

School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences



FEATURE STORY

**Limitless Opportunities:
Auburn alumni fly high in top
leadership roles at Ducks Unlimited** pg. 4

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Working with Nature for Society's Well Being

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Scholarship and Fellowship Reception



Boone and Crockett Club Chief of Staff, Tony Schoonen speaks at the SFWS

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Auburn to grow its wildlife programs with prestigious Boone and Crockett Club Professorship

Auburn University will pursue the creation of a prestigious Boone and Crockett Club Professorship in support of its wildlife research and academic programs.

At the invitation of Auburn President Steven Leath, Tony Schoonen, chief of staff of the renowned wildlife conservation organization, presented a campus-wide seminar at the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences on Sept. 28.

Schoonen's talk, "Understanding Conservation: Responsible Commercial Use of Natural Resources,"

explored the principles of wildlife conservation and the sustainable and ethical use of natural resources for commercial and recreational hunting purposes.

Founded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1887, the Boone and Crockett Club promotes guardianship and visionary management of big game and associated wildlife in North America. The club's standards of fair chase sportsmanship and habitat stewardship are the cornerstones of the country's hunting regulations.

The Boone and Crockett Club championed the creation of landmark wildlife legislation, science and funding mechanisms for conservation, many federal agencies, national wildlife refuges and cooperative research units under the umbrella principle known today as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

In 1992, the Boone and Crockett Club began a campaign to expand the impact of their conservation programs by collaborating with select universities to establish endowed faculty positions that would assure science-based wildlife management and conservation principles continue to guide national policy and decision-making.

During the visit, Schoonen spoke with Auburn administration, faculty and students, and learned about Auburn's nationally recognized wildlife research and academic programs. Based on the stature of its programs



President Steven Leath, left, a member of the conservation organization Boone and Crockett Club, and Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Dean Janaki Alavalapati, right, welcomed the club's Chief of Staff Tony Schoonen to Auburn where he gave a talk to faculty and students, "Understanding Conservation: Responsible Commercial Use of Natural Resources."

and the potential for faculty support, the Boone and Crockett Club encouraged the school to pursue the creation of a Boone and Crockett Club Professorship at Auburn.

"Auburn is a leader in wildlife management and conservation education, and establishing a Boone and Crockett Professorship would help ensure our students are prepared to lead in this growing sector," said Leath.

"By partnering with one of the world's most renowned conservation organizations, Auburn could provide even more outstanding learning experiences for our students and open the door to tremendous economic opportunities for our state."

Through research and collaboration, the Boone and Crockett Club Professorship will help drive policy to ensure landowners have healthy wildlife populations and resources for habitat enhancement and conservation of big game.

"Legislation that assures robust wildlife populations will result in higher land values, increased job opportunities within the state and the sustainability of our natural resources," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

To learn more about the Boone and Crockett Club Professorship, contact Heather Crozier, director of the SFWS Office of Development, at 334-844-2791 or vannhea@auburn.edu.



Auburn University Trustee James W. Rane, the chairman, president and CEO of Great Southern Wood Preserving, Inc., the leading producer of pressure-treated lumber in the United States, sat with APT for an interview to talk about future trends in wood products and Auburn's role in the forest products industry.

APT series to showcase Auburn's forestry, wildlife and environmental research and the state's natural resource industries

As part of Alabama Public Television's ongoing "Spotlight on Agriculture" documentary series, the network is producing three episodes focused on the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences' forestry, wildlife and

natural resources research and the industry's importance to the state.

The episodes will air in the first three quarters of 2019. To celebrate the launch of the three-part segment of the series, the SFWS hosted a public screening and reception for the premier.

The episode trilogy will highlight the importance of forests, wildlife and natural resources to the state's economy and quality of life.

"These programs will help Alabamians to better understand the value of our state's abundant natural resources and the innovative research being done at Auburn to assure we manage

those resources for the well-being and enjoyment of future generations," said Roy Clem, APT executive director.

Through interviews with landowners, business, government and industry representatives, the documentary series will showcase how Auburn's research and Extension programs serve to convey science-based information in order to sustainably manage those resources for the future.

During the Forestry episode, viewers will learn how Auburn's research is improving timber harvesting and forestry operations, developing sustainable products from forest biomass and discovering solutions to many of today's most critical challenges

facing wildlife and natural landscapes such as drought, habitat loss, pests and invasive species.

The Wildlife episode, to air in the second quarter of the year, will examine Auburn's wildlife research and partnerships with landowners, agencies and other stakeholders to aid the development of policies that will assure healthy and sustainable game and non-game wildlife populations and their habitats.

The episode will also discuss the complex relationships between land use, climate change and population growth that alter the health-related interactions among people, animals and the environment that contribute to the presence of diseases such as rabies, Lyme disease and the West Nile and Zika viruses.

Finally, the episode on Environment and Society, to air in the third quarter of 2019, will discuss Auburn's research to examine the relationships between humans and the environment as they relate to economics, policies and other organizational aspects of society.

"We are grateful to Alabama Public Television and the many organizations who participated in the series to showcase the collaborative research partnership between academia, industry and government," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

"This collaborative work and sharing of knowledge and resources is vital to our research that aspires to preserve Alabama's quality of life and assure the sustainable future of our society."

For more information about the Alabama Public Television broadcast schedule, visit aptv.org.

A Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Greetings from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. We are pleased to share several exciting new developments with you about the school and Auburn University. Last fall, President Steven Leath noted in his State of the University address that Auburn University is on the move to new heights with a goal to bolster its student experience and life-changing research and outreach. You will be pleased to note from this issue that we have launched several initiatives that will contribute to President Leath's vision. For example, as part of Alabama Public Television's ongoing "Spotlight on Agriculture" documentary series, we are producing three episodes on Auburn's innovate forestry, wildlife and natural resources research and the importance of these related industries to the state. These episodes will air in the first three quarters of 2019.

The school continues to engage with a range of stakeholders and administrators to promote research and outreach activities relating to cross-laminated timber. We hope that the growing momentum for cross-laminated timber will soon translate into a series of CLT constructions at Auburn and across the state. We also created the Forests, Environment and Wildlife Leadership Academy, or FEWL. The academy is a sequence of two courses, with the first cohort of 12 undergraduate students representing various degree programs from the SFWS. The goal of this transformative student development program is to groom future leaders of our professions and enterprises.

We continue to grow in size and excellence of our academic, research and extension programs. Since 2015, we have increased undergraduate enrollment by 41 percent to 407, graduate enrollment by 24 percent to 89 and credit hours by 29 percent to 6,813. We thank you for your continued support and guidance to move the school forward.

War Eagle!

Best regards,

Dean Janaki R.R. Alavalapati

Holiday Luncheon

SFWS celebrated the holidays with its annual holiday potluck luncheons. Dean Janaki Alavalapati provided turkey and ham and faculty, staff and graduate students shared their favorite holiday dishes and desserts.



Faculty Workshop

Faculty began work on the school's five-year strategic plan that included identifying priorities for future faculty positions and other resources needed to move the school forward as a destination for forestry, wildlife and natural resource programs in the southeastern U.S.



School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences

SFWS NEWS • Fall 2018

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Giving

Questions concerning the school's development program, including annual and corporate giving, planned gifts and estate planning, should be directed to Heather Crozier, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building, 602 Duncan Drive, Auburn, AL 36849. Inquiries may also be made by email to vannhea@auburn.edu or by phone at 334-844-2791.



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In The Spotlight

New Faculty & Staff

Please join us in welcoming new members of the faculty and staff:

Michael Buckman,
Manager, Kreher Preserve & Nature Center

Brian Folt,
Postdoctoral Fellow

Sue Fuller,
Executive Coordinator

Michelle Straw,
Coordinator I, Building Operations

Dustyn Tyler,
Forestry Technician

Awards & Recognition

Congratulations to our faculty, staff, alumni and students on their recent achievements.

Robert Gitzen received a promotion to associate professor with tenure and **Becky Barlow** and **Mark Smith** received promotions to the rank of professor.

The Alabama Wildlife Federation named Extension Specialist **Nancy Loewenstein** the Forest Conservationist of the Year and doctoral student **Jimmy Stiles** and his wife, **Sierra**, the Conservation Communicators of the Year during the Governor's Conservation Achievement Award Ceremony.

Professor **Lisa Samuelson** was renamed the Dwain G. Luce Endowed Professor of Forestry.

Marina Natalla Hornus (Maj. Prof. Brian Via) received the first place Graduate Student Poster Award at the 2018 Forest Product Society International Convention.

Maria Celeste Iglesias (Maj. Prof. Maria Soledad Peresin) was awarded the Auburn Presidential Graduate Research Fellowship to support her doctoral work.

Doctoral student **Osei Asibe Asafu-Adjaye** (Maj. Prof. Brian Via) was a top 10 finalist for the Abstract Competition and Travel Grant at the 2018 Society of Wood Science and Technology/Japan Wood Research Society International Convention in Nagoya, Japan.

Happy Retirement

Please join us in wishing a very happy retirement to **Brenda Allen, Arthur Chappelka, Larry Teeter, John Kush and Efre Robbins** from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Weyerhaeuser Contribution

Weyerhaeuser's Chattahoochee Area Manager Brad Murfee and LTL Administrator Gordon Moss recently visited the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences to present a gift to benefit the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center. Funds will support the construction of an outdoor classroom area. Pictured, from left to right, are Dean Janaki Alavalapati, Murfee, Moss and Development Director Heather Crozier.



Dean's Address to Alumni

During the recent Alabama Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Orange Beach, Dean Janaki Alavalapati addressed alumni and friends. Scotch Plywood sponsored the AU coffee hour, which over 30 alumni attended for an update about the school's programs and research.



Upcoming Events

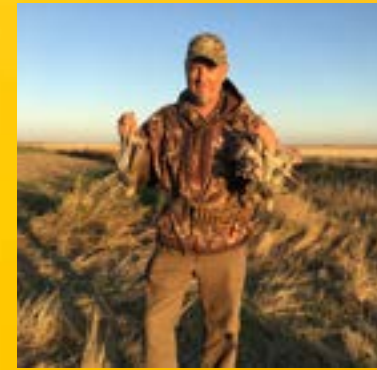
KPNC Birding Installation Opening and Tour with Greg Harbor, March 23
Golden Eagles Dean's Luncheon, April 5
Student Awards Celebration and Dinner, April 10
Organic Gardening Workshop, KPNC, April 13
S'more Fun with Mom, KPNC, April 13
Spring Commencement, May 4 - 7
Spring Graduation Ceremony and Reception, May 5



President Leath speaks at Forestry meeting

During the recent Alabama Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Orange Beach, Auburn University President Steven Leath served as keynote speaker. He discussed Auburn's impact and plans for growth as a partnership university to advance academics and research to benefit citizens, industry and government.

LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES



Tom Moorman '87, chief scientist at Ducks Unlimited, holds a few Hungarian Partridge during a hunt in Saskatchewan last year.



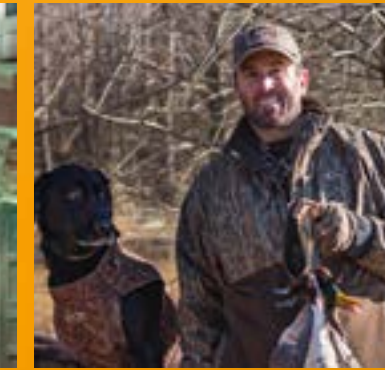
Nick Wiley '86, chief conservation officer at Ducks Unlimited



Craig LeSchack '93, director of conservation operations at Ducks Unlimited (left), attends a project tour in Quebec, Canada, with staff from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



David Schuessler '92, national director of event fundraising at Ducks Unlimited, is at one of the many events directed under his leadership which raise more than \$115 million annually for the organization.



Chad Manlove '98, managing director of development for Ducks Unlimited, southern region, takes time to enjoy duck hunting.

Auburn alumni fly high in top leadership roles at Ducks Unlimited

by Maggie Smith

From the director of conservation operations to the national director of event fundraising, Ducks Unlimited bleeds orange and blue.

With five Auburn University alumni holding leadership positions, the nonprofit wetlands conservation organization has a taste of what it means to be a part of the "Auburn Family."

One member of the Auburn Family, Nick Wiley, is the chief conservation officer for the organization. "My role is to lead Ducks Unlimited's highly successful conservation efforts and make sure we continue to protect and conserve wetlands and grasslands that are most critical for supporting waterfowl populations and other wildlife across North America," he said.

Wiley credits his time as a graduate student at Auburn for fueling his desire to follow a career path pertaining to fish and wildlife conservation.

"I was fortunate to have a great team of faculty advisors while I was at Auburn," he said. "Their strong and direct interest in me greatly shaped and inspired my development as a conservation professional."

Wiley encourages students who wish to follow in his footsteps as a conservationist to dream big, set big goals and never compromise on those goals.

Tom Moorman, chief scientist at Ducks Unlimited, feels his time at Auburn earning a wildlife sciences master's degree rounded out his education and gave him a broader perspective and appreciation of the importance of the organization's conservation efforts.

"Our specific goals are waterfowl and wetland focused, but I can easily understand and convey the non-waterfowl benefits of our work which are substantial and important," he stated.

As chief scientist, Moorman's leadership position ensures Ducks Unlimited conservation programs, public policy and advocacy efforts

"I was fortunate to have a great team of faculty advisors while I was at Auburn. Their direct interest in me greatly shaped and inspired my development as a conservation professional."

- Nick Wiley

in the U.S. remain based on the best and most current supporting science on waterfowl ecology and management, wetland ecology and management and related areas of ecological and social science or human dimensions.

Moorman said students should understand that wildlife management and people, values and social science are an important convergence that is foundational to the profession.

Another Auburn alumnus contributing to Ducks Unlimited's conservation efforts is Craig LeSchack, the director of conservation operations. His role is to work on national and international partnerships and conservation programs, and serve as the staff liaison for volunteer committees and boards.

LeSchack began working with waterfowl conservation when he was a wildlife sciences master's student at Auburn. He says the waterfowl project he worked on in Guntersville helped prepare him for his career.

"Auburn has a very strong wildlife program and I've met a number of wildlife professionals throughout my 25-year career who are Auburn graduates," he said. "People in the

waterfowl conservation community know that if you went to Auburn, you are well prepared for a career in waterfowl conservation."

Auburn also has a presence in the development department of Ducks Unlimited. Wildlife sciences alumnus Chad Manlove is the managing director of development for the southern region.

"I am responsible for managing a fundraising team of staff and volunteers within the southern region to implement a comprehensive major gift program," he said. "I also maintain a personal portfolio of high net worth major gift prospects."

Manlove said that because competition among wildlife-related jobs is fierce, he always encourages students to pursue a master's degree in their field of interest and

consider volunteering at a conservation organization like Ducks Unlimited.

"By earning a master's degree in wildlife science at Auburn, I had a distinct advantage in securing a permanent job within the non-profit wildlife sector," he said. "The oral and written communication skills I gained have been essential in maintaining long-term relationships with passionate supporters of Ducks Unlimited."

Alumni of the Raymond J. Harbert College of Business at Auburn are also at Ducks Unlimited. Business administration alumnus David Schuessler is the national director of event fundraising.

Schuessler did not originally plan to work for the conservation organization, but soon found that it was the perfect fit for him.

"Given Ducks Unlimited's conservation mission, I never fully considered they would have a place for those with a business background," he said. "However, once I started volunteering for my local fundraising chapter I quickly learned that the revenue-producing aspect of the organization was exactly like running a business, and I greatly enjoyed applying my education and growing work experience toward my budding passion for raising funds for waterfowl and wetlands."

Schuessler said the most rewarding part of working for Ducks Unlimited is witnessing the passion that employees and volunteers have for the organization.

"No matter where I travel, the zeal for Ducks Unlimited's conservation work is the same, and it's part of what makes our organization so strong," he said. "I liken it to being a part of the Auburn Family. I can walk up to someone wearing an Auburn shirt and have a 30-minute conversation with them and the same can be said if I see someone from Ducks Unlimited."

Although each alumnus took different paths to get to where they are now at Ducks Unlimited, they all credit Auburn University for providing the groundwork for their careers.

"My graduate work changed my life - the combined wildlife ecology education at Auburn, graduate work on the waterfowl that included working with several other grad students and the guidance I received from my advisor, Dr. Guy Baldassare, really shaped my future."

- Tom Moorman

ACHE approves new degree and online graduate certificate

In December, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education approved the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences' new degree offering in wildlife enterprise management. Enrollment began this spring for students who will take classes primarily in the SFWS in partnership with Auburn's College of Human Sciences and the Harbert College of Business. Courses will include wildlife management, hotel and restaurant management and accounting and marketing. In addition to earning the new bachelor's degree, students will earn a minor in business.

The agency also approved the school's new One Health online graduate certificate. The 15-credit

hour program will examine public health threats, including infectious diseases, and assess strategies for creating sustainable local and global ecosystems. The concept, promoted by the CDC, follows the premise that health-related interactions among people, animals and the environment have profound influences on disease risk, transmission and prediction efforts.

The program is a partnership between the SFWS, the colleges of veterinary medicine and agriculture at Auburn and the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Online professional certification programs require 15 credit hours of online coursework, which students can apply toward the pursuit of a master's degree. Students must apply through the Auburn Graduate School; however, the GRE is not required.

More information about the latest program offerings is available at sfws.auburn.edu.

Eckhardt selected to teach young students about science through global STEM mentoring program

Forestry and Wildlife Professor Lori Eckhardt will be a STEM U Mentor to aid high school students in becoming literate in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. The STEM U Mentor program is a collaboration between United Technologies Corporation and the New York Academy of Sciences.

"I believe that having a mentor can make a difference in choosing a career path or a field of study for high school students," Eckhardt said. "It

also has a positive impact on their development and academic achievement, and is critical in helping youth explore and develop their interest in the fields of STEM."

STEM U paired Eckhardt with three high school students with whom she interacts virtually twice a month. She also participates in group discussions and monthly virtual programs.

"Mentoring helps build self-confidence, as well as skills in leadership, communication, critical thinking and

academic readiness," said Eckhardt, who learned of the program through Sigma Xi, the National Scientific Research Honor Society.

"Dr. Eckhardt's tireless effort and service to help others in educational settings throughout the world is admirable and reflects the enthusiasm among our faculty members to share their knowledge and skills in a global setting," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.



2018 Career Fair

SFWS thanks employers who participated in the 2018 Career Fair. The event is an opportunity for students to meet potential employers while gaining a better understanding of career fields available within private, corporate and governmental organizations.



Fall Icebreaker

SFWS Student Services and student club leaders hosted a great "Fall Icebreaker" event on Aug. 29. More than 150 students, faculty and staff gathered at the event to welcome new students and enjoy food, fellowship and fun.



Fall Graduation

SFWS celebrated its fall 2018 graduates with a ceremony and reception on Dec. 15. Shown are Professor Tom Gallagher and doctoral graduate Marissa Jo Daniel.

Extension & Outreach

Forestry and Wildlife Professor Mark D. Smith elected as fellow of The Wildlife Society

Auburn University Wildlife Professor and Extension Specialist Mark D. Smith was recently appointed as a fellow by The Wildlife Society in recognition of his exceptional service to the wildlife profession.

Founded in 1937, the 10,000-member organization is internationally known as a leader in the fields of wildlife science, management and conservation.

Smith was one of only nine wildlife professionals selected as fellows in 2018, and is the only Auburn University faculty member ever chosen for the lifetime designation.

Smith is the W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and a forestry and wildlife specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. His specialty areas are wild pig damage

management, game and non-game population and habitat management.

"Mark Smith's appointment as a fellow of The Wildlife Society not only establishes him as a lifetime ambassador for wildlife outreach, but also shines a light on the significance of his work at Auburn," said School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Dean Janaki Alavalapati. "This great achievement is reflective of the transformative impact of Mark's teaching, research and Extension service toward the sustainability of wildlife and their habitats."

The Wildlife Society President John McDonald presented the award to Smith at the organization's annual conference in Cleveland, Ohio.



The Wildlife Society President John McDonald presented the award to Mark D. Smith at the organization's annual conference.



Michael Buckman hired as Kreher Preserve and Nature Center manager

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences recently hired Michael Buckman, former director of the Cecil B. Day Butterfly Center at Callaway Gardens, to serve as manager of the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, or KPNC.

Buckman will oversee communications, development and marketing for the KPNC, as well as provide overall administrative management to include strategic planning, capital projects and personnel.

His immediate focus will be achieving milestones outlined in the KPNC's strategic plan, which include improvements and updates to the center's volunteer program, website and membership program. He will also design and implement a long-term forest management plan.

To achieve long-term financial stability, Buckman will work with the KPNC's Advisory Board to grow the support base, endowment and community impact of the preserve, as well as design and actualize five- and 10-year master plans for the KPNC's future.

A lifelong naturalist and wildlife enthusiast, Buckman earned a Bachelor of Science

in Zoology at Auburn in 2005. He has spent his career connecting people with nature through education and leisure.

"There is nothing more rewarding than inspiring in others the same passion I have for the natural world," he said.

Auburn University and Atlanta Audubon Society team up to study West Nile virus risk

Presence linked to type of trees, variety of birds and forest size

by Charles Martin

Auburn University researchers and Atlanta Audubon Society volunteers studied birds and mosquitoes at 30 sites this summer in and around Atlanta — finding that the presence of West Nile virus is influenced by an area's type of trees, variety of birds and size of forest patches.

"If you increase the forested areas, especially with pine trees, more non-carrier birds will inhabit the area, which will lower the probability of a mosquito biting an infected bird," said Graeme Lockaby, associate dean for research in Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

The researchers found:

- Larger forested areas of 80 to 140 acres have less West Nile virus risk because more non-carrier birds are present.
- Corvids, birds that carry West Nile virus, are the most prevalent type of birds inhabiting small forest patches; thus, those areas have higher West Nile virus risk. A small forest patch is considered approximately 5 to 20 acres.
- The number of adult mosquitoes declines as the percentage of pine trees increases in forests.

The Culex species mosquito is the primary mosquito carrier of West Nile virus. When it bites an infected bird, the mosquito becomes infected and transmits the virus to its next bite victims, including humans.

"Birds that carry the virus are primarily of the Corvidae species such as crows, ravens, jays and nutcrackers," Lockaby said. "They prefer open areas with scattered tree cover, but birds that don't carry the disease are more likely to inhabit forested areas."

The research builds upon a 2016 Auburn study in Atlanta that showed West Nile virus is lower among forested areas with pine trees.

"Our goal is to develop a more accurate risk-prediction system to determine which neighborhoods are at higher risk," Lockaby said. "The information we gathered could help in the allotment of resources to battle West Nile virus, like pesticides for mosquitoes and other preventative actions."

Audubon volunteers documented the variety of bird species at the sites, not only visually but also by identifying birds by their sounds. They recorded the locations in a database using GIS and GPS coordinates.

"Atlanta Audubon is thrilled to be partnering with Dr. Lockaby and others from Auburn University. Atlanta is known as the City in a Forest so learning more about the role of our tree canopy on bird diversity,



ecosystem health and human health are of the utmost importance," said Adam Betuel, Atlanta Audubon Society.

Lockaby headed the study with graduate student Nicole Castaneda in conjunction with the Atlanta Audubon Society and U.S. Forest Service. Castaneda studied the bird species diversity data gathered by the Audubon volunteers as well as soil wetness, the age and species of trees and socioeconomic factors at the mosquito sampling sites.

"It is important we understand all factors

that influence the presence of corvid birds that infect mosquitoes, and to know what areas are ideal breeding grounds for the Culex mosquitoes, which transmit the disease to other species," Castaneda said.

The CDC recommends that people try to avoid mosquito bites by wearing long sleeves and using insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and permethane-diol, or PMD. People should also remove containers with standing water, where mosquitoes can breed.

Auburn professor co-authors article in Nature, reveals climate change is altering the functions of ecosystems within the Northern Hemisphere

An Auburn University professor says seasonal water deficits may limit the benefits for plant growth of earlier, warmer springs in the Northern Hemisphere, highlighting the impact of lagged effects of spring warmth on plant productivity during the subsequent summer and autumn, as reported in a paper in the Oct. 4 issue of the scientific journal Nature. The publication is widely regarded as the world's most highly cited interdisciplinary science journal.

Hanqin Tian, director of the International Center for Climate and Global Change Research in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, is co-author of "Widespread seasonal compensation effects of spring warming on northern plant productivity," with an international team of 16 scientists led by Wolfgang Buermann of University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

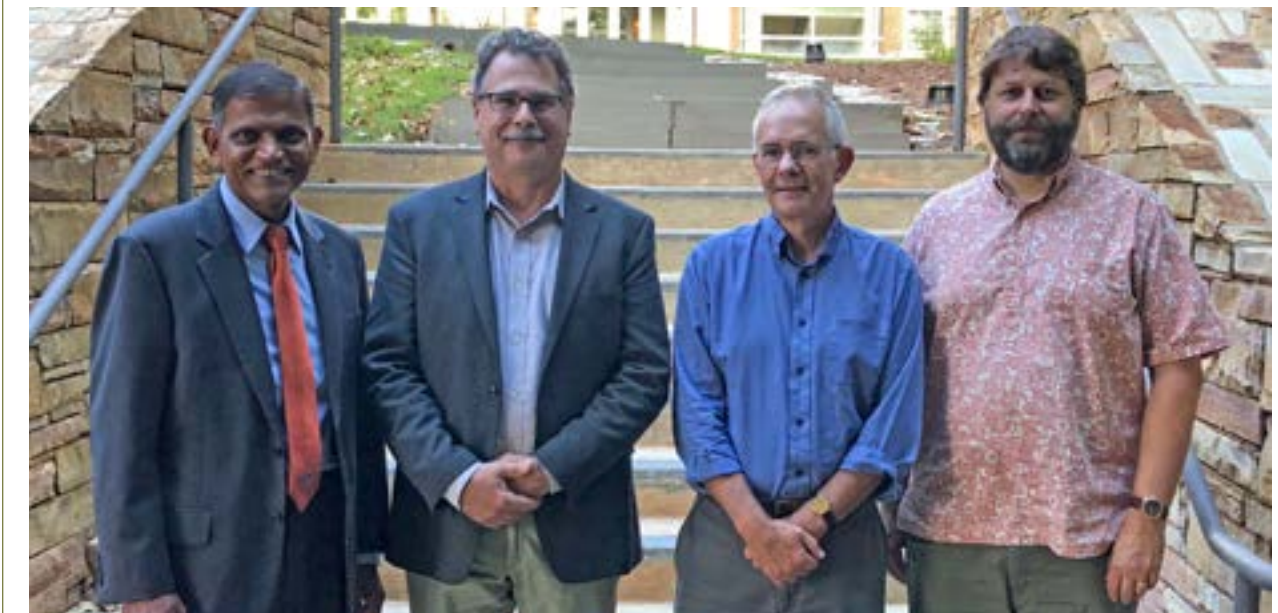
According to a statement released by Nature, the authors suggest that the accumulation of seasonal water deficits may result in regional adverse lagged effects in plant growth in response to warmer springs — a key factor to consider when modelling the effects of climate change on plant productivity.

"Climate warming since the early 1970s has caused shifts in plant phenological cycles: earlier spring onset and delayed autumn senescence," said Tian, who serves as the Solon and Martha Dixon Professor at Auburn. "This study provides evidence for widespread positive and negative lagged plant productivity responses across northern ecosystems associated with warmer springs."

The research team analyzed a range of data, including satellite measurements of vegetation greenness, and reported regional differences in beneficial and adverse lagged effects on plant growth across the Northern Hemisphere.

The study found that the areas in Eurasia above a latitude of 50 degrees north, such as the UK, Scandinavia and parts of Russia, displayed positive correlations between warm springs and plant growth, whereas areas in western North America, Siberia and temperate eastern Asia showed negative correlations.

Altitude and particularly seasonal precipitation seem to strongly influence these regional lagged growth patterns, a finding that contrasts with the idea that temperature and sunlight are key limiters of northern plant growth, said the researchers.



Weaver Lecturer Richard Pouyat, former White House science and technology advisor and now-past president of the Ecological Society of America, second from the left, is pictured, from left, with Dean Janaki Alavalapati, Associate Dean of Research Graeme Lockaby and faculty host and Professor Christopher Lepczyk.

SFWS hosts former White House science and technology advisor for the fall Weaver Lecture Series and Graduate Student Symposium

Richard Pouyat, former White House science and technology advisor and now-past president of the Ecological Society of America, presented "Integrating Science and Policy for Environmental Decision Making" at the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences on Oct. 17.

A national program leader for the USDA Forest Service's Air and Soil Quality Research program in Washington, D.C., Pouyat discussed the critically important roles scientific information

and the scientific community can play in the policy development process, including issue identification, monitoring and evaluation.

As part of the Weaver Lecture Series, SFWS graduate students participated in the Graduate Research Symposium poster presentation competition. Judging involved overall presentation of the material for a general audience, research methodology, accuracy of conclusions relative to research results and professionalism in the appearance of the poster and behavior of the presenter. Professors Latif Kalin, Arthur Chappelka and Robert Gitzen served as faculty judges.

Of the 27 students who participated, results were as follows:

First place — **Elarry Tucker-Williams** (Maj. Prof. Christopher Lepczyk)

Second place — **Ben McKenzie** (Maj. Prof. Sarah Zohdy)

Third place (tie) — **Monet Gomes** (Maj. Prof. Steve Ditchkoff) and **Marina Hornus** (Maj. Prof. Brian Via).

In addition, **James Cash** (Maj. Prof. Chris Anderson), **Nicole Castaneda** (Maj. Prof. Graeme Lockaby) and **Sarah Wilson** (Maj. Prof. Todd Steury) received honorable mentions.

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences' Weaver Lecture Series was established in 1996 through an endowment provided by Earl H. and Sandra H. Weaver. The objective of the series is to bring individuals with expertise in various aspects of forestry and wildlife sciences to Auburn to enhance the school's academic programs through public lectures and interaction with faculty and students.

SFWS celebrates success with donors of Because This Is Auburn — A Campaign for Auburn University

Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences donors recently joined with administration, faculty and staff to celebrate the successful close of Because This is Auburn — A Campaign for Auburn University.

The reception and dinner at Auburn's historic Pebble Hill honored donors who contributed toward the school's \$19.8 million goal and the university's \$1 billion goal.

The school raised \$25,449,813, representing 128 percent of its total campaign goal. SFWS was the first campus constituency to reach its goal, doing so in July 2017, six months ahead of schedule.

Gifts to the campaign supported the creation of five new degrees, 30 new scholarships and five new professorships. Philanthropic support also funded the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation Learning Center, the naming of the EBSCO Atrium and the McCrary Institute and the creation of the Auburn Oaks at Samford Park, among other initiatives supporting faculty and student development.

Dean Janaki Alavalapati acted as master of ceremony, providing remarks and acknowledgement of Campaign Leadership Team Chair Marc Walley and Vice President for Development and President of the Auburn University Foundation Jane DiFolco Parker, before inviting Auburn President Steven Leath to the podium.

Leath expressed his gratitude to the donors, emphasizing the significant impact their investment would have within the school and world for generations to come.

"It is here that our future foresters, wildlife biologists and natural resource managers will rise to take their place in this world, changing our communities, the state, the nation and the world," stated Leath. "Through your support, Auburn will advance its land-grant mission with quality education, competitive research and committed outreach to promote societal well-being in Alabama and beyond."

As one of the many accomplished students who have benefitted from the generosity of donors, special guest and natural resources management student Mary Jo Berkstresser shared the outcomes of her experience as recipient of seven scholarships,



Campaign Chairman Marc Walley, right, is pictured with his parents Jane and Bill Walley, and his wife Penny Walley.



Attendees of the celebration included, from left, Joanna and Ken Nichols, Elmo Ziebach, Tom and Susan Fell and Nancy Ziebach.



Doris Tyler and Phillip Jones, Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation president and board member, visited with Nova at the party.



President Steven Leath addressed donors and friends during the event.

including the Natural Resources Annual Scholarship, Dan Moultrie Scholarship and the Mamie Hardy Scholarship.

"In addition to academic support, scholarships have enabled me to participate in a life-changing study abroad trip to New Zealand and Fiji," she stated.

"It gave me an opportunity to gain practical, real-world experience in sustainability, globalization, economic development, climate change and tourism, which will serve me well as I enter the Peace Corps after graduation and then in my future career as an environmental educator."

Walley acknowledged fellow committee members, former SFWS Deans Richard Brinker and Emmett Thompson, as well as Joe Roberson, Ronnie Williams, Richard Hall, Jim King, Jeff Bentley, Amanda Littrell, Don Heath and Art Dyas.

He also recognized the leadership and vision from former Dean and Professor James Shepard and the dedication and hard work of the school's development team, Director Heather Crozier

and Coordinator Sharon Tatum, in making that vision a reality.

Walley reflected on the successes of multiple Tiger Giving Day projects held during the campaign, as well as landmark events, such as the 40th anniversary of the first African-American graduate and the establishment of the African-American Alumni Endowed Scholarship, created in honor of the milestone.

"This success rested on the shoulders of 6,559 donors to the school during the campaign, including the 1,726 new donors who gave to the school for the first time," he stated. "All of their support and guidance helped the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences go beyond its goal and achieve success."

To commemorate the occasion, donors signed a section of timber etched with the campaign total and split by the new portable sawmill, the product of a successful Tiger Giving Day.

Visitors to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will find the timber proudly displayed in the halls, commemorating the tremendous outpouring of donor support to the historical campaign.

In The Spotlight

Graduate Student SPOTLIGHT



EVAN WHEELER
Wildlife Sciences

Evan Wheeler has always known Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences is a cut above the rest when it comes to graduate education.

"I chose Auburn for my undergraduate degree because Auburn is without question the top university in Alabama for forestry and wildlife sciences," said Wheeler, a master's student in wildlife sciences. "I chose to return for graduate school because I felt that the project that I am working on was a good fit for my ecological interests and would be valuable in developing skills that will help make me a successful and impactful biologist."

As a graduate research assistant under SFWS Assistant Professor William Gulsby, Wheeler focuses on identifying how planting density and management approaches for plantation longleaf pine stands impact timber stand structure and habitat quality for focal wildlife species.

"From a timber stand perspective, we are assessing the effects of planting density on longleaf pine stocking rates, height and basal area over time," he said. "From a wildlife habitat perspective, we aim to quantify how longleaf pine planting density and prescribed fire regime influence the composition and structure of understory

plant communities, which are primary predictors of wildlife habitat quality."

He also said that specific objectives include determining the effects of longleaf planting density and management approaches on habitat suitability for Northern Bobwhites, brood-rearing habitat for Eastern Wild Turkeys and forage production for white-tailed deer.

Wheeler's main roles within the research project are to conduct all of the field data collections and work with research committee members on data analysis and preparation of scientific manuscripts.

"My favorite part of my research has been traveling to new areas to meet with a variety of stakeholders, ranging from private landowners to government agency officials, and discussing land management techniques and objectives," he said. "Observing how site conditions and management regimes have shaped longleaf stands has been integral to

advancing my understanding of the complexities of longleaf pine silviculture and wildlife habitat management."

Wheeler credits the SFWS faculty for providing him with the knowledge he needs to be a successful researcher. "The faculty and staff are exceptional at providing graduate students with technical expertise and motivational support to help guide them through the complexities of a graduate-level research project, while encouraging independent work and thought," he said.

Wheeler recently accepted a position with the Georgia Wildlife Federation as a private lands biologist specializing in longleaf pine ecosystem restoration and wildlife habitat enhancement.

Of the position, he said he is confident that the skills he is developing, along with the professional networking in the department and beyond, will be important to his post-graduate career development.

"My favorite part of my research has been traveling to new areas to meet with a variety of stakeholders, ranging from private landowners to government agency officials, and discussing land management techniques and objectives".

-Evan Wheeler