

M.S. Assistantship in Applied Community Ecology: Bats, Arthropods, and Plants NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Laverty Lab in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Ecology at New Mexico State University (NMSU) invites applications for an MS assistantship beginning in August 2024. The student will work closely with Dr. Theresa Laverty with NSF-funded research taking place at the Jornada Basin Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) site approximately 45 minutes north of the NMSU campus.

The graduate research project will focus on evaluating how bats and their arthropod prey are affected by—and potentially influence—shrub encroachment (i.e., the transition from grasslands to shrublands) in arid landscapes. Bats will be monitored with acoustic detectors and captured using mist nets to collect fecal samples for diet analysis. The student will conduct arthropod and vegetation sampling and set up an associated enclosure experiment. The student is expected to lead fieldwork (which Dr. Laverty is beginning prior to the arrival of the student this summer) with the assistance of two undergraduate researchers each year. The student will work with Dr. Laverty to develop thesis questions related to community ecology and state changes.

Salary and Benefits: This position includes three years of funding for a research assistantship (\$27,828/year), tuition, and health insurance reimbursement (up to \$200/month), as NMSU does not currently offer a graduate student health insurance plan. Additional funds will support the student's attendance of an acoustic monitoring workshop and travel for the student to present their research at a national conference.

Qualifications: A bachelor's degree in ecology, wildlife & fisheries sciences, conservation biology, or a related field and possession of a valid U.S. driver's license are required. Applicants must meet the [minimum requirements for admission](#) to the NMSU Graduate School (e.g., 3.0 GPA in the last two years of undergrad). Applicants should also have demonstrated excellent written and oral communication skills and/or quantitative skills, experience conducting fieldwork, and an ability to work independently while following safety protocols. Preference may be given to applicants who have experience managing field projects, handling bats, conducting acoustic surveys, and completing coursework in quantitative and/or spatial analyses using programs like R, ArcGIS/QGIS, and Sonobat/Kaleidoscope Pro.

This position is advertised at the MS level with the potential to upgrade to a PhD pending funding. Candidates from underrepresented backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and lifestyles are enthusiastically encouraged to apply.

To apply: Please submit a letter of interest in addition to your CV, unofficial transcripts, and contact information for three references through the online application form at: <https://airtable.com/appFBVonMNEDt89yy/pagMOP03BMUVIWjTC/form>. If you have questions about these positions, please reach out to Dr. Theresa Laverty at tlaverty@nmsu.edu. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. I strongly encourage you to submit your application by late June if possible. Information about the Laverty Lab and the department can be at <https://lavertylab.org> and <https://fwce.nmsu.edu/>