

## **Avian Habitat Technician**

**TITLE:** Habitat Technician (Seasonal)

**CLASSIFICATION:** Seasonal, temporary; May – August (14 weeks, start and end dates are flexible)

**WAGE CATEGORY:** Non-exempt

**REPORTS TO:** Executive Director, Michigan Audubon

**LOCATION:** Whitefish Point, Michigan

### **Job Description:**

The technician will help implement species monitoring, habitat protection, and outreach activities that will benefit breeding Great Lakes piping plovers and migratory birds at Whitefish Point, Michigan. The technician will help expand the presence of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the site in this capacity, and increase public education regarding Great Lakes Piping Plovers.

The technician's responsibilities will include tasks that benefit three property owners at Whitefish Point, including: USFWS, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society and Michigan Audubon and its onsite affiliate, the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory.

The USFWS recently acquired 19.85 acres of land at Whitefish Point within designated critical habitat for the Great Lakes population of piping plovers. This makes the total acres owned in fee title by the USFWS at the point 53 acres. Land at the Point, managed by other agencies in consultation with the USFWS, totals an additional 11 acres as follows: Michigan Audubon Society – 2.69 acres and Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society – 8.27 acres. Lands are managed using the 2002 Human Use and Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point. Acres acquired in 2012 are not included in the 2002 plan.

### **Principal Responsibilities:**

#### *Piping Plover*

- Work with Refuge staff in installation, maintenance and removal of protective barriers around piping plover nesting areas.
- Responsible for piping plover monitoring and assist with protection of nesting areas.

#### *Habitat Management*

- Assist with habitat restoration through the planting of dune grass and Jack Pine.

### **Minor Responsibilities:**

#### *Educational outreach and interpretation*

- Maintain a daily presence at the Whitefish Point campus, Tuesday through Saturday or Sunday through Thursday work schedule
- Represent and promote the respective missions of the USFWS, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, Michigan Audubon, and the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory.
- Serve as a primary contact for the visiting public to answer questions about piping plovers,

**Qualifications:**

The ideal candidate will be able to work independently with minimal daily supervision. Candidates who are outgoing, personable, and willing to engage the curious public will excel in the position. Priority will be given to applicants with a demonstrated knowledge of Great Lakes natural history, expertise in identifying plants, and some experience using a consumer-level, hand-held GPS unit. Additional preferred qualifications include:

- Completion of, at minimum, three years toward an undergraduate degree in environmental studies, biology, wildlife management, education, or historical preservation. A college graduate is preferred.
- Ability to live for four months at a remote site, in rustic conditions, and occasionally enduring harsh weather conditions (wind, rain, cold temperatures), and biting insects.
- Willingness to be flexible, engaging, and upbeat while helping advance the mission of three organizations.
- Must possess strong communications skills and be willing to receive direction via email, teleconference, and infrequent on-site meetings with supervisory staff.

**Compensation, Term & Benefits:**

The technician will receive an hourly wage of \$14.00/hour and will be provided an USFWS vehicle to be used for official use only. Vehicle will be shared with Outreach Technician. The technician will be required to attend a one-day USFWS-sponsored piping plover monitoring training in early May. Housing will be provided at the rustic headquarters building of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, located a short distance from the site where work will be conducted. Uniforms and plover monitoring equipment will be provided.

**Application Process:**

Email a cover letter, resume, and three references to [boardchair@michiganaudubon.org](mailto:boardchair@michiganaudubon.org). Applications will be accepted until March 1, 2016.

**About Whitefish Point:**

Governance of the former Whitefish Point Light Station is shared by the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, Michigan Audubon, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The USFWS manages the 33 acres transferred to them from the former Whitefish Point Light Station as part of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge- Whitefish Point Unit. In conjunction with Michigan Audubon, the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, and other conservation groups, the USFWS added 19.85 acres and more than 1,000 feet of Lake Superior shoreline as critical piping plover habitat to Whitefish Point unit on August 30, 2012. The land of the Whitefish Point Unit is "Wooded Dune and Swell Complex" that is distinctive to the Great Lakes region. It supports a diversity of species, including lady slippers, starflower, bunchberry, labrador-tea, and a variety of trees. Whitefish Point is on a world migratory bird flyway. In 2001, USFWS designated all of its Whitefish Point property as Critical Habitat for the piping plover. In 2009, piping plover began nesting at Whitefish Point again for the first time in at least two decades.