

FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



Courtney A. Tye Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship

We are pleased to announce that **Wesley Boone** is the 2018 recipient of the annual scholarship for graduate studies, administered by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Wes is expected to graduate with his Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation in May 2019.

Wes received his BS in Wildlife Biology from Clemson University in 2012 and an MS in Wildlife Ecology & Conservation from the University of Florida (UF) in 2015. At Clemson, he was active in the TWS student chapter, organizing field research learning trips for the group. He has been a member of the parent organization of TWS since 2012 and has attended a national conference and several Florida chapter meetings, often as a presenter. He has published several peer-reviewed papers.

As an undergrad, Wes worked as a technician on small mammals and gray squirrels, developing skills he has applied to his graduate research. His current research focuses on management of Sanibel Island rice rats and insular cotton rats, two candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act. He is specifically studying the influence of fire regime, vegetative structure, patch size, and habitat restoration on rice and cotton rat populations (occupancy and population density), and the genetic distinctness of these two populations, and that of the Pine Island rice rat, from mainland populations, using microsatellites, mitochondrial DNA, and nuclear single nucleotide polymorphism. The research will result in management recommendations for future restoration, maintenance and monitoring of these populations, and educational materials for public outreach and education.

At UF, Wes has mentored undergrads as a Mammalogy and Wildlife Techniques TA (teaching assistant), supervised volunteer field assistants in his research, and recently served in the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program Collaborative to diversify the field of ecology by promoting exceptional individuals. Following graduation, Wes plans to continue in academia, educating future biologists and researching how to offset the impacts of anthropogenic change on wildlife.

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, Wes will receive a check for \$3,000 and present his research findings at the FLTWS Spring Meeting, 11-13 April 2018 in Crystal River, Florida.

Monica Folk
Chair, FLTWS Scholarship Committee