

# FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## *Undergraduate Diversity Student Scholarship*



We are pleased to announce that **Mariaguadalupe Vilchez** is the recipient of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual undergraduate diversity scholarship, administered by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Maria is a senior at UF, majoring in Natural Resource Conservation, with a minor in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. She expects to graduate in Spring 2023.

Maria was born and raised in the City of Miami. As a first-generation college graduate and a Nicaraguan-American in the field of natural resources, Maria is passionate about providing mentorship and immersive opportunities to other under-represented peers. She has participated in a diverse array of wildlife research projects, including shark tagging, coastal fisheries ecology in Florida Bay, python diet studies, oyster reef surveys at Cedar Key, sea turtle nesting surveys, alligator nesting surveys, water quality sampling, and aquatic turtle sampling in freshwater springs. She has served as Secretary and Treasurer of the UF TWS Student Chapter and is the current President.

Maria's long-term career goal is to become a university professor focused on interdisciplinary conservation in both the ecological and legal fields. Following graduation, she plans to attend graduate school and eventually law school, studying environmental law with an emphasis in wildlife and fisheries management.

The FLTWS Undergraduate Diversity Student Scholarship was established in 2018 to recognize and financially assist an undergraduate student from an under-represented background wishing to pursue a career in wildlife biology in Florida. Applicants for the scholarship are judged based on extracurricular activities, demonstrated leadership, professional potential, financial need, personal goals, contribution to Florida wildlife, a letter of reference from a wildlife professional and an essay reflecting on their minority status and how they will contribute to increased diversity and inclusion in the field of wildlife. As this year's recipient, **Maria** will receive a check for \$1,500. She will be recognized at the FLTWS Spring Conference, March 22-24 in Jacksonville.

To attend our Spring Conference, register at: <https://fltws.org/>.

*Monica Folk*  
*Chair, FLTWS Scholarship Committee*