

FWC UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARD PROGRAM POLICY

Approved: 1 December 2017

Revised: none yet

1.0 General description

To promote undergraduate research in the disciplines of fisheries, wildlife biology, ecology, and management in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech, the department has established the FWC Undergraduate Research Program through the support of donors, college, and departmental funds. The program makes competitive awards to support undergraduate research by students majoring in fish or wildlife conservation and mentored by departmental faculty.

Restrictions and maximum amounts awarded vary depending on funding source. Typically, student are notified of awards during the winter and will complete work during the spring, summer and fall of the following year. Faculty members supervising student research must expend awards by the end of November of the year of the award and students will present their results at the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Research Expo held annually in December. Funds will primarily be used for supplies to support the research of the awardee and can be used for salary or wages if justified; however, funds cannot be used to offset tuition. All students applying for awards must have the commitment of a faculty mentor from the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation. The Department Undergraduate Affairs Committee will review applications and make recommendations for awards to the Department Head.

2.0 General criteria

Applications will be judged on their potential to contribute to larger research outcomes and produce publishable results. In their letters of support (see Application process below for more details), mentors should identify matching funds and support, and concisely describe the fit of the student's project into the larger direction of their research program.

We seek to support students with a commitment to research and the potential to pursue a research career. Therefore, students should describe, in their personal statement, how the proposed project fits into their long-term career plans (see Application process below for more details). Students are not expected to develop their research plan independently of their research mentor and are encouraged to work with their research mentor in developing research ideas.

3.0 Funding Limits

Total funds awarded to an individual project cannot exceed \$5000. However, availability of funds from individual funding sources may further limit maximum awards. Please consult annual announcements for specific funding limitations.

4.0 Application process

Applications will consist of two parts: 1) a one-to-two-page statement prepared by the student that briefly describes the project and budget, the student's past preparation to undertake the project, future career plans, and the funding source of interest; 2) a letter of commitment from the faculty mentor clearly indicating the faculty member's willingness to support the student, the role of the project in the larger research endeavors of the laboratory, and any matching support available to assist in completing the project. Funds are listed below and may have additional restrictions. Students should construct their project descriptions and personal statements to clearly indicate how they meet any additional restrictions associated with individual funds.

Applications, including the student's statement and the faculty member's support letter, will typically be due in the Department Head's Office (room 100 of Cheatham Hall) by the 1st of November on an annual basis. The Department Head's Office will be responsible for publicizing the availability of funds among students and faculty each fall and administering expenditures associated with awards.

5.0 Expectations

Students are expected to spend at least eight hours a week working on their project and to meet with their faculty mentors on a weekly basis. Less frequent meetings between faculty and students may occur when faculty are traveling or during the summer months. Students are expected to present the results of their research at the department's annual Research Expo and are encouraged to pursue publication in the peer-reviewed literature at the discretion and under the advisement of their faculty mentor.

Faculty mentors are expected to be available for meetings, provide reasonable access to facilities and supplies to complete the project, provide regular advice and input on the progress of the project, assist in purchasing supplies with awarded funds, and make a good-faith effort to provide support for the broader dissemination of the results through peer-reviewed publication and/or presentations at regional or national meetings of professional societies.

Students may register for Undergraduate Research (FIW 2994 or 4994) credits during the course of their project. These credits can be used to satisfy the experiential learning requirements for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Degree. Students will receive credit for Undergraduate Research after they have presented their results at the Research Expo. Therefore, it is recommended that students register for Undergraduate Research in the fall semester as they complete their project and make their presentation at the Research Expo.

6.0 Specific Funds

6.1 Camp-Younts Foundation Wildlife Undergraduate Research Fund

The Camp-Younts Foundation and its trustee, Hal S. Atkinson, established this endowment to support students interested in the conservation and management of wildlife game species. Hal served as the chief of the Division of Wildlife Management of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and has a deep passion for the conservation and management of game species.

The researcher(s) chosen to receive support from this fund shall be:

- An undergraduate student majoring in wildlife conservation option of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Students conducting the research shall be residents of Virginia or North Carolina with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Preference for use of funds will be given to support undergraduate research of issues related to wildlife game species in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

6.2 Departmental Diversity Undergraduate Research Award

The faculty of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation are committed to promoting diversity and developing and maintaining an inclusive environment in our classrooms and laboratories, and in the fish and wildlife conservation professions. In recognition of this commitment, the department strives to annually fund the research of one or more students from historically under-represented groups in fish and wildlife conservation.

The researcher(s) chosen to receive support under this program should:

- Be from an under-represented group in the fish and wildlife conservation professions including, but not limited to, ethnic and racial minorities, first-generation college students, students from low-income areas, students with disabilities, student from the LGBTQ community, females, etc.
- Preference will be given to students with sophomore or junior standing.

For more information on diversity in fisheries and wildlife management see:

Arismendi, I., and B. E. Penaluna. 2016. Examining diversity inequities in fisheries science: A call to action. *BioScience* 66: 584–591.

Williams, M.J.; Chao, N.H.; Choo, P.S.; Matics, K.; Nandeesh, M.C.; Shariff, M.; Siason, I.; Tech, E.; Wong, J.M.C. (eds.) (2002) *Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries*. Penang, Malaysia: ICLARM - The World Fish Center, xv, 209 pp. ISBN 983-2346-10-X.

<http://wildlife.org/egdwg/>

<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/30970/title/Opinion--Diversity-for-Conservationists-and-Biota/>

6.3 Department Undergraduate Research Award

The faculty of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation strive to support all students. Therefore, in the spirit of inclusion, the department offers awards in this category with no specific restrictions or preferences.