

Blue-spotted Salamander Surveys, 2020

Description

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife seeks to fund survey efforts targeting the state-listed Blue-spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) as part of an ongoing study of regional population distributions. Experienced field biologists are needed to lead surveys in southeastern Massachusetts (Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties). Work will occur during the salamander breeding-migration season, implementing trapping surveys primarily and nocturnal visual surveys and/or cover-object surveys secondarily. Minimum duties will consist of sampling adult Blue-spotted Salamanders via funnel-trapping and taking standard measurements and photos of captured individuals. Sites to be surveyed will be prioritized and assigned by the NHESP.

Work will occur between late February and late April, depending on regional climate and local breeding phenology of Blue-spotted Salamanders. The successful applicant(s) will work in close consultation with the NHESP to plan and implement surveys to achieve preferred survey effort at each site over a desired sampling period. The successful applicant(s) will be expected to have reliable transportation, pay close attention to detail, have the ability to work independently in adverse weather conditions, and meet the physical demands of rigorous field work (see last bullet in Preferred Qualifications).

If feasible, the successful applicant(s) may be asked to assist with an intensive trapping and DNA sampling effort in southern Middlesex County during the same general period. Frequency and duration of assistance with that work would be negotiable, depending on need, travel, and logistical considerations identified at the time. Assistance could vary from a single day to 3 weeks.

Locations

- Primary: various sites in Plymouth, northern Bristol, and southern Norfolk counties
- Secondary (possible): a site in southern Middlesex County

Positions Available

Up to 3

Funding Available

Up to \$4,000 per contract, based on an hourly rate of \$25.00/hr. and a 160-hr. maximum

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience conducting aquatic funnel-trapping surveys for Blue-spotted Salamander and other pool-breeding amphibians.
- Demonstrated experience capturing and handling Blue-spotted Salamanders.
- Thorough understanding of Blue-spotted Salamander movement behavior as it relates to timing and duration of breeding migrations, and to weather conditions.
- Experience conducting nocturnal visual surveys for Blue-spotted Salamander.
- Experience conducting cover-object surveys for Blue-spotted Salamander and other salamander species.
- Experience conducting biological field work under adverse weather conditions (cold, wind, rain).
- Flexible schedule, as it relates to accommodating the timing, duration, and frequency of survey work necessitated by local weather conditions and related salamander activity; generally available

to work between late February and late April, and available to work intensively during a 3-week period once salamander migrations commence.

- Able to provide own camera, GPS unit, field notebook, weatherproof footwear/apparel (e.g., waders), and transportation.
- Comfortable working alone in the woods.
- Physically capable of carrying a 20- to 40-lb. pack of equipment (e.g., stack of funnel traps) while traversing through the woods on foot, hiking up to half a mile through dense underbrush, and wading through mucky and/or densely vegetated wetlands with submerged (and often hidden) woody debris.

Special Conditions & Other Information

- Services of the successful applicant(s) will be retained through the NHESP's contractual relationship with the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.
- Prior to commencement of work, the successful applicant(s) will be named on a Letter Permit from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife authorizing the capture and handling of Blue-spotted Salamanders.
- The NHESP will provide traps, data forms, and equipment for measuring salamanders (scale, calipers).
- Following completion of field work, the successful applicant(s) would be expected to submit several project deliverables: (1) completed survey data forms, (2) a Microsoft Excel workbook with survey and salamander data, and (3) photos of all Blue-spotted Salamanders observed, following a standard file-naming scheme.

To Apply

Please submit an application consisting of (1) a cover letter that directly addresses the preferred qualifications listed above, (2) a resume/CV, and (3) contact information for 3 references. [*Note: references are not required if the applicant has worked on the NHESP Blue-spotted Salamander project within the past 5 years.*] Applications should be sent in either hard-copy or electronic format to: Karen Dolan, Finance & Projects Administrator, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581 or karen.dolan@mass.gov. **Preference will be given to applications received prior to January 14, 2020; final application deadline is January 31, 2020.**

For questions regarding application submission, please contact Karen at (508) 389-6349 or karen.dolan@mass.gov.

For information about specific aspects of the project, please contact Jacob E. Kubel, Conservation Scientist, at (508) 389-6373 or jacob.kubel@mass.gov.