

Agency  
University of Washington

Location  
Seattle, WA

Job Category  
Graduate Assistantships (MS)

Website  
<http://www.predatorecology.com/>

Salary  
Full support (stipend, tuition, and medical benefits) provided for 2 years.

Start Date  
03/28/2022

Last Date to Apply  
**1-December 2021**

### Description

Pacific martens (*Martes caurina*) were once common throughout the forests of the Olympic Peninsula, Washington, from sea level to the subalpine. They now appear to be significantly depleted and potentially headed to regional extirpation. From 2013-2019, the National Park Service (NPS), United States Geological Survey (USGS), United States Forest Service (USFS) and partners conducted camera-trap surveys throughout the Olympic Peninsula, looking for martens and the closely related fishers (*Pekania pennanti*). The few marten detections obtained were limited to high elevation areas within Olympic National Park; marten appear to be absent from the low- and mid-elevation forests they once occupied, and completely isolated from the closest extant population in the Cascade Range. This study will build upon the prior assessment by 1) gathering more complete data on marten resource selection, population distribution, and connectivity on the Olympic Peninsula, and 2) assessing population status and isolation through evaluation of marten genetics. Accordingly, the study will inform managers as to whether intervention (augmentation) may be needed to secure the population.

We seek a highly motivated MS student, who will have the opportunity to 1) deploy and retrieve motion-triggered cameras with automated scent dispensers to detect marten activity, 2) collect marten hair for later genetic analysis in areas where marten activity is detected, 3) undertake statistical analyses of marten distribution and resource selection, and 4) collaborate with a diverse group of project partners. Because cameras will capture incidental photos of other wildlife, this project will also potentially allow for multi-species analyses.

This project is a collaborative effort involving the University of Washington (UW) as well as the NPS, USFS, and Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ). Thus, the student will work closely with team members from all of these institutions while completing a MS in Environmental and Forest Sciences (<http://www.sefs.washington.edu/>) at the University of Washington under the co-supervision of Professor Aaron Wirsing (UW) and Dr. Robert Long (WPZ). The additional team members include Dr. Patti Happe (NPS), Paula Mackay (WPZ), and Betsy Howell (USFS).

The fieldwork on the Olympic Peninsula will involve travel in trucks, extensive hiking with a heavy pack, and low-height tree climbing (i.e., climbing 10-12' to install cameras and dispensers). Field work will occur in designated wilderness in Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest. The Masters student will also be responsible for training and supervising field technicians and volunteers.

### Qualifications

Applicants must have a B.S. degree in wildlife science or a closely related discipline; the ability to hike up to 15 miles/day in mountainous habitats and highly variable weather conditions; camp multiple consecutive nights in remote campsites far from vehicle access; carry up to 50 pounds via backpack; climb/descend steep slopes over rocky terrain; navigate thick vegetation; operate occasionally during non-daylight hours (e.g., if a field day goes long); strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to collaborate with project partners and to work with diverse human populations and a variety of stakeholders; and the ability to work both independently and as part of a team in a remote, wild setting. Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate 1) organizational and time-management proficiency, 2) experience working with and analyzing large data sets, and 3) excellent written and verbal communication skills. Finally, a current valid (U.S.) motor vehicle license is required for this position, as is a driving record that will merit approval to operate university vehicles.

Full financial support (stipend, tuition, and benefits) will be provided for 2 years. The student will be expected—with collaborator assistance—to secure teaching assistantships or other funding to cover the remainder of their tenure if it extends beyond this time frame.

To apply for this position, please send a 1-page cover letter outlining your experience undertaking wildlife research and performing statistical analyses, as well as your long-term career goals. Please also include a CV (maximum of 2 pages) that includes 1) GPA; 2) any publications, awards, and grants; 3) work and research experience; and 4) current contacts for 3 professional or academic references.

Please submit your application as a single PDF document named with the following format: Lastname\_Firstname.

Applications should be emailed to: Professor Aaron Wirsing at [wirsinga@uw.edu](mailto:wirsinga@uw.edu)

Please note that the student must be willing to start the project by 03/28/22 (the beginning of the spring 2022 quarter at UW) and be prepared to start work in the field in June 2022. Only applicants who have been shortlisted will be contacted. The shortlisted candidates will be

required to conduct Zoom interviews.

Review of applications will commence on **1-December-2021**.

Contact Person  
Aaron Wirsing

Contact Phone  
(206) 543-1585

Contact email  
[wirsinga@uw.edu](mailto:wirsinga@uw.edu)