Fish and Game study on the interactions between hatchery-reared and wild salmon populations. If funding continues for additional salmon research, this individual would serve as a lead principal investigator (PI) on the ocean test fishery portion of this program. Regular coordination with other PIs, a contracted vessel operator, and a project manager would be required, and you would ensure all technician and logistics requirements are met to successfully carry out a portion of an ongoing multi-year, multi-investigator contract. Approximately two seasonal field technicians have been overseen by this position, processing samples from multiple collection sites at the entrances to PWS between the months of May and September. For more information:

http://pwssc.org/research/fish-2/hatchery-wild-salmon-interactions/

Peer-reviewed publication of results on any projects conducted on behalf of PWSSC is expected. Two years of funding are secure for this position with high potential for continuation of one or more projects that are part of a herring research program intended to last 20 years (currently in the first quartile). The successful candidate will compete to secure additional funds to initiate new research or continue ongoing research in these and other areas of interest.

All research and outreach is in service to PWSSC's mission to advance the understanding and sustainable use of ecosystems in the northern Gulf of Alaska region through research and education. While the start date of the position is flexible, preference is for the successful candidate to begin as soon as possible.

Applicant must be a U.S. or Canadian citizen or have U.S. Permanent Residence status.

Salary and benefits: Salary is grant funded and competitive with public universities in Alaska; benefits include health insurance (with dental and vision coverage), paid time off and optional enrollment in a retirement annuity.

Application Process: In order to be considered, applicants will submit their curriculum vitae, a one-page statement of research interests and how you the PWSSC mission and opportunities are complementary to your career goals, and the names of three references with contact information

via email to Katrina Hoffman, President and CEO, Prince William Sound Science Center, pwssc[at]pwssc.org using the Subject line: 2015 Fisheries ecology position.

Review of applications will begin on January 26, 2014. Position open until filled.