The Dr. Fritz L. Knopf Doctoral Fellowship in Avian Conservation at Oklahoma State University

A PhD fellowship in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University is available as part of the Dr. Fritz L. Knopf Doctoral Fellowship Program in Avian Conservation. This position will focus on large-scale conservation issues for bird populations and communities in the Great Plains region. The PhD Fellow will bring together diverse existing data sets to answer conservation-relevant questions related to factors that operate at landscape, regional, and/or national scales (e.g., land use practices, climate change, energy development, disturbance regimes) and that inform development and implementation of a multi-stakeholder, landscape-level conservation cooperative that achieves conservation objectives at broad scales.

Within these broad objectives, the Fellow will have the flexibility to pursue independent research interests under the advisement of Dr. Scott Loss and in collaboration with Drs. Craig Davis, Dwayne Elmore, Sam Fuhlendorf, and Tim O'Connell. There will also be an opportunity to conduct collaborative side-projects and interact with other Knopf Fellows (at Iowa State University, University of Colorado Denver, and Utah State University) and to participate in, contribute to, and use data from existing field projects at OSU. The fellow will be expected to participate in grant applications, peer-reviewed and popular publications as first author and co-author, presentations at regional and national meetings, and professional organizations.

The Knopf Fellowship provides funding to support advanced training of doctoral candidates in pursuit of an illustrious career in avian ecology and conservation. The intent of this funding is to provide the candidate with the opportunity to develop the professional network and prolific record of technical and popular presentations and publications needed to develop a highly competitive young professional. The funding provides a stipend for 4 years, tuition and fees, health insurance, and a professional development allowance to present at professional conferences and for short-term research residencies in labs where other Knopf fellows are based.

Qualifications: Fellowship selection will be based on academic merit as demonstrated by: (1) Academic and professional strengths articulated in letters of nomination, (2) Clarity of direction and commitment to avian ecology research articulated in student’s letter of interest, (3) GPA, (4) Demonstration of effective oral and written communication as demonstrated by professional presentations and/or relevant research published in refereed scientific journals; and (5) Demonstrated leadership. Applicants with extensive experience in spatial analyses (e.g., GIS) and cutting edge quantitative approaches (including proficiency in programs such as R, MARK, etc.) will be especially competitive.

The desired start date for this Fellowship position is January 2016.

To Apply: send (by September 30th) applications consisting of a single ZIP file that includes: (1) a statement of interest (2 page max) outlining general interests in avian ecology and specific potential research topics under this fellowship, (2) resume/CV, (3) academic transcripts, (4) GRE Scores, and (5) 3 letters of nomination to Dr. Scott Loss (scott.loss@okstate.edu; questions should be directed here as well).

**Further Information about Dr. Fritz L. Knopf - Dr. Fritz L. Knopf is a retired Research Wildlife Biologist who worked as an Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. His research career focused largely on understanding how biophysical changes on landscapes influence migratory bird populations, and on ways to translate that research into conservation management and policy. He accomplished this by actively engaging with academics, resource managers, and landowners. Dr. Knopf’s collaborations were characterized by mutual trust and respect for the people and native bird populations that occupy the landscapes he studied.

Among the most lasting impacts of his work with the Geological Survey was his dedication to building the careers of young biologists. The desire to carry on this legacy inspired the establishment of the Fritz L. Knopf Doctoral Fellowships in Avian Conservation. The intent of the fund is to support the doctoral
training of promising students who have demonstrated an intellectual talent and strong work ethic for
bird research and conservation. Dr. Knopf proclaims “I was never the smartest one in the arena—just
tried to keep a clear mind and work harder.”

Knopf’s approach was to work across larger geographic ranges with an eye toward identifying localized
similarities rather than differences. This began with studies of riparian avifaunas across an elevational
gradient (First North American Riparian Conference. U.S. Forest Service General Technical Report RM-
120. 523pp. 1985). He then conducted a focused cross-region study of Brewer’s Sparrows and Green-
tailed Towhees (Condor 92:45-55, 1990.) and carried a rangewide approach into his almost 20 years of
Mountain Plover studies.

Knopf’s career was strongly focused by his faculty mentors and student peers within the College of
Natural Resources at Utah State University. A decade after graduating, his graduate advisors/professional
references were gone. He then realized it was his graduate student peers who comprised the foundation
of his professional network, as they were those now employed across the continent. The Fritz L. Knopf
Fellowship Program is intended to facilitate the formation of a network of peers that is anchored by the
Fellows at each of the four institutions (Oklahoma State University, Iowa State University, Utah State
University, University of Colorado Denver). The research residency exchange program is intended to
enhance network development for each doctoral student by providing students with the opportunity to
collaborate with research labs at each of the partnering institutions, and by actively sharing research
findings at professional international meetings.

After graduation, peer network development continues primarily by assuming leadership roles in
professional societies; candidates are expected to regularly attend professional meetings and to become
increasingly active in at least one professional society. Active leadership roles include serving as editors
for professional journals, serving as officers of a society, hosting and organizing conferences, etc.