

Welcome to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife! You have entered one of the top conservation biology programs in the country, and we will start you on a career path that can be both exciting and meaningful. The fisheries and wildlife professions can provide you with many challenges and opportunities throughout your career, and conservation of our natural resources is an important charge for new professionals.

The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is a remarkable place to pursue your career goals. Because of our faculty productivity, our Wildlife Science program was ranked number one in the nation and our Fisheries Science program was ranked number two in a November 2007 report in the Chronicle of Higher Education. But, we are not just outstanding at research. We pride ourselves in the quality of our teaching programs and boast of having three national awarding winning teachers on our faculty, including two that have been recognized for their efforts in distance education.

Our department has a number of goals for your education. We hope that when you graduate you will:

- effectively observe and understand natural phenomena from local to global scales
- objectively and critically analyze complex situations
- appreciate diverse human values and philosophies
- access and synthesize technical information
- effectively communicate orally and in writing
- work as a team member; and
- value new knowledge throughout your life.

These goals will not be obtained easily, but I want to assure you that all of our faculty and staff are committed to assisting and encouraging you in reaching them.

We consider ourselves, including you, a family. Family members ask for help when needed and willingly give assistance and guidance when asked. You have a large support group that can assist you in your career as a student, but it is your responsibility to become an active member of the family. I can offer a number of suggestions that can help you, and that will definitely improve your likelihood of success in our program.

**Get to know your teachers.** Be more than just a statistic or grade by going to your instructor's office hours. Chatting with your professors and instructors is great practice for future professional interactions, and of course you can get help with your assignments and exams. If you are taking courses online, ask your instructor if he or she will have live office hours through Skype or other connection. As you approach graduation you will want letters of recommendation or to list instructors as references on job applications. We need to know you personally to write those letters and support your job search.

**Get help when you need it.** You will find that your teachers and advisors are interested in your success and are willing to assist you when you need it. Your tuition and fees pay for many services – take advantage of them – and let us know when you need help.

**Get to know your advisor.** Your academic advisor is your primary portal to becoming part of our family. They recognize the challenging balance you maintain between school, work and family. Keep them apprised of changes in your personal as well as your academic life.

**Reach out to faculty.** We have internationally recognized faculty who are working on a range of research projects (<http://fw.oregonstate.edu/fisheries-and-wildlife/research-department-fisheries-and-wildlife>). Locate a faculty member with professional interests similar to yours and make it a point to connect with them for career or professional advice!

**Reach out to other students.** The number of fisheries and wildlife professionals throughout the world is fairly small. The students you are attending classes with today are the professionals you may be working with tomorrow. Build professional connections with your academic peers using ONID addresses available through the OSU webpage and join the FW Facebook community by clicking on “Like” at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/OSU-Department-of-Fisheries-and-Wildlife/161834163843?ref=bookmarks>

**Join professional societies and attend annual meetings.** Becoming a member of professional societies such as American Fisheries Society (<http://fisheries.org/>) or The Wildlife Society (<http://www.wildlife.org/>) demonstrates a commitment to the profession. These societies are the primary sources of science and management information for professionals and offer both state chapter and national membership opportunities. Their annual conferences are important from the standpoint of learning new information and skills, and they also provide excellent opportunities for networking with professionals. Make a point of participating in a professional society to get a head start in your career.

**Focus on education but take advantage of other opportunities** in your local community. Opportunities to build a professional family occur almost anywhere. Locate federal, state, county or private natural resource organizations near you and get involved. Employers (and scholarship donors) value this initiative and leadership. As I have always said “it’s not only who you know, but who knows you” that can make a difference in professional advancement.

**Stop by and say hello.** My virtual office door is always open. Call or email me to introduce yourself. I am terrible with names, but I care about your experience here. Your goal should be to contact me enough that I remember who you are.

On behalf of all the faculty and staff, I welcome you to the family and we all look forward to working with you in the future.

Cheers, 