

Job Description:

In a joint research project with Pittsburg State University, our team seeks to 1) evaluate the contemporary prevalence of river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) in southeastern Kansas, and 2) examine relationships among the abundances of river otters, freshwater mussels, and other potential terrestrial mussel predators. I am looking for one outstanding student to pursue a Master's research project at the University of Missouri, using camera traps to document river otters and mussel predation in southeast Kansas (Cherokee, Labette, Neosho Counties). Fieldwork will occur in this region in July – September 2026 and 2027. The MS student will work closely with an MS student at Pittsburg State University (advised by Dr. James Whitney), who will conduct mussel sampling.

The MS student will be supervised by Dr. Christine Brodsky at the University of Missouri (Columbia, MO) within the School of Natural Resources. The student will enroll in the Natural Resources Master's degree program, with an emphasis in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences. The graduate research assistantship will be funded for 2 years (Jan 2026 – December 2027) by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

The Brodsky lab works on a wide range of research projects concerning wildlife ecology within human dominated ecosystems. The GRA hired for this position will be encouraged to identify and explore an additional research objective, related to their own interests. Topics such as urbanization impacts on mammal communities, habitat associations, etc. are possible to explore with camera trap data collected with this project.

Location: Columbia, MO

Salary: \$24,235 (12-month Research Assistantship stipend) + full tuition + medical insurance

Start Date: January 20, 2026

Application Deadline: November 3, 2025

Qualifications:**Minimum Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree in wildlife management, biological sciences, ecology, natural resources, or other related fields
- Competitive GPA scores (at least 3.2 on a scale of 4.0, as required by the degree program)
- Highly motivated, organized, and a strong work ethic
- Experience working independently in the field and data collection
- Valid driver's license

Preference will be given to applicants who have experience working with camera traps, natural resource management, data analysis, scientific writing, and/or experience with analytical software, such as ArcGIS and R.

Application and Deadline:

To apply, please email the following materials to Christine Brodsky (cbrodsky@missouri.edu) with the subject line "Otter GRA" within one PDF file:

1. Cover letter describing your interest in this position, qualifications, and professional goals
2. Curriculum vitae or resume
3. Contact information for three references, and
4. Copy of academic transcript(s) (unofficial)

GRE scores are not required. The deadline for applications is November 3, and review of the applications will begin on November 4. For more information, please contact Dr. Christine Brodsky (cbrodsky@missouri.edu).

The selected applicant will be required to apply and meet the requirements of the graduate program in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Missouri. Details on the full application process to the can be found on the Natural Resources Graduate Studies website. The University of Missouri is an Equal Opportunity Employer (<https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/hr/eeo>).