

The Nemours Wildlife Foundation (NWF) is thrilled to announce a new Fellowship Program designed to support and develop the next generation of conservation researchers and leaders. We invite students pursuing of graduate-level degrees (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) to submit proposals that align with NWF's Mission and produce innovative research resulting in actionable conservation practices to address today and tomorrow's most pressing environmental challenges.

NWF Graduate Research Fellowship Program





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Nemours Wildlife Foundation

The Nemours Wildlife Foundation was established in 1995 by Mr. Eugene duPont, III and his family. Since its establishment, Nemours has served as a hub for scores of interns and graduate students learning the tools and trade of conservation. It has hosted educational opportunities for school groups, community members, and professionals, and has played a leading role in crafting policy facilitating the conservation of the historic rice fields that make this landscape so unique. Today, Nemours' 10,000-acre property is home to a tremendous diversity of wildlife and habitats, and the Foundation is considered a leader in research and conservation in South Carolina's ACE Basin — a breathtaking landscape The Nature Conservancy listed as one of the “Last Great Places on Earth.” Nemours' *Mission* is to facilitate conservation and human well-being in the ACE Basin and beyond through collaborative scientific research, leadership development, management demonstration, and experiential education.

Benefits of Being a Nemours Graduate Research Fellow

Stipends

NWF will provide Fellows a monthly stipend of \$2,300 per month for master's students or \$2,600 per month for doctoral students for use at the discretion of the Fellow.

In-Kind Support

- On-site housing, utilities, office space, and access to conduct research in our newly completed \$2M laboratory are provided in-kind to our Fellows working on or near NWF property.
- If work vehicles are not available from the Fellow's academic institution or from other supporting entities (such as state and federal granting agencies) work vehicles (trucks and/or all-terrain vehicles; ATVs) may be provided for Fellows conducting research on NWF property and/or in the ACE Basin region.

Professional Development

- Advanced Training – NWF will pay up to \$1,000 per year for advanced and specialized skills training through the Center for Wildlife Studies.
- Professional Conference Registration Fees – NWF will pay event registration fees (including advanced training workshops, short-courses, and professional networking activities such as banquets) for Fellows presenting Fellowship-supported research at any professional conference during their time as a Fellow.
- Publication Fees – NWF Fellows may apply for funding for page charges for publication of Fellowship-supported research for 1 publication for M.Sc. Fellows and up to 2 publications for Ph.D. Fellows.
- Networking and Cross Training – NWF Fellows working on the property will have the opportunity to meet and engage with conservation professionals from a host of disciplines and organizations. Additionally, and as their time allows, Fellows will have the opportunity



to participate in a wide variety of research, wildlife management, land stewardship, and education programs ongoing at NWF.

Benefit Details

Stipends

- Fellowships are awarded directly to accredited U.S. colleges or universities for graduate students who satisfy all registration and enrollment requirements of their respective institutions.
- Note: NWF does not pay overhead or indirect costs to any academic institution.
- Academic advisors and their institutions are responsible for the supervision of graduate students receiving a NWF Graduate Research Fellowship.
- Fellowship awards are for 1-year (12 months; or if the applicant is scheduled to graduate in <12 months, the fraction of a year required for degree completion).
- Fellowship recipients may reapply for continued funding.
- Master's Fellows may apply for renewal 1 time (for 24 total months of funding)
- Doctoral Fellows may apply for renewal up to 2 times (for 36 total months of funding)
- Master's Fellows are paid a stipend of \$2,300 per month (\$27,600 per award year)
- Doctoral Fellows are paid a stipend of \$2,600 per month (\$31,200 per award year)

In-Kind Support

- On-site housing, utilities, office space, and access to our newly completed \$2M laboratory are provided in-kind to our Fellows. These benefits are provided contingent upon availability.
- If work vehicles are not available from the Fellow's academic institution or from other supporting entities (such as state and federal granting agencies), work vehicles (truck and/or all-terrain vehicles; ATV) may be provided for Fellows conducting research on NWF propriety and/or in the ACE Basin region. Fellows utilizing NWF vehicles must possess a valid U.S. driver's license and clean driving record to be insurable, and for ATV access, a ATV Safety Institute approved safety certification. These benefits are provided contingent upon availability.

Professional Development

Professional development funds are awarded through NWF and dispersed directly to the Fellow.

Advanced Training

- NWF has established a collaborative partnership with the Center for Wildlife Studies (CWS) and provides a \$1,000 per year account with CWS for advanced and specialized skills training for Fellows.



Professional Conferences

- Fellows are encouraged to present their Fellowship-supported research at professional conferences.
- Fellows with Fellowship-supported research accepted for presentation at a scientific conference may apply to NWF for conference registration fees.
- NWF will pay conference registration fees for Fellows to present their Fellowship-supported research at any professional conference during their time as a Fellow.
- NWF encourages Fellows to participate in advanced training workshops and short courses often held in conjunction with conferences, and participation in professional networking activities (including banquets; not including pre- and post-conference field trips), and these may be added to the Fellow's conference registration fees.
- Travel logistics and expenses (airfare, lodging, meals, etc.) for professional conferences are the responsibility of the Fellow and/or their advisor and institution.

Publications

- All publications stemming from Fellowship support must have a NWF contribution number. In addition, researchers will acknowledge the NWF's contributions in all presentations, reports, and publications emanating from Fellowship-supported research as follows (or similar words that capture the exact meaning): "This research was supported in part by the Nemours Wildlife Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Nemours Wildlife Foundation."
- NWF Fellows may apply for funding to cover page charges to support the publication of Fellowship-sponsored research during the active Fellowship period and for up to 1 year following graduation.
- M.Sc. Fellows may apply for funds to pay for page charges of 1 publication.
- Ph.D. Fellows may apply for funds to pay page charges for up to 2 publications.
- Funds will be provided after review of the application (which includes formal documentation of manuscript acceptance) and when a NWF contribution number is provided for the paper.

Application Details

Application Deadline and Funding Cycle

The application deadline is 11:59 P.M. on 15 March each year. Submitting applications well before the deadline is encouraged. Successful applicants will be notified by early June and funds will be made available at the start of the subsequent fall semester.

Eligibility

Applicants may be master's or doctoral students and can be at any stage of their graduate degree program. Fellowship applications must be submitted by the prospective Fellow, and the applicants must self-certify that they are eligible to receive the Fellowship. To be eligible, an applicant must be a U.S. citizen, national, permanent resident, or covered by a F-1 or J-1 student



visa and an active graduate student enrolled in any conservation-related graduate program at a non-profit university, college, or institution of higher education accredited in, and having a campus located in, the United States, its territories or possessions, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The applicant must be enrolled full-time for the entire Fellowship year (justified exceptions will be considered in special cases).

Research Topics

Research proposals may focus on any conservation-related topic, and in recognizing that changing climates and rising sea levels will change the face of the landscape in the years to come, we encourage researchers to incorporate addressing these challenges as applicable into all proposals. Of particular interest are projects related to:

1. Conserving and managing coastal ecosystems with special emphasis on historic rice fields (both inland and managed tidal impoundments)
 - a. Ecosystem services
 - b. Multidisciplinary approaches
 - c. Multispecies management
 - d. Marsh migration
 - e. Conservation planning for historic rice fields
2. Innovative forestry practices with special emphasis on silvopasture
 - a. Rotational grazing, wildlife habitat enhancement, and wildlife responses
 - b. Fire ecology and controlled burning in forested ecosystems
 - c. Landscape-scale forestry planning and multi-age forest stand management
 - d. Effects on carbon storage, soil health, and water quality
 - e. Economics of silvopastoral systems including forest certification, ecolabeling, and carbon sequestration programs
3. Ecological integrity and resiliency
 - a. Controlling the impacts of invasive species
 - b. Habitat restoration and species reintroduction
 - c. Wildlife disease and zoonotics
 - d. Declining, rare, and endangered species recovery
 - e. Ecotoxicology and impacts of pollution
4. Biodiversity inventory and monitoring
 - a. Techniques for cataloguing rare, endangered, and cryptic species
 - b. Population monitoring and dynamics
 - c. Genetic diversity analyses
 - d. Habitat assessment, community structure, and interactions
 - e. Remote sensing and GIS applications

Application Structure

Applications should be submitted electronically via our online portal and include the following 6 components:



1. **Cover Letter** – The Cover Letter should include a statement of interest in the Fellowship and a description of the applicant’s short- and long-term career goals.
2. **Curriculum Vitae** – The Curriculum Vitae for the Fellowship applicant should include contact information, education, research experience, teaching experience (if applicable), publications, presentations, awards, professional affiliations, community, or university service.
3. **Academic Transcripts** – Please attach scanned or digital files from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended.
4. **GRE Scores** – GRE scores are not required; however, if the applicant took the GRE, please upload copies of all scores.
5. **Letters of Recommendation** – One from the Fellowship applicant’s advisor(s), and two additional letters of professional recommendation.
6. **Research Proposal** – The Research Proposal should include the standard elements of such documents including an Introduction, Problem Statement(s), Methods, Goals, Literature Cited, and a Project Budget.
 - *Conservation Standards* – For applicants versed in this planning framework, we encourage incorporation of *Conservation Standards* approaches, language, and modeling. *Conservation Standards* framing is encouraged but not required for consideration.
- 6.1. **Introduction** – The Introduction should explain the research species/habitat/system/topic and contextualizing how this species/habitat/system/topic is important to the future of ecosystem sustainability and human wellbeing.
 - *Conservation Standards* – Vision, Conservation Targets, Key Attributes, Ecosystem Services, and Human Well-Being Targets.
- 6.2. **Problem Statement(s)** – The Problem Statement(s) should explain how the current lack of knowledge, mismanagement, and/or other human-induced factors threaten the current or future status of the species/habitat/system/topic.
 - *Conservation Standards* – Direct Threats and Indirect Threats/Drivers/Root Causes.
- 6.3. **Methods** – The Methods section should include details describing the approach(s), method(s), and experimental design(s) proposed to answer questions and/or mitigate the issues identified in the problem statements. Corresponding logic model(s) explaining step-by-step how results from this research project will ultimately lead to threat mitigation and achieving conservation goals.
 - *Conservation Standards* – Strategies, Theories of Change, and Results Chains.
- 6.4. **Goals** – The Goals section should set S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented, and Time-Limited) goals for expected results from this research project. It should focus on what the Fellow ultimately hopes to achieve through this research project, and if possible, detail corresponding logic models with S.M.A.R.T. intermediate objectives.
- 6.5. **Literature Cited** – Please provide a list of all literature cited in the proposal.



- 6.6. Project Budget – Please include a Project Budget with details of personnel, field, lab, and any other expenses required to complete this project, along with the details and status of corresponding supporting grants or funds.

Application Scoring

Each application is considered holistically and in consideration of research project merit and applicant qualifications. Preference will be given to those applications most clearly demonstrating a logical linkage between accomplishing research objectives and resultant actionable outcomes. Additionally, preference will be given to projects occurring in, or with clear applicability to, conservation of the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Requirements of Fellow

Agreement to Forego Outside Employment

One of the primary purposes of the NWF Graduate Research Fellowship program is to financially support exceptional students and in doing so, allow them to focus full-time effort on their research, meeting their degree requirements, and to their professional development. Accordingly, we request that prospective fellows voluntarily agree to forgo outside employment while being financially supported through the receipt of NWF Graduate Research Fellowship funding. Making this agreement is voluntary and non-binding but is strongly encouraged. If special circumstances arise that do not conflict with the student's research or degree program, special permission may be obtained from NWF. Any additional personal funding the Fellow expects to receive (e.g., GI Bill benefits) should be listed in their proposed research budget.

Reporting & Presentation

One brief Annual Progress Report is to be submitted for each year of fellowship funding. The Annual progress Report is due no later than August 31st of the NWF Fellowship year and summarizes work to date. Additionally, a Final Report detailing the conclusion of the research project should be submitted ≤90 days following graduation or project completion. Delayed or failure to submit reports may result in delays in or non-renewal of subsequent funding. Both Annual Progress and Final Reports should adhere to the following format:

1. **Abstract** – Brief summary updated for each report and should be approximately 300 words in length.
2. **Introduction** – Brief summary of sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the proposal
3. **Methods** – Brief summary of section 6.3
4. **Results** – Brief summary of research performed and progress towards section 6.4 including any preliminary findings. Please include in this section any applicable graphs and/or graphics (≥2 per report). The Fellow and their academic institution hereby acknowledge that the rights to the graphs and graphics provided by the Fellow may be used by NWF for educational and promotional purposes. The Fellow will be credited alongside the graphic(s) in all instances where they are used. Furthermore, in any publication or material featuring the graphics(s), the credited Fellow will be duly acknowledged.

5. **Discussion** – Brief summary of lessons learned to-date, any corresponding research or management implications, and any proposed adaptation to original in experimental design, methods, timeline, or budget (sections 6.4 and 6.6).
6. **Academic Report** – Grades, as issued by the university registrar, are to be submitted to NWF in conjunction with the student's progress reports. If a student is not required to be registered for any given period but will be involved in work required by their degree program, an official statement to that effect must be provided to NWF to justify Fellowship funding.
7. **Presentations and Publications** – Please provide a list of all professional presentations and publications (including those completed, accepted, in press, or in preparation) developed during the funding cycle.
8. **Photographs** – Please provide ≥ 5 high-resolution images per report capturing study animals, study landscapes, field work, lab work, and/or professional presentations of Fellowship-supported research from the reporting period. The Fellow, photographer, and their academic institution hereby acknowledge that the rights to the photograph(s) provided may be used by NWF for educational and promotional purposes. The photographer(s) will be credited alongside the photograph(s) in all instances where they are used. Furthermore, in any publication or material featuring the photograph(s), the credited photographers will be duly acknowledged. Please label each photograph as follows:
 - image description_location_date_photographer
 - E.g., “black rail chicks_ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge_15 May 2024_John Smith”

Upon graduation (and in addition to the Final Report), both a hard (printed and bound) and digital copy of the Fellow’s completed thesis or dissertation are to be submitted to NWF. Printing and binding fees are the responsibility of the Fellow and their advisor.

In addition to this written progress reports and copies of the funded thesis or dissertation, each Fellowship recipient is expected to present their research in person ≥ 1 time per award year in a public forum hosted by Nemours. Dates for presentations are TBD, and if the Fellow is offsite during an agreed upon presentation opportunity, travel expenses to Nemours to present may be subsidized by the Foundation

Terms and Conditions

For Fellowship applications selected for funding, the terms and conditions of awardees, their advisors, and academic institution are follows:

- Awardees must formally accept and agree to the Terms and Conditions of the Fellowship award.
- Formal acceptance of the Fellowship Terms and Conditions constitutes a commitment to complete a graduate degree consistent with and as indicated in their application, verification that the recipient is U.S. citizens, national, permanent resident, or covered by a F-1 or J-1 student visa, is an actively enrolled graduate student eligible to receive funds, and has agreed



to forgo outside employment while being financially supported by NWF as a Graduate Research Fellow.

- The Fellowship award will be made to the institution of higher education at which a Fellow is enrolled, and the institution is responsible for disbursement of the stipend to the Fellow. Note: NWF does not pay overhead or indirect costs to any academic institution.
- Each institution, in accepting the funds, also certifies that the Fellow is eligible to receive the Fellowship under these terms and conditions.
- Fellows are expected to make satisfactory academic progress towards completion of their graduate degrees, as defined and certified by the Fellow's academic institution.
- In cases where Fellows have misrepresented their eligibility or have failed to comply with the Fellowship Terms and Conditions, the Fellowship will be revoked, and the case may be referred for legal investigation. This action may result in requiring the Fellow to repay Fellowship funds to the NWF.
- It is the responsibility of the Fellow, in conjunction with their advisor and institution, to ensure that all academic and research activities comply with applicable laws or regulations. These include appropriate human subject, animal welfare, copyright, and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws. All academic and research activities should be coordinated with the appropriate U.S. and state government authorities, and necessary licenses, permits, or approvals must be obtained prior to undertaking the proposed activities.
- Any project proposing use of vertebrate animals for research or education shall comply with the Animal Welfare Act [7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.] and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary of Agriculture [9 CFR 1.1-4.11] pertaining to the humane care, handling, and treatment of vertebrate animals held or used for research, teaching or other activities supported by Federal awards. In accordance with these requirements, proposed projects involving use of any vertebrate animal for research or education must be approved by the submitting organization's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before an award can be made. For this approval to be accepted by NWF, the organization must have a current Public Health Service (PHS) Approved Assurance.
- If permits are required (such as collection permits for biological specimens) for data collection, students and their major professors are responsible for securing those permits and must provide NWF documentation of requisite federal and/or state permits prior to initiating data collection.
- Research-related equipment and supplies are the responsibility of the student, their advisor, and/or the academic institution. In some cases, and for research occurring at Nemours and in conjunction with ongoing Nemours research projects, students and advisors may have access to equipment and supplies previously procured by the NWF.
- For Fellows utilizing NWF housing, laboratory, equipment, and/or working on-site, the Fellow and any supporting advisors, technicians, or assistants must agree to abide by NWF Rules and Regulations and sign a Waiver of Liability.
- Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in loss of Fellowship funding.



Acknowledgement of NWF Graduate Research Fellowship Terms and Conditions

By the signatures following, the student and their graduate advisor accept and confirm that they have read and understand the terms of this fellowship award.

STUDENT

Signature Date

ADVISOR

Signature Date