

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS | 2026

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

2026 OVERVIEW

The mission of the Boone and Crockett Club University Programs is to develop a diverse community of high-impact wildlife conservation leaders.



7	31	73	73	~$4.56M
UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS	FALL 2026 FELLOWS	PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS	INVITED PRESENTATIONS	REPORTED RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

CURRENT PROGRAMS

Clemson University
Michigan State University
Oregon State University
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
University of Montana
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

SCIENCE THAT INFORMS MANAGEMENT

POPULATION SCIENCE IN PRACTICE

Michigan State University supplied Missouri with black bear abundance estimates by management zone to support harvest quotas. Its research also examined associations between sustainable wildlife harvest, conservation status, and land-use change.

FROM RESEARCH TO HARVEST DECISIONS

University of Montana projects have informed elk management decisions in North Dakota and helped the Blackfeet Tribe determine sustainable moose tag allocations. Other work addresses pronghorn migration, wildlife responses to energy development, and improved monitoring of Harlequin ducks.

LARGE MAMMALS AND CHANGING LANDSCAPES

Texas A&M research examines wildfire and forest restoration effects on mule deer, elk, black bears, and mountain lions in northern New Mexico. Additional projects study elk in landscapes with Mexican wolves and the nutritional costs of fencing for pronghorn.

WILDLIFE HEALTH AND CONNECTIVITY

At Texas A&M-Kingsville, researchers analyzed captive-deer movements to understand chronic wasting disease risks. Work on mountain lion connectivity across Mexico and Texas and ocelot recovery links applied research with policy and private-land conservation.



Landon Magee is a member of the Blackfeet Nation (Amskapi Piikuni) who grew up at the heart of the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, Montana. At the University of Montana, he is a Ph.D. student studying moose abundance and calf survival on the Blackfeet Reservation.

IN THE FIELD

Daniel Morina (right) is a Ph.D. candidate and Boone and Crockett Fellow in wildlife biology at the University of Montana, who is working with North Dakota Game and Fish to study elk movement, survival, resource selection, and population demographics in the Badlands of North Dakota. Results from this work directly informed management decisions by North Dakota Game and Fish to increase the number of hunting tags, which has slowed population growth and stabilized elk numbers in areas experiencing the greatest conflict with private landowners.



CONSERVATION ACROSS WORKING LANDSCAPES

PRIVATE LANDS, PUBLIC BENEFITS

Clemson's Working Lands Conservation program brings together policy, economics, agricultural production, and conservation. Research uses fenced exclosures to examine how coyotes and wild pigs affect white-tailed deer, evaluates elk restoration suitability in South Carolina and Georgia, and helps landowners support bobwhite quail.

FOREST POLICY AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Oregon State connects forest management, wildlife habitat, and rural communities. Its work examines policies affecting landowner decisions, forest-sector economies, and wildfire risk. The program is recruiting a Ph.D. student to study the Endangered Species Act, managed forests, and wildlife habitat.

WISCONSIN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point fellows Hayden Walkush and Jena Garceau study potential effects of baiting on black bear foraging. Garceau and an undergraduate mentee also test individual identification from hunter-provided camera videos as a possible population-monitoring tool.

WETLANDS AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

At UW-Stevens Point, faculty and fellows work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on marsh bird conservation along the Upper Mississippi River. Fellow Madelyn Slaven studies fall migration through management areas in that system.



This photo of a collared fawn was taken as part of Clemson University's deer monitoring program. Researchers there are conducting cutting-edge wildlife research on key issues related to white-tailed deer management, particularly as it relates to their interaction with coyotes and invasive wild pigs.





Left: John Nettles is a Ph.D. student in wildlife biology at Clemson University. Here, he sets up bear hair snares to help with population counts. Right: Dillon Sapena is a master's student and Boone and Crockett Fellow at the University of Montana. Beginning in 2022, he worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife as a technician to collect statewide distribution data on white-tailed ptarmigan.

PREPARING LEADERS FOR CONSERVATION

SCIENCE MEETS POLICY

Across the network, students connect research with law, governance, communication, and land management. Michigan State's science-policy coursework uses issues before the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to practice testimony and evaluate regulatory decisions. UW-Stevens Point integrates policy, communication, forestry, and soils into its wildlife curriculum.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Texas A&M's 3+2 pathway combines wildlife science with a master's in public service and administration, a policy internship, and a capstone. Texas A&M-Kingsville and the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute host multi-day policy workshops. Montana's Wild Sustenance course combines hunting skills with ethics, policy, and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

2026 FELLOW OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

2026 AWARD WINNER: HAYDEN WALKUSH

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point | M.S. expected 2026

In 2019 the Club established the Boone and Crockett Fellow Outstanding Achievement Award to recognize a graduate student whose research advances the Club's mission and informs natural resource management and policy decisions in North America. The award highlights and strengthens the connection between students and the Boone and Crockett Club that supports them.

From an undergraduate fellowship studying wild turkeys to graduate research on black bears, Hayden Walkush connects curiosity in the field with practical conservation questions. His 2026 Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes research that advances the Club's mission and informs wildlife management.

Working with Dr. Cady Sartini, Walkush studies how black bears respond to working forests, elk restoration areas, bait sites, and hunting activity in northern Wisconsin. GPS collars, activity sensors, and trail cameras help reveal where bears feed, rest, and travel. This approach allows him to connect movement patterns seen on a map with the behaviors behind them, revealing how bears structure their daily routines and decide how and why they use surrounding habitats. So far, his work suggests that sows are aware of the resources within their home ranges, make deliberate movements to specific locations for behaviors such as bedding and foraging, and frequently use the plentiful hunter bait sites. Final analyses are still underway, and the upcoming field season will allow him to evaluate whether individual bears show consistent behaviors across years or adjust their strategies as conditions change.

He also teaches wildlife labs and involves undergraduates in fieldwork, extending the same early opportunities that helped launch his own career.

"What matters most is staying connected to the science and to the wild places and animals I care about." — Hayden Walkush







THE DEMMER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

18 YEARS OF NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

438
PARTICIPANTS SINCE 2009

90+
D.C. CAREER STARTS

70+
STILL IN D.C.

Since May 2009, the Demmer Scholars Program has brought undergraduate and graduate students in natural resources, environmental studies, and related fields to Washington, D.C. Students come primarily from Michigan State University, Mississippi State University, and the University of Montana. Another 30 will be selected for the summer 2027 cohort following a record number of applications.

In 2026, co-directors Dr. Emily Silver at Michigan State University and Ambassador Doug McKalip (Ret.) worked with Mark Rey to lead the summer cohort. Silver and McKalip will lead summer 2027, while Rey and Silver plan an additional fall cohort of 30 students, with potential expansion to more University Programs and graduate students.



Demmer Scholars



Coral White
University of Montana

“I am incredibly grateful that I had the opportunity to work with such competent, passionate, and kind people. This internship taught me so much, but it also made me question so much, in a good way. I came to Washington thinking I had my future figured out, and I am leaving with even more possibilities than I had before.”



Elida Hughes-Margolis
Michigan State University

“One of the most beloved parts of my internship was shadowing advocacy meetings on Capitol Hill. These meetings helped me focus my future career goals, the first being to work on the Hill for a Congressperson after college. I love the idea of being a decision maker and helping serve the people of this country through policymaking and other attributes of each position on the Hill.”



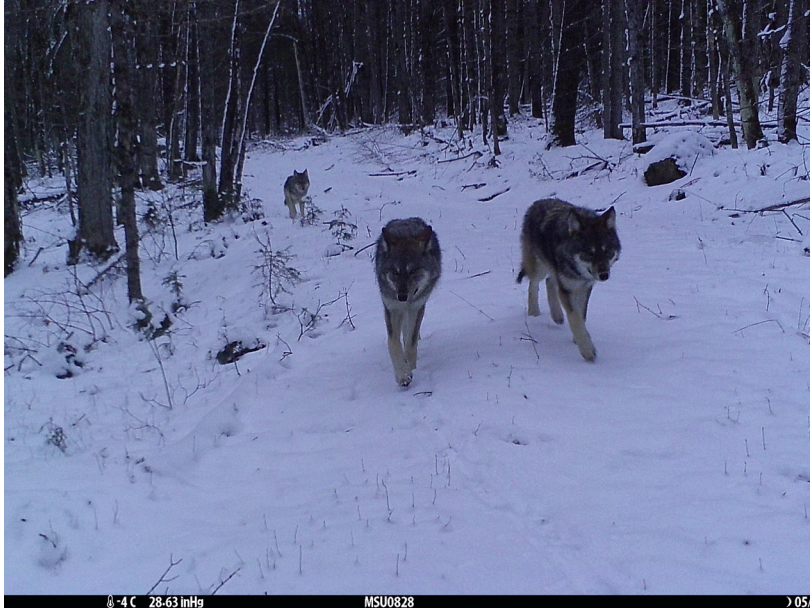
Charles Treadwell
Mississippi State University

“Over my three months in D.C., I have grown both independently and intellectually, appreciating the lessons that I have learned up here and excited to bring this experience and its ideals with me back home and to school. With my background almost entirely consisting of research and field work, this policy internship was completely out of my realm of expertise, but it was that unknown that fueled my excitement.”

2026 UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FELLOWS

UNIVERSITY	FELLOW NAME	DEGREE	PROJECT TITLE
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY	Jenna Krugler	Ph.D.	Management of North America's Most Important Furbearer: The Beaver
	Percival Marshall	Ph.D.	Effects of Habitat Restoration Efforts on Early Successional Bird Species Populations and Future Predictions
	John Nettles	Ph.D.	Estimating Black Bear Abundance in the Upstate of South Carolina
	George Goto	Ph.D.	Invasive Mammal Effects on White-Tailed Deer
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY	Jacob Hill	Postdoc	Effects of Sport Hunting and Subsistence Use on Global Mammal Conservation
	Matt Nelson	Ph.D.	Estimating Wolf and White-Tailed Deer Abundance Using Remote Cameras
	Merjin van den Bosch	Postdoc	Gray Wolf Harvests and Management in the U.S.
	Sarah Schooler	Postdoc	Effects of Baiting on Black Bear Demographics
	Dayaram Pandey	M.S.	Patterns and Trends of Wildlife Harvests across Protected Areas of Nepal
	Grace DeRidder	M.S.	Trends in Recreational Hunters and Wildlife Harvest in the U.S.
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY KINGSVILLE	Chloe Nouzille	Ph.D.	Mountain Lion Movements and Ecology in South Texas
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA	Daniel Bird	Ph.D.	Elk Migration on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation
	Eric Boyd	M.S.	Mountain Goat Response to Human Activities in Glacier National Park
	Landon Magee	Ph.D.	Moose Abundance and Calf Survival on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation
	Daniel Morina	Ph.D.	Elk Response to Oil Development in North Dakota
	Wesley Sarmento	Ph.D.	Bison Reintroduction on the Blackfeet Reservation
	Andi Stewart	Ph.D.	Elk Dynamics in Relation to Carnivore Management in Montana
	Sean Sultaire	Postdoc	Mule Deer Dynamics in Nevada
	Dillon Sapena	M.S.	White-Tailed Ptarmigan Demographics in Colorado
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN STEVENS POINT	Dakota Longsine	B.S.	Effect of Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) Removal on Flea Movements in South Dakota
	Madelyn Slaven	B.S.	The Use of Autonomous Recording Devices to Detect Secretive Marsh Birds
	Jena Garceau	M.S.	Testing Optimal Foraging of Black Bears at Bait Sites
	Hayden Walkush	M.S.	Movement Ecology of Black Bears
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	Katelyn Steen	Ph.D.	Bighorn Sheep Demography, Nutrition, and Spatial Ecology
	Jaidyn Sonnenberg	M.S.	Habitat Selection of Barbary Sheep and Oryx in Southern New Mexico
	Lucas Begeman	M.S.	Chihuahuan Desert Pronghorn: Resource Use, Human Impacts, and Parturition Timing
	Matthew Keeling	M.S.	Black Bear Responses to Wildfire and Forest Restoration in the Jemez Mountains
	Julia Runkle	M.S.	Human Barriers, Habitat, and Nutrition of Chihuahuan Desert Pronghorn
	Maxwell Marwin	M.S.	Cougar Predation, Resource Selection, and Black Bear Interactions
	Sharon Valverde	M.S.	Elk Resource Selection and Forage Following Restoration in North-Central New Mexico
	Mark Peyton	Ph.D.	Influence of Landscape-Scale Habitat Disturbances on Mountain Lion Habitat Selection, Foraging Ecology, and Interspecific Competition
Oregon State University	Currently Recruiting	Ph.D.	TBD 2027









Conservation Through Connections

Science. Policy. Field experience. A shared commitment to the next generation of wildlife conservation leaders.

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB

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Cover: Pronghorn courtesy of Texas A&M. Additional field photos supplied by Hayden Walkush. Additional trail-camera photographs supplied by Michigan State and Clemson.