

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE SCIENCE, MASTER OF SCIENCE

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The Master of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Science is offered for those who wish to pursue careers in various areas of fisheries or wildlife science, and for those who wish to obtain a graduate degree before continuing their education at the doctoral level. The Department of Biological Sciences offers the M.S. degree with a thesis or non-thesis option selecting a concentration of study in either fisheries or wildlife science.

Academic Advisors

Students following the non-thesis option will have an advisor assigned by the program director following admission into the program. Students wishing to pursue the thesis option must be accepted by an academic advisor prior to acceptance into the program. The faculty member that agrees to be the student's academic advisor will submit a letter to the program director acknowledging willingness to serve as a student's major advisor and this letter constitutes formal acceptance into the thesis-option. Thesis-option students, under guidance of their academic advisor, will select two (2) or more qualified personnel that have or can attain graduate faculty status (at least one from the Fisheries and Wildlife Program) to serve as members of the student's advisory committee.

The advisor should assist the student in developing a course plan (submitted on a candidacy form to the Graduate College). Thesis-option candidates will submit a thesis topic approved by the academic advisor, advisory committee and program director along with the course plan. The thesis topic will generally be submitted within the first semester, but no later than the end of the second semester. The advisory committee will determine acceptability of the thesis and oral defense. While the advisory committee helps identify critical deficiencies in undergraduate preparation and adds courses to the program of study to compensate for these deficiencies, it remains the student's responsibility to understand and to satisfy all degree requirements.

Degree Works

Degree Works is a software tool utilized by Arkansas Tech University designed to detail academic progression. It allows both students and advisors to monitor course progress towards degree completion and clearly indicates which course requirements have been met as well as how courses transfer into a program. Transfer courses must be approved through the use of a substitution/waiver form available via the Registrar for progress to display correctly within Degree Works.

Degree Works will display course progression based on the current program of study, but a "what-if" scenario can be generated for any program to see how progression looks with the courses currently completed and in progress. Note that if you have applied to and been admitted to a graduate program while still finishing your undergraduate program, Degree Works will show your new program of study in the

graduate program and you would have to generate a "what-if" query to see your undergraduate degree progress.

Application for Graduation

In addition to satisfying all degree requirements, a candidate for a degree must file an Application for Graduation (https://www.atu.edu/registrar/forms/grad_app-masters.pdf) online or at the Graduate College. Students must apply for graduation upon completion of fifteen (15) graduate credit hours.

Special Conditions of Graduate Credit Graduate Credit Taken Prior to Admission to Arkansas Tech University

A maximum of six (6) semester hours of graduate credit with a grade point average of "B" or better may be transferred from an accredited graduate school if deemed appropriate to the graduate program by the program director and the Graduate College Dean. Students must send a written request to the program director to petition an acceptance of the transfer credit prior to requesting admission to candidacy to the graduate program. Graduate credit earned six (6) years prior to the completion date of all degree requirements may not be applied toward the degree without the approval of the program director and the Graduate College Dean. Credits earned by correspondence courses or for remedial purposes will not apply toward the graduate degree. No undergraduate course may be repeated for graduate credit.

Graduate Credit Taken After Admission to Arkansas Tech University

If after admission to graduate study, a student wishes to take a course at another institution to count toward degree requirements at Arkansas Tech University, the student must (in advance of enrollment) obtain written approval from the program director and the Graduate College Dean.

Additional Admission Requirements Unconditional Admission

Students are eligible to apply for unconditional admission to the Master of Science degree program in Fisheries and Wildlife Science if they meet the following criteria:

1. Applicants must meet the admission requirements for Graduate College. (<https://catalog.atu.edu/graduate/admission/>)
2. Applicants must have completed a bachelor's degree in a biological science from an accredited university.
3. Applicants must have completed courses in fisheries management or wildlife management, ecology, and statistics with a minimum grade of "C".
4. Applicants must file scores for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) in the Graduate College.
5. Applicants must provide a letter of intent that addresses the applicant's interests, goals, and reasons for applying to the degree program
6. Applicants must provide two (2) letters of recommendation (<https://www.atu.edu/gradcollege/resources-forms.php>), using the form provided by our Fisheries and Wildlife Science Program, from professors familiar with the applicant's academic ability.
7. Approval from the Program Director.

Conditional Admission

Qualified students lacking one or more courses listed above may be accepted provided the deficiencies are made up without graduate credit. Applicants who fail to meet the grade point requirement specified for unconditional admission may be admitted conditionally and allowed to enroll for a maximum of twelve (12) semester hours. Following completion of twelve (12) semester hours, the student's GPA must reach 3.0.

Curriculum

Degree Requirements

Option 1: Thesis Option

1. A minimum of 30 semester hours at the graduate level must be completed for the thesis option, including completion of:

Code	Title	Hours
Thesis Only Option		
FW 6001	Graduate Seminar in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology	1
FW 6002	Research Methods I	2
FW 6012	Research Methods II	2
FW 6013	Population Dynamics	3
FW 6991	Thesis Research (6 hours)	6
MATH 5173	Advanced Biostatistics	3
Approved 5000 or 6000 level elective courses		13
Total Hours		30

Code	Title	Hours
Non-Thesis Only Option		
FW 5163	Biodiversity and Conservation Biology	3
FW 6001	Graduate Seminar in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology	1
FW 6002	Research Methods I	2
FW 6012	Research Methods II	2
FW 6013	Population Dynamics	3
FW 6033	Conservation Management Practicum	3
FW 6043	Conservation Research Practicum	3
FW 6101	Comprehensive Exam	1
MATH 5173	Advanced Biostatistics	3
Approved 5000 or 6000 level elective courses		15
Total Hours		36

Code	Title	Hours
Electives		
EMHS 6033	Leadership and Management	3
FW 5003	Principles of Wildlife Management	3
FW 5014	Forest Ecology and Management	4
FW 5024	Limnology	4
FW 5034	Advanced Geographic Information Systems Applications	4
FW 5064	Wetland Ecology and Management	4
FW 5103	Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Management	3

FW 5881	Advanced Topics	1
FW 6023	Quantitative Fisheries Science	3

2. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 must be achieved in all graduate work attempted at Arkansas Tech University. A maximum of six (6) hours of "C" can be counted toward degree requirements, and a student receiving more than six (6) hours of "C" is subject to dismissal from the program. Refer to the section of the catalog on Academic Probation and Dismissal (<https://catalog.atu.edu/graduate/academic-information/>).
3. A written thesis and an oral defense of the research thesis must be approved by the advisory committee, the program director, and the Graduate College Dean. The topic of this thesis work is guided by a graduate advisor and the topic is approved by submitting a Graduate College form at or about the time of candidacy approval. Students will be required to enroll in an additional one credit hour of graduate coursework prior to their thesis defense if the thesis is not defended within one semester of completion of the coursework for the degree. For the purposes of this policy, summer is considered to be one semester.
4. Completion of all requirements for the degree must be accomplished within six (6) years from the time of admission to the program.