

## **Doctoral Assistantship Quantifying Biological Diversity (Plants, Arthropods, Birds) in Restored Grasslands in Long Island Sound**

The Mitchell Lab in the Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources at Tarleton State University is seeking applicants for a Ph.D. in Animal and Natural Resource Science for Fall 2024 or Spring 2025 (negotiable). The applicant will evaluate the efficacy of long-term restoration efforts to improve biodiversity in grassland ecosystems on Fishers Island, New York. This is a partnership between Tarleton State University (PI-Dr. Adam Mitchell) and the Fishers Island Conservancy (FIC), a non-profit organization which seeks to preserve, enrich, and enhance natural resources on Fishers Island and its surrounding waters. Fishers Island is a thin, inhabited island in the Long Island Sound located 2 miles off the coast of New London, Connecticut, including a decommissioned military base on the western half of the island that has been actively managed for grassland bird habitat since 2010. A previous study compared plant, invertebrate, and bird communities between 2014-2016 and assessed efficacy of restoration techniques (prescribed burn and invasive plant removal). The applicant would replicate the previous study, compare short-and-long-term patterns in biological diversity, and develop their own research question with guidance from the Mitchell Lab and FIC. The applicant would also work with FIC to improve management plans and assist with grant-writing to fund additional conservation efforts on the island. Finally, the applicant will be expected to engage with the public on invasive species removal, improving native biodiversity on their own properties, and other outreach activities.

**Tarleton State University**, a member of the Texas A&M System, is located in Stephenville TX, about an hour's drive from the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex (northeast), Waco (southeast), and Abilene (northwest). Tarleton hosts more than 15,000 students, and as of 2021, gained institution status as an R2 "High Research Activity". For more information on Tarleton's Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources, please see the following link: <https://www.tarleton.edu/wildlife/>

**Qualifications:** M.S. in Biology, Entomology, Natural Resources, Wildlife Biology, and other related fields. Applicants should be self-motivated, able to work independently in adverse field conditions and in remote areas, as well as delegate to a team of undergraduate and graduate students. Applicant should have strong quantitative skills, including familiarity with statistical software (such as R). The applicant should also have strong technical writing skills.

**Salary and Benefits:** The student will receive a monthly stipend of \$2,500 for 36 month (3 year) commitment, including health benefits as an employee of Tarleton State University and the Texas A&M University System. Students are responsible for costs of in-state tuition and fees; opportunities exist for scholarships at the department and college level to cover tuition costs.

**Application:** Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Please email the following materials as a single PDF file to Dr. Adam Mitchell ([abmitchell@tarleton.edu](mailto:abmitchell@tarleton.edu)): 1) A single-page cover letter describing professional goals, 2) a resume or CV, 3) official or unofficial copy of academic transcripts, 4) a writing sample (published or unpublished thesis, submitted research article, or technical report in which the applicant is a co-author), and 5) contact information for three references. Please include the subject line "YOUR\_NAME\_Fishers" in your email.