

# FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## *Courtney A. Tye Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship*



We are pleased to announce that **Simona Picardi** is the 2019 recipient of the annual scholarship for graduate studies, administered by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Simona is expected to graduate with her PhD in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation in December 2019.

Simona earned her MS degree in Ecology in 2015 and BS degree in Biological Sciences in 2012 at the University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy. Her thesis research in Italy focused on responses of an important game species, the roe deer, to hunting pressure. For her dissertation research, she is investigating the interplay of hydrology and movement patterns in wood stork population responses to human-driven environmental changes. The project involves the use of GPS tracking technology, remote sensing, and quantitative tools to determine important management implications. Wood storks have been identified as a prominent indicator species in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) because population performance is indicative of the success of restoration efforts.

Simona is a member of both The Wildlife Society parent organization and the Florida Chapter. At last year's Spring Meeting in Crystal River, she was awarded the Best Student Paper and served as a session moderator. She published her thesis research on movement responses of roe deer to hunting risk in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. She will present her latest research findings on wood stork movements at both the 2019 FLTWS Spring meeting in Melbourne Beach and the 2019 TWS meeting in Reno.

Besides research, Simona is passionate about teaching and mentoring. She serves on the board of the UF branch of the Carpentries organization, whose mission is to promote informatics literacy to researchers worldwide, for which she regularly teaches workshops on statistical programming. During her time in Florida, she has mentored several other international students. She volunteers with FWC for wading bird nest counts and participated in a structured decision-making workshop for the Florida grasshopper sparrow. Following graduation, Simona plans to pursue an academic career in wildlife ecology, carrying out research relevant to wildlife conservation and management.

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 and the National Wild Turkey Federation co-sponsor the scholarship. As this year's recipient, **Simona** will receive a check for \$2,000 at the FLTWS Spring Meeting, 10-12 April 2019 in Melbourne Beach, Florida.

*Monica Folk*  
*Chair, FLTWS Scholarship Committee*