

# WILDLIFE ECOLOGY, MS

The Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology offers graduate education and training in a number of areas leading to the master of science and/or the doctor of philosophy degree in Wildlife Ecology. The department takes pride in its program's outstanding research reputation and the success of graduates working throughout the world. The Wildlife Ecology program was founded by Aldo Leopold in 1939, and the program has maintained his vision and legacy of excellence in our current research and graduate training activities.

Master's and doctoral work in wildlife ecology typically focus on areas of wildlife ecology that reflect the expertise of the faculty, including, but not limited to, behavioral ecology, physiological ecology, population dynamics, wildlife disease, community ecology, landscape ecology, wildlife management, wildlife-habitat linkages, molecular ecology, human dimensions, species distribution modeling, climate change, endangered species recovery, conservation biology, toxicology, and wildlife damage management.

The department is home to the U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. In this program, research in support of state and federal wildlife conservation programs is given priority.

In recent years, annual research support for the department's programs has averaged between \$3 million to \$4 million drawn from an array of federal, state, and conservation organizations and private donors. Competition for admission is very strong, and not every admissible student can or will be offered financial support. Graduate assistantships and/or fellowships may be available for a limited number of well-qualified students. Before submitting an application for admission, interested students should contact individual faculty to determine whether an assistantship or other financial aid might be available. Once admitted, students work closely with major professors and an advisory committee to develop a research program.

## ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	May 31 for international applicants; August 1 for domestic applicants
Spring Deadline	October 11 for international applicants; December 1 for domestic applicants

Summer Deadline	December 1 for domestic applicants; February 1 for international applicants
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

The Graduate School sets minimum requirements for admissions (<https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements/>). Academic program admission requirements are often more rigorous than those set by the Graduate School. Applicants are encouraged to apply earlier than the dates listed above. Check the program's website ([https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/academics/21417982244\\_4e0823cb05\\_k/application-process/](https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/academics/21417982244_4e0823cb05_k/application-process/)) for details about the admission process.

### PREREQUISITES

Individuals are expected to enter the program having taken a majority of the following coursework, but deficient courses may be taken while in the program in consultation with the student's Graduate Committee.

- One course in ecology, with population ecology/dynamics strongly recommended
- One course in conservation biology, wildlife management, natural resources policy, or human dimensions of natural resources
- One course in animal organismal biology (e.g., physiology, terrestrial vertebrates, ornithology)
- One course in genetics or evolution

Coursework used to fulfill the prerequisite courses listed above does not transfer in for fulfillment of degree requirements.

## FUNDING

### FUNDING

#### GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

#### PROGRAM RESOURCES

Additional information regarding funding for Forest and Wildlife Ecology graduate students is available on the departmental website (<https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/>)

academics/21417982244\_4e0823cb05\_k/current-employment-opportunities/).

## REQUIREMENTS

### MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

#### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

#### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

### CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).
Other Grade Requirements	n/a

Assessments and Examinations	Students must complete an entrance seminar, coursework certification meeting and paperwork, an exit seminar, and a defense of a thesis.
Language Requirements	None.

### REQUIRED COURSES

Additional information and forms related to program-specific courses is available in the program handbook.

Students must complete a total of 30 credits to meet graduation requirements.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Graduate Seminars</b>		
Students must enroll in at least two graduate seminars. These should be selected in consultation with the major professor and the graduate committee.		
<b>Statistics</b>		
Students must take at least one graduate-level course in statistics.		
<b>Individual Course Plan</b>		
Remaining coursework will be determined in consultation with the student's graduate committee.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

## POLICIES

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

### MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

#### PRIOR COURSEWORK

##### Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With MS committee approval and Academic Affairs Committee approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 14 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

##### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW–Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

##### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW–Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

## Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW–Madison

With MS committee approval and Academic Affairs Committee approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

## PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

## ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

## CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

## TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

## GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

## College of Agricultural and Life Sciences: Grievance Policy

In the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), any student who feels unfairly treated by a member of the CALS faculty or staff has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing. Some complaints may arise from misunderstandings or communication breakdowns and be easily resolved; others may require formal action. Complaints may concern any matter of perceived unfairness.

To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect the rights of both the person complaining and the person at whom the complaint is directed, the following procedures are used in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies.

1. The student should first talk with the person at whom the complaint is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. Others may be resolved by established departmental procedures.
2. If the student is unsatisfied, and the complaint involves any unit outside CALS, the student should seek the advice of the dean or director of that unit to determine how to proceed.
  - a. If the complaint involves an academic department in CALS the student should proceed in accordance with item 3 below.
  - b. If the grievance involves a unit in CALS that is not an academic department, the student should proceed in accordance with item 4 below.
3. The student should contact the department's grievance advisor within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The departmental administrator can provide this person's name. The grievance advisor will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, in discussions with the student and the person at whom the complaint is directed.
  - a. If informal mediation fails, the student can submit the grievance in writing to the grievance advisor within 10 working days of the date the student is informed of the failure of the mediation attempt by the grievance advisor. The grievance advisor will provide a copy to the person at whom the grievance is directed.
  - b. The grievance advisor will refer the complaint to a department committee that will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, providing a copy to the student. Either party may request a hearing before the committee. The grievance advisor will provide both parties a written decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
  - c. If the grievance involves the department chairperson, the grievance advisor or a member of the grievance committee, these persons may not participate in the review.
  - d. If not satisfied with departmental action, either party has 10 working days from the date of notification of the departmental committee action to file a written appeal to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. A subcommittee of this committee will make a preliminary judgement as to whether the case merits

further investigation and review. If the subcommittee unanimously determines that the case does not merit further investigation and review, its decision is final. If one or more members of the subcommittee determine that the case does merit further investigation and review, the subcommittee will investigate and seek to resolve the dispute through mediation. If this mediation attempt fails, the subcommittee will bring the case to the full committee. The committee may seek additional information from the parties or hold a hearing. The committee will present a written recommendation to the dean who will provide a final decision within 20 working days of receipt of the committee recommendation.

4. If the alleged unfair treatment occurs in a CALS unit that is not an academic department, the student should, within 120 calendar days of the alleged incident, take his/her grievance directly to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The dean will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If this mediation attempt does not succeed the student may file a written complaint with the dean who will refer it to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. The committee will seek a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, subsequently following other steps delineated in item 3d above.

## OTHER

Additional information for students in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology can be found on the Graduate Programs page ([https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/academics/21417982244\\_4e0823cb05\\_k/application-process/](https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/academics/21417982244_4e0823cb05_k/application-process/)) for the department.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Articulates, critiques, and elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry and practice in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
2. Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
3. Demonstrates understanding of the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management in a historical, social, and global context.
4. Evaluates and synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
5. Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
6. Selects and utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.

## PEOPLE

### PEOPLE PROFESSORS

Bowe, Scott  
Burivalova, Zuzana  
Chen, Min  
Drake, David  
Karasov, William  
Hua, Jessica  
Kruger, Eric (chair)  
Ozdogan, Mutlu  
Pauli, Jonathan  
Peery, M. Zach  
Pidgeon, Anna  
Radeloff, Volker  
Raynor, Jennifer  
Rickenbach, Mark  
Rissman, Adena  
Townsend, Philip  
Van Deelen, Timothy  
Zuckerberg, Benjamin

### AFFILIATED FACULTY

Balster, Nick (Soil Science)  
Marin-Spiotta, Erika (Geography)

### INSTRUCTORS AND TEACHING FACULTY

Berkelman, James  
Nack, Jamie  
Meindl, George

### STUDENT SERVICES

Hochmuth, Allee  
Laabs, Emily

For faculty and staff profiles, visit <https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/people/faculty-and-staff/>