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A PhD research assistantship is available with Dr. Marcus A. Lashley (UF Game Lab, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida) and Dr. David S. Mason (Plant Ecology, The Jones Center at Ichauway).

Global changes and management practices are reshaping predator communities, with consequences that may resonate across entire ecosystems. This position investigates this phenomenon through the soundscapes that govern ecological processes. The successful applicant will design and execute experiments in The Jones Center's 20+ year predator exclusion study using two models:

1. Wild turkeys: Analyzing gobbling behavior as a direct response to predation risk.
2. Sentinel songbirds: Examining how predation risk indirectly affects seed dispersal and plant communities through interspecies communication.

This extensive field research will describe both direct and indirect pathways by which the soundscape mediates predator effects on communities. The applicant will utilize game cameras and automated recording units to monitor wildlife, while employing seed traps, seed predation trials, and vegetation surveys to track plant community processes.

The successful applicant will enroll as a PhD student at University of Florida (UF) while co-sponsored by The Jones Center at Ichauway. Fieldwork will take place at this 28,500-acre research preserve in southwestern Georgia, which offers graduate student housing, an 18,000-square-foot research laboratory, on-site gym, and walking trails. The extensive field research will require using game cameras and automated recording units to monitor wildlife and seed traps, seed predation trials, and vegetation surveys to monitor groundcover processes.

Time will be split between residency at The Jones Center for data collection, with the remaining portion of the year spent completing coursework on the UF campus. Teaching responsibilities include assisting with one undergraduate wildlife ecology course per year aligned with the applicant’s expertise.

Required Qualifications: Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree in ecology, wildlife sciences, botany or a related field.

The successful candidate must meet eligibility requirements for work in the U.S. at the start of employment and continue working legally for the remainder of the term.

Preferred Qualifications: A M.S. degree in ecology, wildlife sciences, botany or a related field.

Applicants must:

- Conduct ecological research independently and creatively.
- Demonstrate experience analyzing data using R Studio or other software, writing peer-reviewed publications, and presenting findings professionally.

- Be willing to work long hours outdoors in challenging conditions, including uncomfortable weather, biting insects, and thorny vegetation.
- Display a team-oriented approach to leading and mentoring technicians, including supporting other lab research when needed.
- Be able to carry equipment (< 50 lbs) and walk miles across uneven terrain.
- Have requisite organizational skills to manage large datasets and schedules for experiments and technicians.
- Communicate professionally and confidently to connect with scientists, land managers, and landowners from diverse educational and professional backgrounds.
- Possess A valid U.S. driver's license and the ability to operate 4WD trucks on unpaved roads.
- Travel domestically for conference participation, including overnight stays.

If interested, please email Dr. Marcus A. Lashley (marcus.lashley@ufl.edu) and Dr. David Mason (david.mason@jonesctr.org) (1) a cover letter explaining interest, qualifications, and relevant experience; (2) a resume or CV; (3) unofficial transcripts, (4) contact information for three professional references, and (5) a writing sample. Details on the full application process to the UF Graduate School can be found at https://admissions.ufl.edu/apply/ graduate/. Additional information on the Plant Ecology Lab and the Jones Center can be found at https://lab.jonesctr.org/mason/. Financial support is available for four years, starting in fall 2025, and includes a stipend ($28,000/year) and tuition waiver. Review of applications will begin **Friday, April 11, 2025**, followed up with virtual interviews.