**Tips for contacting potential mentors:**

* Research the potential mentor as best you can before you contact them. It’s good practice to mention how your interests and career goals align with the mentor’s research (1-2 sentences). Be specific while remaining concise. Short, enthusiastic, and to the point is best!
* Outline what your interest in working with the mentor is (e.g., advertised pairing from F&W Mentorship Program page, honors thesis, or independent research project?) and your availability/commitment to the research (how many hours/week? One term? Possibility of extension?)
* Proofread you email for grammar/simple errors before sending. Typing out your email in Word before copying to the body of an email is a great way to catch errors. So is reading your email aloud!
* Attach your resume or CV to introduce yourself to the potential grad mentor. Be sure to include relevant coursework, expected graduation date, and any work or research experience. And don’t worry - everyone starts with minimal experience!
* Send your initial email from your @oregonstate.edu email address (if you have one). This will help keep your email from getting lost in the spam folder.
* Graduate students (and postdocs, research faculty, and PIs) are often quite busy, but that does not mean they aren’t excited to speak with interested undergraduates. Be prepared to contact multiple prospective mentors when finding a position. It’s okay to send a follow up email if you did not hear back after one week but contact a different mentor if there is still no response. Unfortunately, not every mentor that you contact will be able to take you on as a research mentee. If a mentor you are quite keen on says “no”, send them a polite thank you and consider asking them to refer you to a colleague that might have an opening or asking to be considered when future opportunities arise. This can help you build a reputation and relationship with OSU researchers!

**Things to avoid:**

* While researching the prospective mentor is highly encouraged, avoid copying and pasting information from their research interests/bios directly into your email – this is always obvious to the recipient, especially if you carryover formatting! Prospective mentors are much more likely to respond if you take the time to write an email in your own words.

**Still need help getting connected with a mentor?**

There are additional resources at OSU’s Undergradute Research webpage here: <https://undergraduate.oregonstate.edu/research/resources/students>

You can also fill out an application for the F&W Mentorship Program using the “Apply Now” button on the program homepage. The program coordinators are also available to help you at any time!

**Example Initial Contact Email:**

Hi Awesome Grad Mentor,

I am interested in working with you as an undergraduate mentee. I am very interested in the aquatic system. I recently took the Freshwater Ecology course and am very excited at the prospect of getting hands-on experience working with you to analyze stream samples. I would like to start working with you in Winter term, and can commit to spending ten hours a week on this research. I have attached my resume for your review.

I look forward to speaking with you about this further.

Sincerely,

Eager Undergraduate Mentee

Dear Jane Doe,

I am writing to express interest in working with you as an undergraduate student researcher. I saw your posting on the Fisheries and Wildlife Undergraduate Mentorship Program page and I am quite keen to work with you. I am broadly interested in the research themes of population connectivity and marine systems. My research interests pair nicely with your recent research on tagging albatross.

I would like to being working with you on the advertised work, analysing tag data. I am detail-oriented, hardworking, and hope to develop an independent research project with you after the completion of the advertised project, if you are willing.

My resume is attached with further details on my background for your reference.

I look forward to speaking with you further about this opportunity.

Sincerely,  
John Doe

Hi Danger Dan,

My name is Safety Sal and I am a rising junior in Fisheries and Wildlife at OSU. I am interested in gaining hands-on research experience and am writing to inquire if you are able take an undergraduate student mentee at this time? I am interested in salmonid feeding ecology and distribution. I am working towards a career in fisheries management with a state agency and am very interested in gaining laboratory experience to expand my skillset.

I have previous research experience from my Fisheries & Wildlife Mentorship pairing with Clammy Clark where I assisted with field surveys, as further detailed in my CV (attached). Would you be willing to discuss any open opportunities that you have with me?

Sincerely,

Safety Sal