

**Volunteer Positions on the
5th Crazy Ant Strike Team Expedition
Johnston Atoll National Wildlife Refuge**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking 4 volunteers for an approximately 7 to 8 month period beginning November 2012 to join the Fifth Crazy Ant Strike Team (CAST V) Expedition to Johnston Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Johnston Atoll is located in the central Pacific Ocean, 717 nautical miles west-southwest of Honolulu. The refuge is managed for 14 species of breeding seabirds and 5 species of wintering shorebirds in addition to its diverse coral reef and marine organism assemblages, including the threatened green turtle. The atoll contains four small islands (696 acres), which constitute the only land area in over 750,000 square miles of ocean. The emergent land associated with this refuge provides critical, rat-free habitat for central Pacific seabird populations and its coral reef ecosystem is an important marine resource. The refuge is uninhabited except for the 5 member strike team. As a volunteer you will have the opportunity to live in this remote setting where you will be surrounded by birds and sea life.

President Calvin Coolidge recognized the atoll's importance as a wildlife site and designated Johnston Island a National Wildlife Refuge back in 1926. In 1934 President Roosevelt added a military mission to the area and for the next 70 years the government used the atoll in a variety of capacities; as a base during Viet Nam, for the testing of nuclear weapons, and for the storage and destruction of chemical weapons. During the 1950's and 1960's several thousand people lived at Johnston. The main island at Johnston was originally about 64 acres, however, it was enlarged in various dredge and fill operations to its present size of about 640 acres. The dredging destroyed some of the extensive coral reefs but much remains. The military has ended their mission at Johnston and departed the atoll in 2004 after several years of clean-up activities. Now Johnston has been returned to the wildlife that had it in the beginning and where there once were buildings, seabirds are again. Johnston Atoll NWR is also part of the newly created Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. For more information see <http://www.fws.gov/johnstonisland/>

In January 2010, an infestation of *Anoplolepis gracilipes*, or yellow crazy ants (YCA) was found affecting approximately 130 acres of the 640-acre Johnston Island. Yellow crazy ants, named because of their manic behavior when disturbed, have wreaked havoc on ecosystems and bird habitats in other parts of the world; therefore the presence of this infestation is cause for great concern. Local impacts to wildlife already observed on Johnston Island include the apparent desertion of the entire affected area by ground nesting birds that previously occupied those areas (red-tailed tropicbird and wedge-tailed shearwater) and a possible reduction in density and numbers of tree-nesting bird species inside the area colonized by YCA (red-footed booby and white tern). The potential for even greater impacts to the terrestrial ecosystem at Johnston Atoll is substantial if the infestation of YCA is left unchecked.

Since August 2010, four strike teams have been deployed to eradicate the invasive ant. Duties performed by these and future camps include: 1) in Honolulu; packing and preparing gear, food,

and all items necessary for the camp; and 2) on-island include; maintaining pesticide bait stations, monitoring and enforcement of quarantine measures, monitoring ant and bird populations, bike and camp maintenance. The camp will consist of 4 volunteers and a strike team leader.

Volunteers will be expected to work at least 48 hours/week, 6 days/week . However, this does not necessarily mean 8-5 M-F as some projects will necessitate working evenings or consecutive days. Primary responsibilities will include:

- Ant bait application and monitoring
- Entomological surveys/ bioassays
- Seabird, shorebird, and sea turtle surveys
- Data collection and management
- Weekly and summary reporting
- Camp establishment/disestablishment
- Camp maintenance and chores

It is imperative that potential volunteers consider that Johnston is a remote site where all but emergency access is by ship, which takes 3-5 days to transit from Honolulu. No re-supply or ship visits during the 7-month camp are anticipated. On the island, transportation will be by foot or bicycle. Living conditions are primitive consist of 12x14x6 ft personal tents and a bunker will be used for communal/food storage/kitchen and office. Bathing is done in sea water. Contact with the island has proven to be reliable but is limited to slow internet access. However, this internet access cannot be guaranteed and communication could be limited to text only e-mail with no internet. Direct medical attention is at minimum 1-3 days away.

Requirements: Must be able to walk 10 miles per day, lift 70 lbs, comfortable with insecticide use, and ride a bicycle. Much stooping and bending will be required to maintain the bait stations. Weather conditions can be harsh with strong winds, gales, and hot sun. Since travel to the island is by boat, and at times in high surf conditions, the possibility of capsizing exists. Applicants must be able to swim. Must possess a valid passport that will not expire before July-2013. All Strike Team members must follow all pesticide and safety protocols. Direct medical attention is at minimum 1-3 days away. Safety in this remote setting is of primary concern and all individuals are expected to work together as a team to maintain good communication at all times.

Prior experience in the following is recommended: camping, invasive species control, shorebird and seabird identification and monitoring, entomological surveying, familiarity with GIS tools and software, data management, and pesticide application. Possession of a valid US drivers license.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide: airfare to and from Honolulu, housing and a modest food stipend while in Honolulu, transportation between Honolulu and Johnston, island quarantine clothes, and food and housing on Johnston. The Honolulu stipend will not be paid up front so volunteers will need to have sufficient finances to provide for their own food for the preparation period in Honolulu.

Applications will be evaluated as they arrive and the positions will be filled quickly.

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and at least 3 references to both:

[Lee Ann Woodward@fws.gov](mailto:Lee_Ann_Woodward@fws.gov)

[Stefan Kropidlowski@fws.gov](mailto:Stefan_Kropidlowski@fws.gov)