WILDLIFE ECOLOGY, PHD

The Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology offers graduate education and training in a number of areas leading to the master of science and/or the doctor of philosophy degree in Wildlife Ecology. The department takes pride in its program's outstanding research reputation and the success of graduates working throughout the world. The Wildlife Ecology program was founded by Aldo Leopold in 1939, and the program has maintained his vision and legacy of excellence in our current research and graduate training activities.

Master's and doctoral work in wildlife ecology typically focus on areas of wildlife ecology that reflect the expertise of the faculty, including, but not limited to, behavioral ecology, physiological ecology, population dynamics, wildlife disease, community ecology, landscape ecology, wildlife management, wildlife-habitat linkages, molecular ecology, human dimensions, species distribution modeling, climate change, endangered species recovery, conservation biology, toxicology, and wildlife damage management.

The department is home to the U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. In this program, research in support of state and federal wildlife conservation programs is given priority.

In recent years, annual research support for the department's programs has averaged between $3 million to $4 million drawn from an array of federal, state, and conservation organizations and private donors. Competition for admission is very strong, and not every admissible student can or will be offered financial support. Graduate assistantships and/or fellowships may be available for a limited number of well-qualified students. Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to program faculty before applying. Admittance depends on appropriate fit within a research lab and the faculty member’s ability to fund a graduate student throughout their degree program. Once admitted, students work closely with major professors and an advisory committee to develop a research program.