

This year WFA received the greatest number of applicants for the Wild Felid Legacy Scholarship in its eight-year history. From 22 well-qualified applicants, the WFA Council is pleased to announce Jennifer Feltner, Rekha Warriar, and Orlando Gallo as this year's recipients. Dee Dawn has once again provided funds to support one of the scholarships in honor of her daughter, Deanna. Dee has selected Jennifer Feltner as the recipient. The other scholarships were supported through donations from Altria Client Services and WFA members. We thank all of the applicants for their dedication to sound science and conservation of the world's wild cats and encourage them to apply again next year. Information on the other 19 applicants and their projects will be provided in the winter 2017 issue.



Jennifer A. Feltner, PhD candidate, North Carolina State University; jafeltner@gmail.com

Advisor: Dr. L. Scott Mills, ismills@ncsu.edu

Dissertation: Intra-guild competition and predator-prey dynamics following large carnivore recovery in a system with increasing human impacts.

Objectives: 1) investigate whether seasonal and annual cougar habitat selection and foraging patterns have changed over time as wolves and grizzly bears recolonized the southern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem; 2) examine the extent to which dominant competitors are exploiting cougar food resources through kleptoparasitism, and the potential causes and consequences of this phenomenon; and 3) determine the direct and indirect impacts of predation by cougars, wolves and grizzly bears and human harvest on elk and secondary prey species such as bighorn sheep, moose and pronghorn antelope.

Expected completion: Spring 2019

Dr. Mills writes: “[Jennifer] is super smart, eclectic, thorough, rather unbelievably hard working, and deeply committed to conservation in general and big cat research and conservation in particular. Her ‘non-traditional’ experience in D.C. and business has honed a remarkable ability to negotiate political landmines and

build coalitions—a critical task given that her research is centered on cougars, wolves, bears, and elk in the Teton/Yellowstone Ecosystem!”



Rekha Warriar, PhD candidate, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins; reka@rams.colostate.edu

Advisor: Dr. Barry R. Noon, Barry.Noon@colostate.edu

Dissertation: Devising a landscape scale conservation strategy for Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) and Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) in the human dominated Central Terai Landscape, India.

Objectives: 1) Determine the spatio-temporal dynamics of tiger and leopard use of areas outside protected area boundaries in the Central Terai Landscape; 2) Determine the scale and nature of human-large carnivore interactions in the Central Terai Landscape and their bearing on community attitudes towards large carnivores occurring outside protected areas.

Anticipated completion: August 2018

Dr. Noon writes: “Rekha has contributed significantly to our project (under very challenging field conditions)... For her doctoral research Rekha is building on [prior] research with an emphasis on documenting

the use of the agricultural matrix surrounding protected areas... Specifically, her research will document the degree and potential for human-tiger conflicts... [and result in] recommendations to the Indian Government on how to best mitigate human-wildlife conflicts in north India. ...Rekha ...will be the first Indian woman to conduct field research on tigers in India with the goal of obtaining a doctoral degree in ecology.



Orlando Gallo, PhD candidate, Universidad Nacional del Sur (UNS); gallo.ori@gmail.com

Advisor: Dr. Emma Beatriz Casanave, casanave@criba.edu.ar

Dissertation: Landscape ecology and genetics of puma (*Puma concolor*) in the Argentine Espinal: analysis of spatial connectivity and gene flow.

Objectives: 1) Determine the level of genetic variability of the population (or meta-population); 2) Estimate the effective population size; 3) Analyze the population genetic structure and characterize gene flow; 4) Identify the presence of geographic barriers (particularly those with an anthropogenic origin) to dispersion; 5) Analyze landscape connectivity and build a map of resistance/conductance to the gene flow; and 6) Contrast genetic with ecological data to delineate appropriate conservation strategies.

Anticipated completion: April 2020.

Dr. Casanave writes, “[Orlando] will contribute to improve knowledge on ecology, genetics, distribution and conservation of pumas. [He] is a motivated person, who quickly assumes responsibility and is not afraid to face new challenges and situations. He is also very responsible in field as well as in the laboratory, with excellent predisposition to work and outstanding motivation.”