The Department of Biology at Texas State University offers a master’s degree program in population and conservation biology that introduces students to the most contemporary issues in the field. Graduates of the high-quality, rigorous program have the knowledge and skills to enter a highly competitive and growing job market in natural resource management and ecology.

Population biology is the study of ecological and evolutionary processes that create and maintain biological diversity. Investigative research in population biology spans the biological sciences from molecules to ecosystems and has input from the physical, chemical and earth sciences. Conservation biology applies population biology principles and uses them to manage and conserve endangered or threatened species, biodiversity and natural resources. Population and conservation biology lies at the interface between basic and applied sciences.

Graduates with master’s degrees in population and conservation biology are prepared for advanced studies in ecology, behavioral ecology, conservation biology, population and evolutionary biology, systematics and biodiversity studies.

“This program gives me the freedom to shape the direction of study and research I want to pursue. Students are expected to learn from one another and participate in shaping classes. Discussion and active participation are the norm. All of this provides an excellent environment for learning and research. The faculty help students mold potential research ideas into projects that are original and realistic. Their goal is to allow students to develop skills they are interested in taking to the next stages of their careers.”

— Michelle Downey  POPULATION AND CONSERVATION BIOLOGY STUDENT
Course Work
The master of science with a major in population and conservation biology is a research degree that requires a minimum of two years of full-time coursework and research leading to a thesis. The program combines principles of population biology with strong training in measurement and analysis of biological systems, augmented with the student’s choice of study in particular specialties.

Incoming students must complete a two-semester core-course sequence in principles of population biology. Students also complete a two-semester series in statistics and experimental design in the first year. The course of study in the second year of the program includes a two-semester seminar sequence in population biology as well as elective courses.

The seminar courses pair small groups of students with faculty who conduct research in population and/or conservation biology. These seminars explore current topics in the field, including theoretical advances, contemporary research and methodological issues. Elective courses in the second year allow students to specialize in particular subdisciplines of the field, including ecology of populations, population management, conservation biology, or evolutionary ecology and genetics.

Faculty
Population and conservation biology faculty are nationally known researchers in the field. They are widely published, have received extensive grant funding, serve as officers and board members in professional societies, and are award-winning teachers.

Admission Policy
Applicants to any of the master’s programs in biology should have a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited university in biology or a related discipline with a comparable program of coursework.

The Department of Biology requires students to have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on the last 60 undergraduate semester hours taken before receipt of the bachelor’s degree. Students with GPAs below 3.0 may petition the department for conditional admission.

Each applicant must submit the following to the Graduate College:
- the online Graduate College application through ApplyTexas
- application fee
- one official transcript from each college or university attended, including community colleges
- official Graduate Record Exam (GRE). See www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/pcbio.html for details about GRE requirement.
- a current curriculum vitae
- a statement of purpose that describes the applicant’s professional aspirations and rationale for pursuing graduate study in biology
- three letters of recommendation.
- an Intent-to-Mentor letter from a Texas State Biology Department faculty member. In this letter, the faculty member must agree to serve as the student’s initial thesis advisor.

Financial Assistance
Assistantships and scholarships are available to qualified applicants on a competitive basis. The Department of Biology offers a limited number of graduate instructional assistantships to full-time students enrolled in the master’s program. These assistantships are renewable based on an annual review of each student’s progress and performance. Faculty members may also have funds available to support students as research assistants. Support is normally limited to two years.

Visit www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/apply for access to an online application, where to submit application documents and additional details. Applications are due June 15 for the fall semester, October 15 for the spring semester and April 15 for the summer semesters. The fall priority deadline is February 1.

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