

PhD in Natural Resources with Emphasis in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences

The PhD degree in Natural Resources in the Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences Emphasis Area is focused on resource management at organismal, population, or ecosystem scales. Our PhD degree is designed to prepare students for academic careers in research and teaching or other advanced scientific positions. Students entering the PhD program often have completed an MS degree, but this is not a requirement. An applicant contemplating graduate work in the Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences Emphasis Area (including limnology, conservation biology) should have a strong background in biological and physical sciences, including biology, botany, zoology, ecology, physiology, and genetics. In addition, such taxonomic courses as plant taxonomy, invertebrate zoology, ichthyology, ornithology, and mammalogy are highly desirable, as is a background in chemistry, mathematics, statistics, and physics.

Degree Requirements

PhD students must complete, with a B average or better, a minimum of 72 hours of course work beyond a BS (15 hours or more at the 8000 course level, exclusive of problems, readings and research). A maximum of 30 hours of graduate credit (post-BS) from an accredited university can be transferred toward the PhD program.

Candidates are expected to design and have approved by their committee a plan of study during their first semester in residence and a dissertation proposal by their second semester. Candidates also are required to undertake a qualifying exam in their second semester, which is intended to determine course work for greater ecological understanding and pairing with research. Candidates will undertake a comprehensive exam a minimum of 6 months prior to the dissertation defense. The objectives of the comprehensive examination are to (1) determine if a student has acquired sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge in selected areas of concentration, and (2) evaluate the candidate's capacity to apply that knowledge in solving applied or theoretical problems. The comprehensive exam is comprised of development of a post-doctoral proposal or policy research paper, and an oral exam. A dissertation acceptable to the student's graduate committee shall be completed and defended in a final oral examination. All candidates must complete an initial proposal, qualifying exam, comprehensive exam and final oral examination, and deliver a final dissertation seminar before the degree is conferred.

Application and Admission Information

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Admission requirements

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline from an accredited institution
- Undergraduate GPA*: 3.2 on a scale of 4.0 in last 60 hours

- Minimum TOEFL scores: 550 (paper-based test), 80 (Internet-based test)
- Experience in research or management of natural resources. Practical skills are strongly considered.

*Students whose GPAs do not meet the requirements will be evaluated individually. Applicants will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

We require applicants to contact Fisheries and Wildlife faculty to determine the availability of research assistantships prior to applying to the program.

All application materials must be submitted to the Apply Yourself (<https://applygrad.missouri.edu/apply/>) online application system. In addition, we require:

- A minimum of three letters of recommendation and the accompanying evaluation sheets from people who can attest to the candidate's scholastic and conservation field work abilities
- Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences emphasis area application
- Written response to 1 of 5 questions listed on the Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences Graduate Program Admissions page
- TOEFL scores (when applicable)
- Publications (optional)
- Résumé or CV

A background of 25 to 30 hours in biological sciences courses is desirable. Minor deficiencies may be remedied during the graduate program; major deficiencies may require preparatory coursework prior to consideration for admission.