

MSc Assistantship in the Ecology and Restoration of Savanna Ecosystems

Description: Our research group (goheenresearchgroup.com) at Iowa State University seeks a creative, enthusiastic, and dedicated MSc student to develop thesis research on the ecology and restoration of African savannas. The successful applicant would join a team of collaborators to quantify the restoration of an ant-plant mutualism and interactions with mammalian browsers following removal of the invasive big-headed ant. The MSc student will be supported through a research assistantship funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation and (potentially) 1-2 semesters of teaching assistantship at the Iowa State University. The work will be conducted with a collaborative team of U.S. and Kenyan citizens, including Drs. Todd Palmer (<http://thepalmerlab.com/>) and Patrick Milligan (<https://www.savannaecology.com/>). We envision a field-based MSc with significant analytical components, involving some combination of (1) occupancy modeling and camera trapping; (2) abundance estimation via line transect methods; and (3) demographic analyses. The student will spend significant (4-6 months annually) in Laikipia, Kenya. The student will also contribute to project deliverables (annual progress reports, project summaries, manuscript drafts) and will co-lead project management and logistics. Discoveries and research findings from this work can be found through papers by Hays et al 2022 *Ecology*, Kamaru et al 2024 *Science*, and Pietrek et al 2021 *Oecologia*.

Qualifications: The successful applicant will have earned a BSc in ecology, environmental science, wildlife biology, or a comparable field prior to commencing MSc studies. In addition, the successful applicant should have excellent written and oral communication skills, excellent interpersonal skills, experience working independently in remote locales, experience working with a diversity of stakeholders, experience operating and maintaining 4WD vehicles, and experience with quantitative tools and/or GIS (or a strong desire to learn).

Application Materials: please email the following in a merged pdf with the subject header "MSc position": (1) a cover letter stating your interest in the position and your career goals; (2) a vita or resume; (3) copies of your transcripts; and (4) contact information for three references. GRE scores are optional. Please name your file "LASTNAME_MSC_POSITION". We will contact applicants within one week of the deadline regarding the status of their applications.

Application deadline: 15 January 2025

Start date: May or August 2025

To apply or for further information, please email Jake Goheen (jgoheen@iastate.edu).