

Postdoctoral Research Associate in Quantitative Movement Ecology at the University of California, Riverside

Position Title: Postdoctoral Research Associate

Institution: University of California, Riverside - VanAcker Lab

Location: Riverside, CA

Salary: \$69,073 - \$71,632 (depending on time since PhD degree)

Start date: As soon as possible

Description: Full-time position with a two-year appointment

Application closing date: August 1, 2025

We are looking for a quantitative wildlife movement ecologist to join our team to lead analyses on urban white-tailed deer movement behavior and pathogen transmission dynamics. This is an exciting opportunity for candidates with skills in movement ecology, spatial analysis, and statistical inference with, ideally, a knowledge of zoonotic pathogen systems. This postdoc will be a part of a larger team working to understand SARS-CoV-2 (SCV2) dynamics in ungulates in the United States through assessing deer movement, habitat selection, and infection dynamics at the human-wildlife interface (<https://www.targetedsurveillance.com/>). The candidate will have access to longitudinal white-tailed deer infection data of multiple pathogens (both SCV2 and non-SCV2) alongside high resolution deer GPS data from a borough in New York City. Additionally, there are opportunities to examine movement behavior and pathogen dynamics across deer populations in multiple sites throughout the United States which vary significantly in land use. This postdoc can work closely with a collaborative team of disease ecologists, movement ecologists, and veterinarians through the national SARS-CoV-2/Cervid Targeted Surveillance Team. The position requires a high-degree of self-motivation and independence, effective communication and teamwork, meticulous data handling, and excellent organizational and time-management skills.

This full-time position is in person under Dr. Meredith VanAcker at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) in the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology and will involve close collaboration with the Diuk-Wasser lab at Columbia University. UCR offers a flexible work environment and supportive colleagues who prioritize work-life balance. The position is funded for 2 years from the date of hire pending performance and includes a comprehensive benefits package. The start date is as soon as possible with the latest start date in late-September 2025.

Percentage breakdown of duties:

15% Establishing and maintaining automated workflows for GPS data

35% Develop analytical pipeline for integrating movement and pathogen datasets

35% Writing and submitting scientific papers

15% Other duties include supporting any ongoing data collection and preparing and delivering presentations

The successful applicant will have received their PhD in a relevant subject area within the past 23 months with a strong quantitative emphasis. Specific experience with the R programming language and methods in advanced spatial and statistical analysis is required. Submission to or publishing in peer-reviewed scientific journals is required and mandatory during the appointment period. To apply, please provide (1) a cover letter detailing your experiences for the qualifications above and how they have prepared you for this position, (2) a CV, (3) the names and contact information of three professional references, and (4) two relevant publications. Please submit these materials to Dr. Meredith VanAcker (mereditv@ucr.edu) as a single pdf by August 1, 2025.