

# Survival Guide to the Wildlife Program at HSU

By the Wildlife Graduate Student Society (WiGSS)<sup>1</sup>

<http://www.humboldt.edu/wigss/>

Welcome to Humboldt! By now you've probably spent hours figuring out your first semester of classes, slept through the general grad orientation, arm-wrestled other students for places to live, combed all the thrift stores for cheap furniture... and probably felt a little overwhelmed with it all. With this in mind, your fellow grad students have put together this guide for the things we all wish someone had told us when we began the program. You may want to keep this handy until you finish, and feel free to make suggests for improvement! (Drafted Fall 2002; Updated Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, Fall 2010, Spring 2012)

We've organized this survival guide by phases. Often we read information in our first semester that is very important and pertinent for our 4<sup>th</sup> semester and consequently forget the information (because we're cramming so much other information into our brains). So, we suggest reading the whole thing when you're starting out with a special focus on the first year items. Then, reread this document every fall semester thereafter. Can you remember to do that? We hope you try! This document is also arranged by Big things and Not so big things...

*This 2012 update includes the guidelines/qualifications for Extended Education, deadlines for thesis submission for graduation, and new printer lab location. \*\*\*Be sure to look for current deadlines on the College of Natural Resources webpage: [http://www.humboldt.edu/cnrs/graduate\\_programs](http://www.humboldt.edu/cnrs/graduate_programs)*

## JUST STARTING OUT?

### Big things:

- Proposal
  - Try to complete your proposal in your first semester or first year at the very least. Some professors require a draft before starting school.
  - You need to have your first committee meeting (and therefore proposal) finished before any fieldwork can start. Forms for your committee meeting include:
    - Graduate Committee Formation Form
    - Tentative Course List
    - Proposal
- [IACUC protocol](#)
  - Start on this process early, as this form is required before you begin any fieldwork.
- [College of Natural Resources and Sciences](#)
  - The section of the Graduate Programs page for currently enrolled students has many helpful links to forms you'll be needing to complete during your time here at HSU.
  - [Policies and Practices of the Natural Resources Graduate Program](#)- Please read.

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- [Ecology Series Seminar](#)
  - This seminar series is on Thursdays throughout the semester from 4-5 pm.
  - Eco Series acts as a forum for students to interact with other students and faculty.
  - Wildlife graduate students are expected to attend all the presentations. Students are also encouraged to present thesis ideas early in their program for feedback and ideas, as well as after fieldwork and (some) analysis completed. Talks on projects outside of thesis work are encouraged if slots are open.
- Thesis Units
  - It is important for graduate students to enroll in WLDF 690 (thesis) and WLDF 695 (Adv Field Problems) courses with their advisors. This is largely how we get “credit” for the graduate program, justify lab space, grad equipment, etc.
  - The department’s policy is 2 units of each class each semester UNLESS you are coming up against unit cap issues for financial aid. The unit cap is 50 units and includes all units attempted at HSU.

## Not so big things:

- From out of state? – Get a CA Driver’s License and register your car ASAP so you can be eligible for CA Residency and therefore more grants (such as the CSU Grants which cover tuition).
- CNRS Orientation – Usually early in the fall semester, this orientation by Julie Tucker and the professor acting as Graduate Coordinator for CNRS is *very* helpful so try to attend.
- North Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society – This group has big potluck “mixers” twice a year or so and is a good opportunity to interact with professors, local professionals, and undergraduates.
- Your key works the downstairs door on the NW corner of the Wildlife and Fisheries Building after-hours. Keep your building pass handy when in the building after-hours.
- Grad labs have access to group printers in room 238 (small room between 230 and museum) and room 240. You will need a key card for this room, so arrange for this through your advisor and Katherine Moon in WFB 220.
- Students may use the department fax machine for thesis related faxes (with approval from your advisor). See Katherine Moon in WFB 220.
- Funds are usually available each semester for teaching assistantships, grading, and jobs in the game pens. Ask your advisor.

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- Presentations given at professional meetings, papers, etc., are expected to acknowledge HSU Wildlife Department as “home base”.
- If you haven’t already, think about joining a professional organization (or two) such as The Wildlife Society or American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU). Some of these organizations have free student membership grants.
- If you think you want federal work after finishing your degree, there are unit quotas to fulfill, such as 9 units of botany. The US Office of Personnel Management - [Wildlife Biology Series](#) website gives further details.
- If you’re interested in The Wildlife Society’s requirements to be a [Certified Wildlife Biologist](#), visit their website.

## ARE YOU IN YOUR SECOND YEAR?

### Big things:

- Advancement to Candidacy
  - [File these forms](#) before finishing your last 9 units (excluding WLDF 690/695).
    - Advancement to Candidacy
    - Approved Graduate Course List
    - Thesis Proposal (the whole proposal, not just the abstract)
- Watch your unit cap!!!
  - If you are dependent on financial aid, keep in mind there is a **50 unit cap** for aid eligibility. At 50 units, Financial Aid will review your aid eligibility, but will most likely discontinue aid. It’s a good idea to plot out your courses early to account for this. Note that this includes all units attempted at HSU, including all thesis units (see previous section of this document) and any remedial courses taken.
- Make yourself familiar with the Graduate Handbook available on the Graduate Studies website. It contains pertinent rules and regulations for the graduate program, as well as guidelines for preparing and formatting your actual thesis. Also familiarize yourself with the Policies and Practices of the Natural Resources Graduate Program.
- You must apply for graduation (degree check) in your last semester.

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## Not so big things:

- Participate in WiGSS! Be an officer, coordinate one of the many grant applications during the year, or help at fund raising events. Note: your service to the club will be evaluated when considered for club associated grants.
- Go to a professional meeting – There are several per school year for organizations such as TWS, AOU, COS, ASM, ESA... Especially if you can make the time. Funding can be found through travel grants. Think about presenting a preliminary analysis and of course, your final analysis.
- Specialized Wildlife classes -- At irregular intervals, professors teach specialized classes such as Advanced Ornithology, Advanced Habitat Ecology, or Advanced Diseases. They may only be taught once during your time at HSU, so take advantage if you can.

## NEARING THE END?

### Big things:

- If you're dependent on financial aid, watch your unit cap!
  - As long as you are under your unit cap at the beginning of a semester, you can still be eligible for aid for that semester.
- Extended Education
  - Once a student has...
    1. Completed all degree course work,
    2. Enrolled for a minimum 2 year period,
    3. Advanced to Candidacy,he/she is able to enroll in Extended Ed as long as
    4. There is no longer "substantial work" to do to complete their project/thesis. He/she can continue to do/use Extended Ed for multiple semesters until graduation. These criteria are consistent for the whole university.

\*\*Wildlife defines criterion 4 ("no longer substantial work to be completed") as follows:

A complete and satisfactory draft of the thesis must be delivered to the thesis advisor in time for him/her to judge it as complete and satisfactory by the start of the semester in which the student wishes to enroll in Extended Ed. Note that different advisors may require different review times and use somewhat different standards for what is judged as complete and satisfactory.

If you are planning on Extended Ed, you need to fill out the Extended Ed Office's "Graduate Continuous Enrollment" form and get your advisor to sign it first (that indicates he/she has reviewed your thesis to meet criterion 4). Then bring it to the Dept. Chair. You also need to fill out the "Graduate Continuous Enrollment Unit Authorization for Extended Education x693". Again, that needs your advisor's signature and then Gary Hendrickson's. Extended Ed's

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deadlines for registering are 30 January and 12 February (for late fee) – but note these ARE NOT the deadlines to meet criterion 4 – that is indicated by the underlined phrase above.

“Rule of thumb”: if you plan to graduate in the spring term to be really sure you’ll have enough time, you need to get a draft to your committee (i.e., usually after several drafts with your advisor) by about Valentine’s Day.

- Deadlines
  - Deadlines apply to turning a thesis in to the Graduate Coordinator for review after it has been approved by all members of your committee. Submit your thesis to Julie Tucker by 5:00 pm on the following dates:
    - For a Fall graduation: November 1
    - For a Spring graduation: April 1
    - For a Summer graduation: July 1
  - Don’t wait until the last minute! If the grad coordinator cannot get to all of the submitted theses in the time allotted, you will have to wait until the next semester.
  - More information can be found at:  
[http://www.humboldt.edu/cnrs/graduate\\_programs](http://www.humboldt.edu/cnrs/graduate_programs)
  
- Schedule a defense
  - If you’d like to defend during Eco Series, you’ll need to have your thesis at least to your committee before an Eco Series slot is reserved for you.
  
  - Prepare a layman’s summary for your defense.

## Not so big things:

- WiGSS covers the cost of 2 thesis bindings (you are required to bind 3 copies).
  - Turn your thesis binding receipt in to the WiGSS Treasurer and you will be reimbursed.

<sup>1</sup> The Wildlife Graduate Student Society (WiGSS) was established in 1999 for several reasons (below). Meetings are every other week during the school year and are open to all.

1. To unify the wildlife graduate students and create a stronger connection between the students and faculty.
2. To assist with the Ecology Lecture series. Contribute to facilitating, finding and funding guest speakers.
3. To provide services and equipment for wildlife graduate students to assist with research, course work, thesis writing, and thesis publication. WiGSS covers cost of 2 thesis bindings and also provides small travel and equipment grants.
4. To provide services and equipment that will benefit undergraduate students and other users of the Wildlife and Fisheries Building.
5. To provide peer support in terms of volunteer assistance with fieldwork, reviewing thesis proposals or thesis drafts, or other needs.
6. To provide a forum for addressing student concerns/frustrations, focusing strongly on working together to develop solutions.
7. To engage in some type of community involvement or philanthropic activities.
8. Acts as an avenue to apply for larger Event and Travel Grants through Associated Students.