

M.S. Graduate Assistantship in Wildlife Ecology at Oklahoma State University

Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK

M.S. Graduate Assistantship: Elk Response to Recreation

Description: The Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University seeks candidates for an M.S. graduate research assistantship to lead a project investigating elk response to recreation. The project will use GPS-collar data and camera trapping to assess how elk respond to summer recreation in Montana. The student will be provided 3 years of data previously collected and will conduct fieldwork for 1 additional year (in Montana). The student will then lead analyses and peer-reviewed publications summarizing the results. The student will have opportunities to collaborate with other faculty and students and to explore their own research questions in conjunction with the M.S. project. This project will be data-heavy and quantitative in nature, so students interested in quantitative and/or spatial ecology are encouraged to apply.

The student will be supervised by Drs. Colter Chitwood and Bryan Murray at Oklahoma State University. This project is an ongoing collaboration with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) and the University of Montana. Therefore, the student will be expected to work closely with all collaborators, including coordinating the final year of camera trapping in the Ruby Mountains of southwest Montana. Field work in Montana will also involve Dr. Paul Lukacs at the University of Montana and Dr. Kelly Proffitt at Montana FWP.

The M.S. position is available beginning August 1, 2022. It includes a graduate stipend of \$16,500 annually, resident and non-resident tuition waiver, and health insurance at \$20 per month (for student only; family coverage available for an additional fee). It also includes a \$200/month (\$2,400/year) additive stipend meant to offset the cost of out-of-pocket student fees, which brings the total stipend amount to \$18,900 annually. This additive requires that the student serve as a TA for at least one semester per year and is meant to help offset some of the out-of-pocket fee costs (because fees cannot be waived).

Qualifications: Applicants should have a B.S. in wildlife ecology or conservation, forestry, natural resource ecology, environmental sciences, or a related field. Applicants should have a GPA of 3.0 or greater and have taken the GRE, as required by the Department and the Graduate College. Applicants should have the ability to walk/run over rugged terrain, sometimes in extreme conditions. Applicants need to have a valid U.S. driver license (without restrictions). Desired qualifications include experience conducting field research, experience/interest in quantitative or spatial ecology, and interest in big game ecology. Experience with camera trapping, data management, R programming, and scientific writing is desirable. Oklahoma State University requires background checks for all newly hired graduate assistants, and they will be conducted prior to employment (i.e., post-offer and pre-employment).

To Apply: Please combine the following into a single PDF file: 1) letter of interest, 2) current CV (including GPA and GRE scores), 3) contact information for three references, and 4) unofficial transcripts. Send the PDF file as an attachment to Dr. Colter Chitwood (colter.chitwood@okstate.edu), with the subject titled “M.S. Position--Elk Response to Recreation.” Review of applications will begin 11 April 2022 and continue until the position is filled. If interested individuals have questions, they should contact Dr. Chitwood.

Institutional Information: The Chitwood (<https://colterchitwood.wordpress.com/>) and Murray Labs are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to fostering an environment where diversity of background and thought is accepted and encouraged. We encourage all interested people to apply regardless of preconceived notions of their own experience as it relates to this project’s objectives.

Oklahoma State University (OSU) is located in Stillwater, Oklahoma, which is midway between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. OSU is a land-grant institution with an enrollment of about 25,000 students, and it is located on the ancestral lands of the Kickapoo, Osage, Kiowa, and Quapaw peoples. Indigenous people from other Native nations also reside here, many of whom were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands. They all contribute to the history and current vitality of our region. The Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management is part of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and conducts interdisciplinary research, instruction, and extension education to address the sustainable management and conservation of the wildlife, forest, rangeland, and fishery resources of Oklahoma and beyond. The Department is a source of cutting-edge research, quality instruction, and effective outreach to students, landowners, managers, and public agencies.

Any offer of employment is contingent on the university’s verification of credentials and other information required by law and/or university policies, including but not limited to a criminal background check. Oklahoma State University, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action. Oklahoma State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all individuals and does not discriminate based on race, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, or veteran status with regard to employment, educational programs and activities, and/or admissions.