

FISH, WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION ECOLOGY

Undergraduate Program Information

Through lecture courses, labs, hands-on field experience and internships, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology will prepare you for a career in a variety of natural resource fields related to the conservation and management of wild animal populations and the natural systems they perpetuate. Award-winning professors will guide students in the study of how to manage fish and wildlife populations, their habitats, how their populations grow and contract, how different species influence the biotic community in which they live and how natural systems are affected by human activities.

Bachelor of Science in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology.

With the continuous growth of human populations and the ever dwindling of natural resources, natural resource professionals are needed now more than ever. Learn how to sustainably manage fish and wildlife populations and the habitats they utilize to ensure their long-term successful conservation. We offer two options within this degree. The Wildlife Ecology and Management option focuses on the ecology, conservation and management of wildlife (including mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles) in their natural habitats. The Aquatic Ecology and Management option focuses on the ecology, conservation and management of aquatic resources and the animals and plants found in them.

The department offers a minor in Wildlife Science for students majoring in other disciplines. The minor includes a minimum of 18 credit hours.

Bachelor of Science in Conservation Ecology

New Mexico State University offers an interdisciplinary, undergraduate program in Conservation Ecology. The goal of this program is to train biologists for the current and future challenges that we face in the conservation and wise use of natural resources. An overriding principle of the program is to provide a solid foundation in basic science coupled with a practical approach towards sustainability and stewardship. The curriculum encompasses several disciplines and includes a wide variety of courses from Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, Biology, and Geography.

This educational experience will provide students with an overview of global biodiversity and an understanding of the ecological and evolutionary processes that have created and sustained it. Courses in population and community ecology coupled with population viability analysis and risk assessment will give students the necessary background to understand the theory and development of these fields as well as the tools to tackle real-world problems. Courses in basic genetics, evolution, and conservation genetics will expose students to the importance of conserving genetic variation in order to maintain adaptive potential within populations, thereby sustaining the evolutionary process. Students will also receive background on wildlife law and environmental policy, information vital for assisting governing bodies in making decisions regarding the protection and wise use of our natural resources. Skills obtained in the application of geographic information systems, molecular genetics, and professional communication can also be acquired through various electives. If biochemistry is taken as an elective, this curriculum provides the necessary educational background for pre-vet requirements, thus preparing students for veterinary school

and future jobs such as wildlife or zoo veterinarian, or conservation medicine practitioner. In sum, we seek to provide undergraduate students with an education that will allow them the opportunity to contribute to the conservation of all life on Earth.

The department offers a minor in Conservation Ecology for students majoring in other disciplines. The minor includes 20 credits.

To graduate from the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, an overall grade point average of 2.0 is required in courses taken in the major field and in all courses taken at NMSU.

Graduate Program Information

Master of Science in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology (FWCE) offers graduate work leading to the Master of Science degree with a major in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology. Faculty members in the department also may advise Ph.D. candidates through the graduate program in the Department of Biology, Department of Animal and Range Sciences, Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, as well as other Ph.D. granting departments. For additional information please see the graduate catalog entries for the respective departments.

Minimum qualifications for admission to the graduate program include the following:

- 3.0 grade-point average in the last two years of undergraduate work
- Students who are most competitive for admission are those with a combined average GRE score greater than 70th percentile on the verbal and quantitative parts of the GRE.
- Course work in zoology, botany and animal ecology and a basic appreciation of sustainable use of natural resources, with supporting courses in mathematics, chemistry, physics and written and oral communication.

Applicants should submit a written composition of approximately 350 words that indicates the applicant's reasons for pursuing advanced study, explains personal and educational goals, and any additional experiences (e.g., military or career) or skills that might provide a foundation for graduate study. Applicants should submit three letters of recommendation (it is preferred that at least two letters come from university instructors) along with official GRE scores (use NMSU code 4531). Applicants should also contact a faculty member in the department that they would like to work with as an advisor, and that faculty member needs to agree to serve as the student's advisor. Application forms, application fee and transcripts, GRE scores, letters of recommendation and letter of application should be submitted online to the Graduate School. Successful applicants will be selected from those who meet the criteria of grade-point average, GRE scores, and educational background described above and who appear to have professional promise as indicated by personal history and written references.

For the Master of Science degree, a minimum of 30 semester credits of graduate work in the major and related subjects is required, together with a thesis for most students. Of these credits, at least 15 must be in courses numbered 500 or above, and at least 15 must be for courses with the FWCE prefix. Those programs involving a thesis or research project include 4 to 6 credits of research (FWCE 598 Special Research Programs or FWCE 599 Master's Thesis). Students electing a minor in FWCE are required to take at least 9 credits in the minor field. A nonthesis option is

available to some students, depending on prior training and experience, and subject to approval by the advisor and department head.

All students in the program must complete the following requirements:

- A ST 505 Statistical Inference I or equivalent
- One semester of Graduate Seminar (FWCE 515 Graduate Seminar - may be repeated for credit)
- A minimum of 3 additional credits from the Quantitative Methods category in addition to A ST 505 Statistical Inference I (eligible courses listed below)
- One course each from the Ecological Concepts, Organismal Biology and Ecological Techniques categories (eligible courses listed below)
- 4 to 9 credits from the Independent Study category (eligible courses listed below)

In addition, a student may petition to have up to 3 credits of special topics courses (FWCE 548 Graduate Problems) to apply to one of the three areas. Courses other than those listed may be acceptable, given permission by the student's supervisory committee