

## PhD and MSc assistantships – Movement ecology and conservation of Mexican spotted owls

### *Position summary*

The Jones Lab at the University of New Mexico/USDA Forest Service (<http://gavinmjones.com>) in partnership with Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL, <http://lanl.gov>) is recruiting 1 PhD **and** 1 Master's student to begin graduate studies in Fall 2026. Research will focus on various aspects of movement, habitat, and conservation of the threatened Mexican spotted owl in the southwestern US. The project aims to understand breeding-season movement ecology and habitat selection of Mexican spotted owls in the seasonally dry forests and canyonlands of the southwestern United States using high-accuracy GPS tracking. Results will directly inform large-scale forest restoration efforts and habitat management plans within the range of this threatened species.



The ideal candidate will have undergraduate (for the MSc) or graduate training (for the PhD) in wildlife ecology, biostatistics, or a related discipline. Experience capturing and/or handling raptors and supervising field research projects is a plus, but training will be provided, and both students will be working alongside a team of professional staff to successfully execute the field efforts. Geospatial and statistical skillsets will be critical for project success; candidates should have developed skills in these areas or a strong interest in quantitative approaches. Candidates must also be willing and able to work on a collaborative project with multiple stakeholders on high-profile and sometimes controversial conservation issues. Candidates must ensure that they meet all the basic admissions requirements for the UNM graduate school (<https://biology.unm.edu/graduate/admissions-requirements.html>); GRE is not required.

Students will be employed through LANL and must pass a background check and drug screenings. Positions come with generous salary and benefits packages. During the academic year, the positions will be based in Albuquerque, NM, and during the field season (spring/summer) will be located in the Jemez region in northern New Mexico including on LANL property. The students will be enrolled through the Biology Department at the University of New Mexico and will be affiliated with the USDA Forest Services via the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) located in downtown Albuquerque. Ideal start date for the position is March/April 2026, but there is some flexibility if accommodation in timing is needed.

### *How to apply*

Email a cover letter (1-page max) describing your background and interests in the position, a CV, and contact information for 3 references to Dr. Gavin Jones ([gavinjones@unm.edu](mailto:gavinjones@unm.edu)). To ensure full consideration, please submit application materials by **7 January 2026**. Formal employment review and hiring will be completed by LANL.



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