

## Native Songbird Care & Conservation Internship Outline



Native Songbird Care & Conservation (NSCC) is a state and federally licensed wildlife rehabilitation hospital and non-profit organization located in Sebastopol, California. The internship program at NSCC provides a unique opportunity to gain experience in the care of injured, ill and orphaned native passerines within the wildlife rehabilitation setting. From a conservation perspective, this internship also provides an up-close look at the anthropogenic threats facing passerines in today's world.

Each year our experienced staff and volunteers care for approximately 1,000 native passerines. From swallows and swifts to flycatchers and wrens, we care for over 75 species of migratory passerines annually. During the breeding season, many of these birds are nestlings and fledglings that have been orphaned due to nest destruction or attack by free-roaming cats. They require an intense amount of care that includes hand-feeding from dawn to dusk, medical treatment, cleaning, enrichment and other tasks that prepare them for successful release back to the wild.

Passerines are a diverse group of species that require a high level of specialized and well-managed care. This internship provides a unique opportunity to gain experience at a facility that focuses exclusively on the rehabilitation of native passerines. During this challenging internship, interns will work with the director to learn a wide range of skills until they are able to work independently. Interns will be responsible for assisting with the care of orphaned, sick and injured songbirds admitted to NSCC. They will assist with the daily care of patients, including cleaning, feeding, intake, and routine exams; training and working with volunteers; answering the hotline and interacting with the public.

Depending on their age and species, each bird has specific requirements for care, diet, housing and release back to the wild. Interns will learn species identification and natural history of native passerines. This knowledge will be applied to create care and release plans for our patients.

All species cared for at NSCC are state and federally protected. Patients typically arrive at our hospital due to a negative interaction with humans. Interns will become familiar with the laws and ethics that govern and guide our work as rehabilitators. They will also learn about the various conservation issues and anthropogenic threats impacting passerines in today's world.

### **Time commitment:**

The internship term begins late May and ends mid-August. Specific start and end dates will be discussed and mutually agreed upon by the director and intern. This is a

voluntary training position that includes a weekly stipend of \$200 to offset living expenses while on the project (stipend is disbursed bi-monthly). This position is a minimum 24-30 hours a week with strict adherence to the agreed upon work schedule for the duration of the 12 week term. Shifts are at least 8 hours and are typically 12pm-8pm. Interns are required to attend three 2-hour classes as part of their coursework during their term and a final exam at the end of the term.

**Coursework:**

3 classes will be taught during the term. Classes will cover areas of wildlife rehabilitation relevant to the intern's work at NSCC with the birds. There will be discussion with the Director and other interns related to class material, current cases/patients in the clinic, and rehabilitation procedures and practices at NSCC. During the final week of the term, there will be a final exam based on the reading material, classes, and rehabilitation procedures learned at NSCC.

Class schedule will be determined at start of internship.

**Responsibilities and requirements:**

Interns are responsible for assisting with the care of orphaned, sick and injured native songbirds admitted to NSCC. Interns will learn and practice several aspects of animal care in a wildlife rehabilitation hospital. They will assist hospital staff with the daily care of patients, including cleaning, feeding, enrichment, intake, exams, treatment, record-keeping and releases. They will learn species identification and natural history of native passerines. They will assist with training new volunteers and work closely with volunteers to ensure the hospital is maintained in a clean and orderly condition at all times. They will answer the hotline and learn to assist members of the public seeking help with wildlife. They will participate in release site selection and release back to the wild of our patients.

Interns will help with occasional transport from municipal shelters, veterinary clinics and other wildlife centers who will hold sick, injured and orphaned wildlife brought in by their communities and need to be transferred to NSCC for rehabilitation. Interns must have their own vehicle, valid driver's license and current insurance. NSCC does not reimburse for gas money spent on transport.

**Housing and Transportation**

Housing and transportation are the responsibility of the intern. There is no on-site housing available. Interns are encouraged to reside locally and arrange for their own housing. We suggest using Airbnb, subletting an apartment, renting a room, or staying with a friend or relative nearby. Make sure to consider the commute between your living quarters and the center when researching places to stay.

## **Qualifications**

- Must be at least 18 years of age and current on tetanus vaccine
- Must be currently enrolled in or recently completed an undergraduate degree in Biology, Animal Science, or related field.
- Must be able to perform physically demanding tasks such as cleaning, lifting at least 25 lbs, bending, stooping, standing most of the day, etc. Must not have sensitivities to bird dander, mealworms, plant material, bleach or dish soap.
- Must have respect and compassion for wildlife; maturity and professionalism when working with the public, NSCC staff and volunteers
- Must be able to work independently and as a team member
- Must be able to work quickly and efficiently while following directions, procedures and policies of NSCC
- Ability speak, read and write English proficiently
- Must be responsible, adaptable, hard working, motivated to learn, and have attention to detail
- Must be able to multi-task and work in a fast-paced demanding environment
- Must be able to work long hours with few breaks
- At least three months previous experience working with wild birds or volunteering at a wildlife facility is strongly desired

## **Application process:**

Please submit your resume, letter of intent, copy of transcript/coursework (*optional*), and selection of 2-3 references whom we may contact, (*At least 1 teacher/professor and 1 previous employer recommended*) to the email below. The letter of intent must state when you are available to begin your internship and detail your interests, experience, and availability; demonstrate that you have secured housing and reliable transportation for the duration of the internship; and you are able to complete the internship in 12 consecutive weeks without interruption. Vacations should be scheduled before or after the 12-week term. If you qualify, an interview, by phone or in person, will be scheduled.

Please submit to [director@nativesongbirdcare.org](mailto:director@nativesongbirdcare.org) with the subject line *Internship Application*.

If you have any questions, please send your inquiry to [director@nativesongbirdcare.org](mailto:director@nativesongbirdcare.org)

The deadline to apply is April 16, 2018.

## **Upon completion:**

Upon successful completion of the internship and final exam, interns will receive a certificate of completion from NSCC and be eligible for a letter of reference from the director summarizing their coursework, accomplishments and skills learned during the internship.