

FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Courtney A. Tye Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship



We are pleased to announce that **Meghan Beatty** is the 2023 recipient of the annual scholarship for graduate studies, administered by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Meghan is expected to graduate with her PhD in Wildlife Ecology & Conservation from the University of Florida in 2024.

Meghan's research interests are focused on at-risk species in need of management guidelines. During undergrad research at the University of Rhode Island, she worked on diamondback terrapins. Following graduation, she conducted field work on the Concho water snake, piping plovers, and saltmarsh sparrows. Her MS research (at UF) was on the state-threatened southeastern American kestrel in Ocala National Forest. Her PhD research involves population dynamics of the endangered Everglade snail kite, an indicator species of wetland restoration success in Florida.

Meghan has a special interest in population ecology and research that increases understanding of populations dynamics across time and space. Her long-term goal is to become a professor with a research lab focused on imperiled species conservation. She enjoys teaching and empowering others to learn at their fullest potential. Meghan has mentored 5 undergraduate students through the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program and is currently mentoring an undergraduate student working on an honors thesis on snail kites.

Meghan plans to use the scholarship award to conduct a field experiment related to her dissertation on snail kites. She plans to study how social information explains movement of snail kites between wetlands. This will involve 3D printing snail kite decoys and snail egg clusters and purchasing weatherproof equipment for playback to see if snail kites are attracted to wetlands by the presence of conspecifics, conspecific reproductive success, or by the presence of snail egg clusters (indicator of prey availability).

The FLTWS Graduate Student Scholarship was established in 2012 to recognize and financially assist graduate students pursuing a career in wildlife biology at a 4-year school in Florida. In 2014, the scholarship was renamed the Courtney A. Tye Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship in honor of a respected FFWCC employee and graduate student scholarship applicant, who was tragically lost to the conservation community. Applicants for the scholarship are judged based on career interest, research relevance, contribution to Florida wildlife, demonstrated leadership, professional potential, TWS involvement, financial need, and recommendation from a professor. The Florida Wildlife Federation co-sponsors the scholarship.

As this year's recipient, **Meghan** will receive a check for \$2,000. 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