



Ducks Unlimited Graduate Fellowships Background

Educating the next generation of conservation scientists is critical to the success of Ducks Unlimited (DU). In addition to including graduate studies in many staff-led research projects, we provide dedicated support to graduate students (either Master's or PhD) across North America. This support is provided in the form of annual graduate fellowships. Fellowships are provided through generous donations from individuals and corporations. Background on these awards is provided below.

Bonnycastle Fellowship for Wetland and Waterfowl Research

The purpose of the Bonnycastle Fellowship for Wetland and Waterfowl Research is two-fold: 1) to assist in the development of talented young professionals who are dedicated to furthering the conservation of wetlands and wildlife, and 2) to advance scientific understanding of the biology of waterfowl and wetlands.

This fellowship honours the conservation vision of Richard H. G. Bonnycastle, who was born near Dauphin, Manitoba in 1903. Richard was the eldest of six children of the local magistrate and Ellen Boulton. Educated at Trinity College in Toronto, Richard later earned B.A. and law degrees from Oxford University in 1924. A star athlete at Oxford, Richard toured Europe as a member of the world champion Oxford hockey team, along with teammates Roland Michener (later Governor General of Canada) and Lester Pearson (later Prime Minister). Bonnycastle returned to Winnipeg and, after a short stint with a law firm, the lure of adventure pulled him to the Hudson's Bay Company. From 1926-1937, he toured the western Arctic, where he rose quickly to the position of Chief Fur Trader.

A keen observer of great curiosity and energy, his Arctic diaries (published in 1984) vividly recount his harrowing travels and the challenges of rejuvenating the far-flung Hudson Bay empire in rapidly changing times. Bonnycastle returned to Winnipeg as a senior manager, and worked for the Company until 1945, when he left to become managing director for Advocate Printers. During the next 10 years, he put together the beginnings of what is now the world's largest publisher of romantic fiction, Harlequin Enterprises Ltd. A leader in the Winnipeg business community, Bonnycastle sat on several corporate and charitable boards and served as President of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, First Chairman of Winnipeg's Metropolitan Corporation, and First Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg. Bonnycastle died at the controls of his floatplane in 1968, after landing on Long Island Bay in the Manitoba wilderness he loved.

The outdoors were an important part of Bonnycastle's life from boyhood, and he gave generously of himself in the cause of conservation. After returning from the Arctic, another Oxford hockey teammate, Winnipeg Lawyer E. B. Pitblado, helped draw Bonnycastle to service with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). Bonnycastle joined the DUC board in 1955. His talents and energy were quickly recognized, and he was elected President in 1957, serving four full terms through 1960. First as President, then as Chairman of the Board (1961-1962), and later as Chairman of the Executive Committee (1962-1968), Bonnycastle offered DUC outstanding leadership during a period of challenge and change. He is credited with leading the directors to a more active and business-like role in the conduct of DUC affairs. In addition to leading the push for enhancing reconnaissance and surveys to provide information to guide long-range conservation planning, he played a key role in bringing the company under firmer administrative and fiscal control. He initiated a tradition of meeting away from corporate boardrooms, in the field, with the people actually delivering DUC's conservation programs.

At the DU annual meeting in 1958, Bonnycastle posed the unorthodox idea of engaging an independent agency to examine and evaluate active DU projects so that the company "would have an impartial appraisal of the effectiveness of their work". In his view, this would be helpful to management and would aid the board in determining the extent to which expenditures were being wisely made and objectives achieved. Frustrating attempts to arrange for these evaluations with government agencies ended in 1964, but Bonnycastle's vision of a group dedicated to providing scientific leadership for conservation was realized in 1991 with the establishment of the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research. These fellowships honour the memory of a great conservation leader and his commitment to the wetlands, waterfowl and people of Western Canada.

The Bonnycastle Fellowship is open to a broad range of innovative proposals for work anywhere in North America, on any aspect of wetland or waterfowl ecology that promises to advance conservation. The competition is open to graduate students based at any North American university. Fellowships will be awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the study to wetland or waterfowl ecology; the importance of the proposed research to conservation; and achievability of the work.

The award of up to \$8,000 CDN/year is available to provide personal or research support for successful applicants. The award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for Master's students, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support.

Dr. Bruce D. J. Batt Fellowship in Waterfowl Conservation

Dr. Bruce Batt retired as DU Chief Biologist after a long and productive career in waterfowl research and conservation. During his 41-year career, Dr. Batt was involved in a greater diversity of issues and a broader number of landscapes important to North American waterfowl than any biologist of his generation. He made significant contributions to understanding waterfowl breeding biology, wintering ecology and wetland ecology, and he positively influenced an entire generation of waterfowl professionals.

During his two decades with DU, Dr. Batt helped establish the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, contributed to important work on mid-continent ducks, Arctic geese and northern habitats, supervised DU's initiatives in Mexico and Latin America, and helped to lead DU's conservation administration and communication efforts.

In recognition of his many accomplishments, particularly his passion for the role of sound science in guiding conservation, DU has established the Dr. Bruce D. J. Batt Fellowship in Waterfowl Conservation. The purpose of this fellowship is to provide financial assistance to deserving graduate students conducting waterfowl or wetland research in North America.

The competition is open to graduate students based at any North American university. It will be awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the study to wetland or waterfowl ecology; the importance of the proposed research to conservation; and achievability of the work.

One award of up to \$5,000 CDN/year is available to provide personal or research support for the successful applicant. The award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for students pursuing a Master's degree, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support.

Edward D. and Sally M. Futch Graduate Fellowship

The purpose of the Edward D. and Sally M. Futch Graduate Fellowship is to assist in the development of talented young professionals dedicated to furthering the conservation of wetlands and wetland wildlife, while also advancing scientific understanding of the biology of waterfowl and wetlands in North America.

Residing in Galveston, Texas, Edward and Sally Futch shared a deep interest in the outdoors, especially in waterfowl and wetlands. They were vitally involved in the education of youth — tomorrow's leaders in science and medicine — through the University of Texas Medical Branch and elsewhere in the Galveston community. Their abiding interest in waterfowl and other wildlife took them to the far corners of the globe. Their appreciation of these resources, coupled with their understanding of the critical links between wildlife abundance, ecosystem integrity and sound scientific management of wildlife habitat, led them to dedicate funds to support this fellowship. Mrs. Futch and the late Dr. Futch, an educator himself, took a special interest in the scientific work of DU. They were very proud to support this program for today's youth and tomorrow's environment.

This competition is open to graduate students enrolled at any North American University. Subject matter for the student's research can deal with any aspect of waterfowl or wetland biology that promises to advance conservation.

Fellowships will be awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the research to furthering waterfowl conservation; and the achievability of the work.

One award of up to \$9,500 USD/year is available to provide personal or research support for the successful applicant. The award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for Master's students, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support.

Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation Wetlands and Waterfowl Research Fellowship

This fellowship was established in 2000 to support graduate students engaged in important waterfowl research. The fellowship reflects the longstanding support of Spencer and Ann Olin, who began supporting DU in 1941. This generous support is carried on today by other Olin family members.

The Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation Wetlands and Waterfowl Research Fellowship is an investment in young waterfowl professionals and is focused on two primary objectives: 1) developing critical scientific information that will contribute to the future conservation of waterfowl and wetland resources, and 2) contributing to the training of future professionals in the field of waterfowl and wetlands conservation. The ultimate objective is to ensure waterfowl and wetlands conservation through the contribution of career professionals. Research to date has included work on redhead duck foraging habitat in the Laguna Madre, mallard breeding ecology in the Great Lakes region, black duck winter and spring habitat use, mallard duckling survival, and scaup population ecology.

The fellowship is open to graduate students enrolled at any North American University. Subject matter for the student's research can deal with any aspect of waterfowl or wetland biology that promises to advance conservation.

Fellowships will be awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the research to furthering waterfowl conservation; and the achievability of the work.

One award of up to \$9,500 USD/year is available to provide personal or research support for the successful applicant. The award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for Master's students, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support.

Waterfowl Research Foundation Fellowships

The Waterfowl Research Foundation Fellowships are an investment in young waterfowl professionals and are focused on three primary objectives: 1) developing critical scientific information that will contribute to the future conservation of waterfowl and wetland resources, 2) contributing to the training of future professionals in the field of waterfowl and wetlands conservation, and 3) honoring the critical role that waterfowlers have played in supporting waterfowl and wetland conservation throughout North America. The ultimate objective is to ensure waterfowl and wetland conservation through the contribution of career professionals.

The fellowships are open to graduate students enrolled at any North American university who must possess a current hunting or sportsman license issued by the appropriate regulatory authority. Subject matter for the student's research can deal with any aspect of waterfowl or wetland biology that promises to advance conservation.

Fellowships will be awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant, including the candidate's past and present participation in waterfowl hunting; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the research to furthering waterfowl conservation; and the achievability of the work.

Two awards of \$12,000 CDN/year are available to provide personal or research support for the successful applicant. The awards are renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for Master's students, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report, continued possession of a valid hunting or sportsman licence, and the need for continuing financial support.

Michael F.B. Nesbitt Family Research Fellowship

The goal of this award is to support post-graduate education of wetland and waterfowl scientists, and thereby help train future leaders who will follow in the footsteps of Michael Nesbitt's family. This family has a long history in scientific endeavors, which is honored by this fellowship. Gerald H Barrett-Hamilton (1870-1914), his maternal grandfather, was a world renowned Irish naturalist who wrote the History of British Mammals. His mother, Geraldine Margaret Nesbitt, daughter of Barrett-Hamilton, was the first woman at the University of Manitoba to graduate with honors in both zoology and chemistry, in 1931. The Nesbitt family also includes two Provosts/Presidents of Trinity College in Dublin. Bartholomew Lloyd served from 1831 to 1837, having expertise in mathematics and physics, and Humphrey Lloyd, his son, served from 1867 to 1880. Humphrey was a physicist with an international reputation and the recipient of an honorary Doctorate from Oxford University. Most recently, Michael Nesbitt was a member of DUC's Board of Directors for 10 years. He also chaired the pension committee for two years, played a role in the design of Oak Hammock Marsh, and served on several other committees long after his tenure on the Board.

Graduate students located at any North American university are eligible for this Fellowship. It is awarded based upon: the qualifications of the applicant; the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal; originality and creativity in study design; expected contributions of the study to wetland or waterfowl ecology; the importance of the proposed research to conservation; and achievability of the work.

One award of up to \$5,000 CDN/year is available to provide personal or research support for the successful applicant. The award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, once for students pursuing a Master's degree, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support

David R. Luukkonen Waterfowl and Wetland Graduate Student Fellowship

Dr. David R. Luukkonen (Dave) was born in Chicago and lived in New Jersey for a few years but spent most of his childhood growing up in Michigan, hunting and fishing across the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. Dave loved vacationing in the remote west UP, where his parents were raised, and like most "Finlanders" from this area, he was very comfortable and capable in the outdoors. After completing his BSc degree at Michigan State University and MSc degree at Virginia Polytechnical University, Dave started his professional wildlife career conducting bird monitoring for a consulting company in Florida. He soon moved back to Michigan when offered a Wildlife Habitat Biologist position with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MNDR) Wildlife Division. This job led to an Avian Research Scientist position in the agency, which resulted in a complementary opportunity for completing a bird-ecology PhD at Michigan State University (MSU). Dave became an adjunct professor at MSU and eventually retired from the MDNR to become a university research associate so he could spend more time mentoring graduate students. Nearly all the research conducted by Dave and his MSU students was bird related, with a focus on game birds.

In addition to pioneering research on Sichuan and ring-necked pheasants, American woodcock, molt-migrating Canada geese, non-breeding diving duck monitoring, and bird redistribution resulting from landscape and environmental change, Dave was the Michigan representative to the Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Section. His charm and great sense of humor, coupled with extremely sharp intellect, benefitted the waterfowl resource as well as Midwestern hunters, with common sense regulations based on the best available science. Knowledge spanning so many aspects of bird conservation made Dave an essential component of the Joint Venture conservation community.

The Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture (JV) is a partnership established to implement goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) in a regional geography vital to waterfowl,

waterbirds, and other wetland wildlife. The 2018 NAWMP update identified a critical need to expand formal education and field experience of university students to ensure that an appropriately skilled workforce meets NAWMP conservation goals. Objectives of this JV-supported Fellowship are to address the NAWMP need for training as well as the science needs of the JV, while also recognizing the long-term contributions of regional avian scientist Dave Luukkonen.

Beginning in 2005, Dave was a critical member of the JV Technical Committee, a member of the JV Waterfowl Committee, and a productive contributor to the JV Science Team. We lost Dave to cancer in December 2021. Subsequently, several close friends and colleagues developed this Fellowship opportunity via the JV and Ducks Unlimited as a tribute to Dave's conservation work related to wetland birds, their habitats, and to the people who enjoy hunting and other bird-related recreation.

Support from this Fellowship is dedicated to addressing Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes JV waterfowl, waterbird, wetland, and relevant social science evaluation priorities (see <https://umgljv.org/science/>). Graduate students located at any North American university are eligible for this Fellowship. It is awarded based on qualifications of the applicant, the scientific soundness of the student's research proposal, originality and creativity in study design, expected contributions of the study to waterfowl/wetland bird conservation and management in the JV region, and achievability of the work.

Two awards of up to \$10,000 USD/year are available to provide personal or research support for successful applicants. Each award is renewable for up to two additional years for PhD students, one additional year for students pursuing a Master's degree, assuming annual approval of a satisfactory progress report and the need for continuing financial support.

