

## **MS Research Assistantship: Cormorant depredation of catfish at aquaculture farms in eastern Mississippi and western Alabama**

**Agency:** College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, Auburn University

**Location:** Auburn University, Alabama

**Job Description:** A MS graduate research assistantship is available in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment at Auburn University to examine the distribution, abundance, and foraging patterns of cormorants at catfish aquaculture farms in the Black Belt Prairie region of eastern Mississippi and western Alabama. Working as part of a team with field staff from the USDA National Wildlife Research Center-Mississippi Field Station, the graduate student will conduct aerial surveys from fixed wing aircraft of cormorants from October-April each year coinciding with their peak movement through the area. Upon completion of each survey, cormorants will be collected on a subset of aquaculture pond clusters for food habit analyses. This project will require significant overnight travel to conduct field research and work under adverse (cold, night, rainy etc.) weather conditions. This project is a cooperative effort among the Auburn University's College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment and School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the USDA National Wildlife Research Center-Mississippi Field Station, and Virginia Tech. This project is fully funded by the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center (SRAC).

**Qualifications:** B.S. in wildlife, fisheries, biology, or closely related natural resource field. A strong work ethic, good verbal and written communication skills, experience with analytical software such as R and ability to work independently and as a productive member of a research team is required. Familiarity with analytical methods such as occupancy analyses is preferred but not required. The student must be comfortable with the use of firearms (training provided) and conducting bird necropsies. Applicants must have a minimum of 3.0 GPA and competitive GRE scores (e.g., >150 on Verbal and Quantitative). Expected start date is August 1, 2023.

**Application:** Submit by *May 1, 2023 in a single pdf document* a 1) cover letter stating your interests and career goals, 2) transcript(s) and GRE scores (unofficial copies fine), 3) resume/CV, and 4) full contact information for 3 references to:

Dr. Mark D. Smith  
W. Kelly Mosely Environmental Professor/Extension Specialist  
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**Starting Date:** August 1, 2023

**Salary:** \$18,000/year and tuition waiver.