WILDLIFE ECOLOGY, PH.D.

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.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

51 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

32 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

For well-prepared advanced students, the program may accept prior graduate coursework from other institutions toward the minimum graduate degree credit and minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement. The minimum graduate residence credit requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison.

COURSEWORK EARNED TEN OR MORE YEARS PRIOR TO ADMISSION TO A DOCTORAL DEGREE IS NOT ALLOWED TO SATISFY REQUIREMENTS.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

For well-prepared advanced students, the program may decide to accept up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above completed at UW–Madison toward fulfillment of minimum degree and minor credit requirements. This work would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With payment of the difference in tuition (between University Special and graduate tuition), the program may decide to accept up to 15 University Special student credits as fulfillment of the minimum graduate residence, graduate degree, or minor credit requirements on occasion as an exception (on a case-by-case basis). UW–Madison coursework taken as a University Special student would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral 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.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

Doctoral students must complete a doctoral minor.

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
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. 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.

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.

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

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS
Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten 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.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
• Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.
• Demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
• Advances contributions of the field of wildlife ecology and natural resource management to society.
• Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Creates research and scholarship that makes a substantive contribution.

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

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.