Masters Student Assistantship – Beaver Ecology and Management

Location: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Start date: Fall 2023 (approximately Aug 15, 2023)
Last date to apply: Open until filled
Salary: $28,000/year + tuition waiver + health insurance

Description

We are looking for a masters student with a collaborative spirit, a creative mind, and strong interest in applied ecology and natural resources management. The student will be part of the Michigan State University Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Michigan Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit. The student will be advised by Drs Brett DeGregorio and Gary Roloff.

The student will lead a 2-year project evaluating the behavioral responses of beavers to “beaver deceivers” installed at beaver dams to help control water levels. The selected student will work closely with biologists and staff from USDA Wildlife Services to capture beavers and attach radio-transmitters. The student will track radio-tagged individuals year-round which will entail driving to and from East Lansing to several field sites (up to 90 min drive) on a regular and recurring basis. Telemetry will be conducted from roadsides, on foot, and from kayak or canoe. The student will be responsible for analyzing movement and behavioral data and must either be or become proficient with mapping software (ArcMap) and data analysis packages (R or similar). The student may supervise volunteers or seasonal technician so must be comfortable in a supervisory role and have clear communication skills.

Because fieldwork will occur year-round including during the academic school year, we are seeking a candidate with strong time management and organizational skills to be able to balance field work and coursework simultaneously. The selected candidate must also be comfortable working on and around water and show a proven adherence to safety procedures in the field.

The student’s stipend will be paid via a research assistantship. The research assistantship will cover the student’s salary year-round, health insurance, and tuition will be covered by PIs.

Required Qualification
- Strong time management and organizational skills
- Communication skills to co-produce and conduct a research project with collaborators from USDA Wildlife Services, Michigan Dept of Natural Resources, and Michigan State University.
- Commuting between campus and study site will be frequent so applicants must currently possess a valid U.S. driver’s license and a safe driving record.
- Comfort working on and around water and a strong and consistent adherence to field safety principles.
- Fortitude and previous experience working in challenging field conditions (e.g., heat, humidity, cold, rain, etc.) across all seasons.

Desired Skills
- Familiarity with flora and fauna of the Great Lakes Region.
- Experience using GIS software (e.g., QGIS, ESRI, R geospatial packages).
- Proficiency in at least one statistical analysis program (e.g., R, JMP, SPSS).
- Commitment to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To apply, please email your:
- CV (which should include education, previous work/research experience, confirmation that GRE scores meet MSU requirements, and contact info for 3 references).
- A cover letter detailing 1) interests and experience and 2) how these interests and experiences will translate to being a successful graduate student, project leader, and collaborator with our cooperating agencies and 3) how you meet the qualification requirements of this position

- Please mark the subject of your application email as “MS Student Application” Email to degreg12@msu.edu.