

7 April 2011



To: Students interested in Wildlife Independent Study class

From: Dan Shaw

I am excited by your interest in enrolling for an independent wildlife research class. We have a rich tradition of students in this class doing sophisticated and meaningful research. Several times our students have taken their research to scientific meetings and competed successfully with graduate students. It is an opportunity to do in depth work on a topic in which you have great interest. Several students have used their independent study research to support their senior theses.

To be successful students must be motivated, capable of working independently, and attentive to details.

This is a non-traditional class and it is important for both students and parent/guardians to fully understand how this class works.

Signing up for the class does not determine automatic enrollment.

There are more students who have signed up for the class than there are spaces available.

Please read this email carefully and contact me if you have any questions.

1. An independent study cannot be a senior's fifth academic class.
2. Students can work in pairs on an individual project and I encourage that approach.
3. Each year I can accept no more than 8 total independent study students and no more than five total independent study projects.
4. To be accepted as a student in an independent study each student, or if working with a partner - each pair, must submit a one to two page research proposal to me for consideration. See me for a handout on preparing your proposal and evaluation criteria. Students should also meet with me before working on a proposal. The first round deadline is 16 May. First round acceptance as independent study students will be determined by 20 May. This is done so that a student who is not accepted will have time during finals week to make alternative plans for the 11-12 school year.
5. If there are still independent study spots available after 20 May I will consider proposals on a rolling basis up until the last day to add a class in the fall semester.
6. Any student who has not made adequate progress on their independent study by fall midterm will be dropped from the class.

WILDLIFE & CONSERVATION BIOLOGY RESEARCH - Course Description

Wildlife & Conservation Biology Research (WCBR) builds upon the coursework in Wildlife Biology and Conservation (WBC). After having had a broad exposure to research techniques, wildlife biology, and conservation issues in WBC, students in WCBR focus in on a particular wildlife biology research topic. Students design, execute, and prepare for scientific publication and/or professional presentation a wildlife research project or comparable project. Each student, in addition to Bosque School's WCBR teacher, often works with an additional mentor who has specific research experience in the studied topic. Supporting coursework and activities are based upon the selected research topic and vary from one student to the next, though principles of research design, data analysis, and ethical live animal research are components of all WBR projects.

Almost all of the work is independent but there is a mandatory, lunch-time seminar-style class every two weeks for all students taking the WCBR Independent Study. In addition to the independent work itself, there are also other class meetings as arranged with the teacher and the student researchers.

Students enrolled in WCBR can also enroll concurrently with NM State University's online wildlife biology class "WLSC 110 Introduction to Natural Resource Management."

Guidelines for Preparing a Wildlife and Conservation Biology - Independent Study Research Proposal

Prior to being enrolled, any student, or student pair, interested in taking an Independent Study in Wildlife and Conservation Biology must submit a one to two page research proposal to Dan Shaw. The proposal will be reviewed and enrollment in the course is not automatic. Interested students should meet with Dan Shaw prior to starting work on the proposal. Once a proposal is approved and the student is enrolled it is possible for a student to start work on their independent study before the school year begins. Research areas can include a specific species, suite of species, habitat, human attitudes and behavior regarding conservation and wildlife, and other related areas. The project can build upon the work of previous students or class work completed in Wildlife and Conservation Biology.

The proposal should outline the general ideas about the research project. This is a rough draft document and not a definitive plan. It is assumed that as student researchers learn more about their topics there will be refinements and adjustments to the plan.

The one to two page proposal should include:

- ✂ Topic or species of consideration
- ✂ A possible hypothesis or research question(s)
- ✂ A rough time schedule
- ✂ How the work schedule will fit into the student's other obligations for their senior year
- ✂ Will other people be needed to assist the researchers accomplish their work, if so how many
- ✂ Where will the project take place and how much travel time is involved
- ✂ What special equipment or materials will be required and how will they be obtained
- ✂ Citations of any resources that have already been read
- ✂ Descriptions of any discussions that have already taken place with potential research partners such as land owners or other scientists

Student criteria for acceptance to do an independent study in wildlife & conservation biology:

- 🐾 Student has demonstrated the ability to be responsible and work independently
- 🐾 Student was highly successful and committed in Wildlife and Conservation Biology class
- 🐾 Student is enthusiastic about the work and has a realistic understanding of the commitment that will be required to successfully complete the research

Project criteria for acceptance to do an independent study in wildlife & conservation biology:

- 🐾 Is the project doable in the time available to the student researchers and identified assistants?
- 🐾 Will the project address an unknown related to wildlife and or conservation?
- 🐾 Is the project able to be completed with the equipment we have or can obtain?
- 🐾 If the project involves live animals will the research be able to be permitted and approved by appropriate government agencies and Bosque School's Institutional Review Board within the researchers' time schedule?
- 🐾 If it involves off site activities are the landowners and/or managers of the involved properties supportive of this research?
- 🐾 Will the findings of this project be able to be presented at a professional meeting such as the American Fisheries and Wildlife Societies Joint Annual meeting in early February or submitted for publication to a scientific journal?