

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS

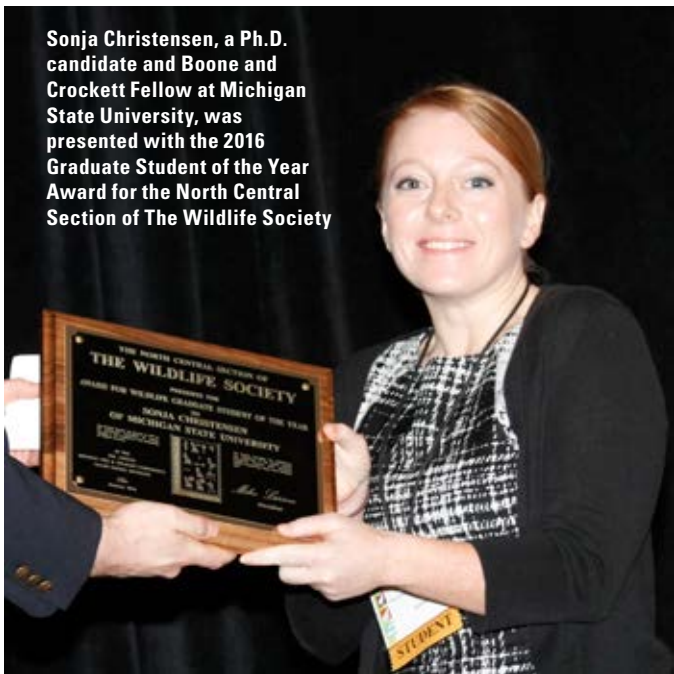
FROM: Michigan State University



The Boone and Crockett Club's University Program captured a major feather for its cap at the recent Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference. Sonja Christensen, a Ph.D. candidate and Boone and Crockett Fellow at Michigan State University, was presented with the 2016 Graduate Student of the Year Award for the North Central Section of The Wildlife Society.

She was recognized for her passion for wildlife disease ecology and her strong leadership abilities. Sonja is Coordinator for the National Fish and Wildlife Health Steering Committee, as well as a member of the executive board for both the Michigan chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Wildlife Disease Association chapter, which she helped to form. Her research seeks to understand the recovery of whitetail deer populations following heavy mortality from epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) and the drivers of this disease in emerging regions. In 2012, EHD caused more than 15,000 deaths in deer in localized areas of Michigan during a few weeks in late summer. Originally from Bemidji, Minnesota, Sonja graduated with a biology degree from Minnesota State University. While completing her undergraduate degree, she

worked for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources farmland wildlife population research group, focusing on whitetail deer and furbearer species. Sonja earned her M.S. at Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, where she evaluated interactions of whitetail deer and exotic sika deer on Assateague Island National Seashore, in Maryland. In 2008, Sonja was appointed the deer/moose biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. She began her Ph.D. research in the Boone and Crockett program at Michigan State University in 2013. ■



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B&C UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS LOCATIONS

The Boone and Crockett Club University Program is designed to provide science-based knowledge from seasoned wildlife professionals

and educators to college graduates in the wildlife field to better prepare the graduates for the responsible and wise management of wildlife in the future.

