Full-time Postdoctoral Research Scientist position in tick control and tick-borne disease management with the New England Center of Excellence in Vector-borne Diseases (NEWVEC)

Compensation: $61,500
Location: University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI
Employer: NEWVEC
Listed: May 16, 2025; open until filled

Position summary:

The New England Center of Excellence in Vector-borne Diseases seeks a postdoctoral scientist to develop scientific and decision support tools for resource management agencies and homeowners looking to implement disease management solutions. The position will work closely with a team of vector-borne disease and quantitative ecologists, entomologists, and decision analysts associated with the New England Center for Excellence in Vector-borne Diseases (NEWVEC) group at the University of Rhode Island. Supported by an award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NEWVEC was formed to focus on operational research for the effective control of ticks and mosquitoes in New England and training the next generation of public health entomologists. Our current work centers on development of decision support tools across different contexts for tick control, from individuals and households to county, state, and regional management. This position will address a wide need for research and decision support around residential tick control actions to reduce potential tick-bite exposure and risk of tick-borne diseases in people and their animals.

Duties:

Work will emphasize identifying optimal management strategies in tick control and personal protection to reduce risk of tick bites for people and pets; however, as part of a collaborative team of seven institutions within NEWVEC, there will be many opportunities to engage in other areas of interest. The candidate will work directly with tick-borne disease experts to assess potential mitigation strategies, conduct quantitative modeling that directly aid in management decision making, and calibrate decision support tools to reduce risk of transmission and outcomes. The work will involve collaborating with homeowners, researchers, state, and federal partners to identify and weight management objectives and mitigation actions, facilitating expert elicitations regarding parameters for which there are few data, developing and using models of human and wildlife population epidemiology to evaluate management strategies that may be effective at reducing tick-bite exposure, and identifying research needs for future work to address various ecological and management uncertainties. Results of this analysis will be used to develop public tools for tick control decision support.

In addition to the duties outlined above, and depending on prior experiences of the postdoctoral candidate, there will be an opportunity to receive specialized training in structured decision making, expert elicitation, facilitation, and quantitative modeling that directly aids in management decision making.

Qualifications:

Applicants are expected to have earned a PhD degree in a relevant discipline, preferably within the last five years, and to have skills in one or more of the following: wildlife disease ecology, modeling, epidemiology, statistics, quantitative ecology, decision analysis, expert elicitation, or human dimensions of natural resource management. Previous experience leading a collaborative research project is desired but not necessary. The successful candidate will also have excellent writing and personal communication skills, and a demonstrated desire and ability to publish in peer-reviewed journals.

Benefits:

Salary and benefits are competitive and available for at least 15 months. Some funds will be available to support travel to meetings with the study team members, regional workshops during model development, and professional conferences. Postdocs will receive high-level training in decision analysis and disease ecology.

Location:

The position will be based at The University of Rhode Island in Kingston, RI. Work will involve close collaboration with the PIs at URI and other NEWVEC institutions (NEWVEC.org).

Application:

Send a letter via email (include in the subject line: "NEWVEC postdoc position for ticks and tick-borne disease decision support" to be sure your application is reviewed) describing your background and experiences as they relate to this position, and a CV with names and contact information for three references to Associate Professor Nelle Couret (ncouret@uri.edu) and Professor Tom Mather (tmather@uri.edu). Applications will be reviewed as they are received until the position is filled.