PhD Position: Freshwater Mussel Conservation
Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Position Description: The Roy Lab in the Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (MA Coop Unit) at the at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst is recruiting a PhD student in freshwater mussel conservation starting Summer or Fall 2022. The student will work on a large, collaborative project involving academic, state, and federal scientists in multiple states and Canadian provinces along the east coast to assess the population status of the state-listed Brook Floater (Alasmidonta varicosa) and develop cooperative conservation efforts. The project involves propagation and restoration initiatives, and the student will work with region-wide collaborators to develop pre-stocking habitat and mussel assessment methods and post-stocking mussel monitoring protocols. In addition, the student will work with partners in Massachusetts and Connecticut to conduct field mussel and habitat surveys at sites with unknown populations, investigate mussel response to dam removal, and develop a regional assessment of Brook Floater occupancy based on field-collected data. The successful candidate will become a PhD student in the Organismic and Evolutionary Biology (OEB) Program at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst and be part of Allison Roy’s freshwater ecology lab in the MA Coop Unit. As such, we are seeking inquisitive students with broad interests in ecology and evolution, a passion for research co-production with state and federal scientists, and a team player who embraces our values of diverse perspectives, supporting individual growth and empowerment in each other, inclusivity, and environmental justice.

Qualifications: Competitive candidates will have a background in freshwater ecology and field research experience. MS degree is strongly preferred. Interests or experience working on collaborative research projects, using ArcGIS, and employing quantitative methods using R are desirable. Experience in freshwater mussel ecology and sampling is helpful, but not required.

Salary/Benefits: The student will be supported on a research assistantship (20 hours/week) with occasional teaching assistantships. The position provides an annual salary of ~$32,500 per year, benefits through the Graduate Employee Organization (GEO), and a tuition waiver. Funding for travel to professional conferences is also provided.

Application: To express interest in this position, please send 1) a cover letter describing your background, experiences, and interests related to this position and 2) a resume or CV to Allison Roy (aroy@eco.umass.edu) by 19 November 2021. Allison will review materials on a rolling basis. Competitive prospective students will be asked to apply to the OEB Program through the UMass Graduate School with an application deadline of 1 December 2021. Applications to the Graduate School require undergraduate and graduate transcripts, a personal statement describing research interests and experience, and 3 letters of recommendation. Any questions can be directed to Allison.

Project Team:
Dr. Allison Roy (aroy@eco.umass.edu), U.S. Geological Survey, MA Coop Unit, UMass Amherst
Dr. Jason Carmignani (jason.carmignani@mass.gov), Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
Ms. Laura Saucier (laura.saucier@ct.gov), Connecticut Dept of Energy & Environmental Protection
Dr. David Perkins (david_perkins@usfws.gov), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service