



Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

Active by nature.

Ducks Unlimited Canada's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research

Submission and Review of Research Proposals and Fellowship Applications

Amended October 16, 2009¹

The Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research serves as the science arm of Ducks Unlimited Canada. Ducks Unlimited recognizes that partnerships with researchers from North America's universities and other research institutions are essential for the attainment DU's conservation vision. These guidelines describe the process that IWWR uses to receive and review research proposals. Part One addresses proposals for awards of secured funds such as earmarked grants and endowed research fellowships. Specific competitions for such awards will be announced as they become available. Part Two covers proposals for unsecured research support, i.e. proposals for which IWWR will have to solicit funds after approving the research in concept.

Part 1. Applications for Secured Grants and Graduate Research Fellowships

Applications for IWWR Graduate Research Fellowships will be received by November 20, 2009.

Two fellowships (FUTCH, OLIN) will be available in our upcoming funding cycle (early winter 2009/2010).

Applications for other secured, earmarked funds will be received at various times following the issuing of special Requests for Proposals (RFP). Decisions on Fellowship applications will be announced in January. The timing of decisions for other funding competitions will be specified in individual RFPs, but typically will be within 8 weeks of proposal submission.

For all submissions, Research Proposals, not more than 10 pages in length, should describe the

¹ Submission guidelines will be revised annually as needed and distributed to any interested investigators or research institutions.

basic research idea, rationalize its importance, suggest how it will be accomplished, and provide an estimate of the resources the project will require. Proposals should include the following sections:

- A. Introduction to the problem (Why is it interesting from the viewpoints of wetland or waterfowl conservation and basic biology?)
- B. Objectives and major hypotheses
- C. Basic approach
 - 1. design of experiments or observations
 - 2. general methods
 - 3. principal investigators
- D. Timetable (including reports and publications)
- E. Literature cited
- F. Budget² (including a list of any secured matching support and other pending applications for funds).

Research proposals in response to RFPs also should include resumes of the principal investigator and any involved graduate students. Fellowship applications additionally should include a brief statement (<1 page) of the student's career objectives, academic transcripts, GRE scores (if available), a letter of endorsement from the applicant's Ph.D. advisor, and two additional letters of recommendation.

Research proposals deemed to be of significant interest to DU Canada will be sent for confidential peer review to at least 2 IWWR researchers or DU conservation staff and 2 external scientists. External referees are selected from a large pool of reviewers and will be screened for potential conflicts of interest. No IWWR staff member or external referee will be involved in a decision regarding a proposal in which they, or a close colleague, are stakeholders. Fellowship applications will be reviewed and ranked by our staff. Proposals will be judged primarily on the relevance of the proposed research to IWWR's objectives and DU conservation mission, the scientific soundness and achievability of the work, and an assessment of the qualifications of the graduate student or other lead investigator. Specific grants or fellowships may have additional award criteria.

Part 2. Unsolicited Applications for Research Support

This category includes all proposals that Ducks Unlimited Canada might support with limited discretionary funds or, usually, with new funds raised by IWWR and the PI after the project is approved in concept. The selection of these projects is a two-step process.

Pre-Proposals

² **Note:** As a charitable, non-profit institution it is the policy of DU Canada's IWWR not to pay university or government overhead charges on research grants.

Pre-proposals for unsecured research support may be submitted at any time. Pre-proposals, typically about 5 pages in length, should describe the basic research idea, objectives, the general approach and methods to be used, and include a preliminary budget. If project proponents have a full proposal in hand prepared for another funding agency, this may be substituted for a pre-proposal. Regardless, all initial submissions will be treated as pre-proposals.

Staff will review pre-proposals to assess DU Canada's likely interest in supporting the research. Of particular importance in the initial screening is the relevance of the proposed research to the Institute's objectives and DUC's conservation mission. For topics of interest to us, subsequent discussions between project proponents and IWWR staff will help modify project ideas and increase the likelihood that research proposals will closely match DUC's interests and funding capabilities.

Responses to pre-proposals generally will be made within 8 weeks after submission. Many proposals will be declined at this stage. Other proponents will be asked to submit a more detailed final proposal for more rigorous peer review. At the same time, IWWR staff may request assistance from the PI to prepare funding requests for prospective private donors.

To maximize the likelihood of funding the following year, pre-proposals should be received by November 20st. This date is just ahead of IWWR's annual budget preparation deadlines. Earlier submission usually will improve the chances of success by increasing the time subsequently available for fundraising.

Final Proposals

Final proposals should follow the format described on page 2, and will be sent for confidential peer review to at least 2 IWWR researchers or DUC conservation staff and 2 external scientists. Review criteria are the same as those described in Part 1 above, namely: the relevance of the proposed research to DUC's conservation work and IWWR's objectives; the scientific soundness and achievability of the work; and the qualifications of the graduate student or other lead investigators.

If a final proposal for unsecured funds is approved in concept, IWWR staff then will help the PI seek funds to support the study. This might mean providing partial support with discretionary funds, or most likely, assisting with joint funding requests to potential private sponsors. Occasionally, such funding approaches may be made opportunistically before approval of a final proposal; however, financial support will not be granted without satisfactory completion of peer review of a full research proposal.

Scope of Proposals for DU Canada

DU Canada will consider supporting field research anywhere in Canada. Retrospective analyses, modeling, or laboratory work on problems of importance to DU Canada may be supported regardless of where the work is conducted.

Generally, grants for fieldwork in the United States or Mexico will be made and administered by Ducks Unlimited Inc., Memphis, TN. For guidance about applying there please contact Mr. Humburg at the address below.

Field research in the United States or Latin America may be supported directly by DU Canada in exceptional circumstances if the information is judged to be of extraordinary importance to migratory waterfowl in Canada (e.g., research on declining scaup populations), if the work is part of a cross-border project (e.g., Fraser River Delta / North Puget Sound), or if the a unique research opportunity exists in circumstances where the results would be clearly transferable to Canadian ecosystems (e.g., hydrology and nutrient cycling in prairie potholes in northern ND).

3. Annual Progress Reports

Substantive progress reports and requests for further financial support are due on the anniversary date of the original full proposal unless specified otherwise in your individual grant agreement. Such reports are required before any funds are released for further work. Clear justification must be presented for major changes in research objectives, design or methodology during the course of a study. Reports should include the following information:

- A. Project rationale (very brief)
- B. Objectives and hypotheses
- C. Methods (brief)
- D. Preliminary results
- E. Discussion
- F. Any proposed changes in experimental design, methods, or timetable
- G. Budget request for the next fiscal year (include disclosure of any matching support)
- H. An abstract usable for IWWR annual reports, etc.

And, as per your particular grant agreement:

Appendix 1. Itemized report on expenditure of funds to date (required before grant renewal)

Appendix 2. Any other specified deliverable products

4. Where to Apply

To apply for or inquire about Graduate Research Fellowships, Unsolicited Research Support or RFP's please contact:

Dr. David W. Howerter, Research Scientist and Manager
Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research
Ducks Unlimited Canada
P.O. Box 1160
Stonewall, Manitoba, Canada R0C 2Z0
Phone : (204) 467-3292
Fax : (204) 467-3410
Email : d_howerter@ducks.ca

For the United States and Mexico:

Science support in the United States from DU Inc. is being managed separately. For guidance about applying to DU Inc., please contact:

Dale Humburg, Chief Biologist
Ducks Unlimited Inc.
One Waterfowl Way
Memphis, TN 38120
Phone: (901) 758-3786
Fax: (901) 758-3850
Email: dhumburg@ducks.org

Electronic submissions are strongly encouraged. Electronic submissions greatly facilitate peer review and management of your proposal. Acceptable formats include WORD document files (preferred), Rich Text Format files (.rtf), or Adobe Acrobat files (.pdf). Microsoft drawing objects and jpg, PowerPoint or Sigma Plot files may be used for graphics not integrated in text files. Submissions via courier, regular mail and fax also are accepted.