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 are given priority. In recent years, annual research support for the department’s programs has averaged between three to four million dollars 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.

**FUNDING**

Students making satisfactory progress are normally provided with assistantships or fellowships for the typical duration of a graduate program (usually fewer than six academic semesters and three summer sessions for the M.S. degree, and fewer than eight academic semesters and four summer sessions for the Ph.D. degree). Details of funding will be established before the first semester.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

**MASTER’S DEGREES**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT**
30 credits

**MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT**
16 credits

**MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT**
At least 50% of credits applied toward the graduate degree credit requirement must be with courses designed for graduate work. Graduate work may include UW–Madison courses that are numbered 700 and above, or courses outside of wildlife ecology that have been identified by the subject owner as graduate level.

**PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

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

**PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE**

Students may count up to 7 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above upon approval of the M.S. committee and the Academic Affairs Committee. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL**

With M.S. or Ph.D. committee approval and Academic Affairs Committee approval and payment of the difference in tuition (between Special and graduate tuition), students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**
15 credits

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED**

Contact the program for information on any additional required courses.

**OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT**
3.00

**OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS**

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

**PROBATION POLICY**

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result
in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

**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.

**ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS**

Contact the program for information on required assessments and examinations.

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

**ADMISSIONS**

The equivalent of a bachelor's degree in wildlife ecology or a related field is required for admission with full standing to pursue wildlife ecology graduate studies in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology. Students with undergraduate work in other fields may be admitted with deficiencies; these deficiencies must be satisfied prior to graduation. Academic requirements for admission are those of The Graduate School and the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology; Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are required.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- Articulates, critiques, and elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry and practice in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
- Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
- Demonstrates understanding of the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management in a historical, social, and global context.
- Evaluates and synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
- Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

- Selects and utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.

**PEOPLE**

**Faculty:** Professors Rickenbach (chair), Karasov, Radeloff, Ribic, Samuel; Associate Professor Drake, Lutz, Peery, Pidgeon, Van Deelen; Assistant Professors Pauli, Zuckerberg