Job Description:

We (Pruitt Lab at the University of California, Santa Barbara) are looking for two field assistants to join us in South Africa and Namibia for 3 months to help perform and set up various short- and long-term experiments with the African desert social spider *Stegodyphus dumicola*. We will be investigating how intracolony behavioral variation leads to success in the field, its role in defending the colony against ant raids, and the role that keystone individuals play in this system. This job will require spending a lot of time both inside performing behavioral assays on spiders, and outside setting up and recording survival data on colonies in the field. There will also be a lot of driving, as we will likely be setting up studies in both South Africa and Namibia. You will be expected to be up early to assist with projects, and some projects may require surveying colonies during the night as well. Expect long, 10+ hour workdays. Also, it is possible that WiFi will be unavailable during the entire 3 month stay in Africa.

This position will provide you with valuable experience designing, setting up, and executing research projects in the field. There may also be the opportunity for you to design and execute your own research project, depending on our time constraints.

Compensation:

We will cover all airfare costs as well as food and lodging while in South Africa. Additionally, we will pay each assistant $600 per month. If your performance is outstanding, we will gladly provide glowing letters of recommendation for you should you need them.

Duration:

3 months (from Early January to early April of 2017)

We will be taking applications from now until September, 2016. In early September we will review all the applications at once and select a handful of top candidates for Skype interviews. Once the interviews are completed, we will make our final decisions.

Requirements:

1. Seriously interested in pursuing a career in ecology
2. Excellent academic performance
3. Undergraduate or recent graduate
4. Be able to lift 80lbs
5. Must be able to stay for the entire 3 month duration
6. **Must not be squeamish around spiders.** These are medium-sized spiders, and one colony can have sometimes over 1,000 spiders inside it. You will be required to handle them often with bare hands. They will sometimes try to bite you, but their fangs cannot penetrate your skin. *It does not hurt when they bite you.* Please do not apply for this position if reading that made you queasy.
7. Limited dietary restrictions: food options where we will be staying are often quite limited, and it may not be possible to accommodate severely restricting dietary requirements. Vegetarians should be fine.

Apply for this position:

If this position interests you, please send your cover letter, CV, unofficial academic records including current GPA, and two personal references that we may contact to Colin Wright (africaspiders@gmail.com). We are accepting applications NOW through November of 2016.

Additionally, if you have any questions regarding us, our lab, or the project, please don't hesitate to email me and ask!