



## 2026 National Wildlife Federation Graduate Student Research Fellowship Request for Applications

**Topic:** NWF Wildlife Education Research Fellow

**Location:** Remote, any U.S. location

**Background:** The National Wildlife Federation, America's largest and most trusted conservation organization, has been on the front lines for wildlife since 1936, fighting for the conservation values that are woven into the fabric of our nation's collective heritage. The Federation works with 52 state and territory affiliates—autonomous, nonprofit organizations that take the lead in state and local conservation efforts. In response to a recent report by the IPBES Global Assessment, stating that an estimated one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, NWF is committed to developing a stronger, more effective wildlife education program, focused on threatened and endangered species.

### **Goals of the Fellowship:**

The goal of the Wildlife Education Research Fellowship is to support research and content development focused on threatened and endangered species. This work will build upon the existing database created by previous Fellows, analyzing and synthesizing prior and ongoing projects to identify gaps, themes, and opportunities for future content creation. The Fellow will extract actionable ideas and recommendations that can inform educational materials and strengthen the impact of current wildlife education efforts.

### **Project Strategies will include:**

- Reviewing and synthesizing the existing database and materials developed by previous Fellows
- Identifying 8-10 species topic ideas aligned with threatened and endangered species priorities
- Drafting at least four (4) blog pieces, including topic selection, outlines, and beginning drafts
- Conducting background research using credible scientific and conservation-based sources
- Coordinating with NWF staff to ensure alignment with organizational messaging and education goals
- Incorporating feedback and revisions from advisors or project leads
- Organizing research findings and content ideas for future use and continuity
- Focusing on accessible, engaging content for diverse audiences
- Subjects include butterflies, owls, and additional relevant species

Fellow will have access to platforms such as Airtable and Notion to organize existing Fellow work, manage research data, and support continuity across project work.

### **Applications will be evaluated based on the following:**

- Interest in wildlife and habitat conservation
- Demonstrated interest in, and experience working with, diverse constituencies

- Demonstrated knowledge of and/or skillset in research
- Initiative to overcome barriers and seek alternative avenues when necessary
- Proactive approach to ensure project successfully achieves goals

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to gather and interpret relevant data and report findings
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- An entrepreneurial spirit, initiative and energy
- The ability to use initiative and work autonomously in addition to team working skills

#### **Fellowship Program Requirements:**

- Participate in a Fellowship kick-off call - date TBD.
- Create project plan for a 4-6 month Fellowship term based on agreed upon Fellowship goal.
- Participate in periodic phone check-ins with NWF staff and Fellow cohort about project status and responsibilities.
- Develop a summary report of findings and programmatic recommendations

#### **NWF Values:**

Your actions are expected to reflect the values of the National Wildlife Federation: collaboration, mindfulness, empowerment, inclusivity, and mission focus. Core competencies include the ability to:

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to equity and responsibility to all individuals.
- Bring a consistent, high level of empathy and social awareness to daily work and interpersonal interactions.
- Actively seek feedback, direction, and guidance from team members, and proactively keep staff informed of decisions that affect them.
- Show passion for and commitment to NWF's mission of uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife and people thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Applicants are invited to learn more about National Wildlife Federation's required equity competencies at <https://www.nwf.org/About-Us/Careers>.

#### **Perks and Privileges:**

- \$4,750 stipend
- Professional development resources, assistance, and networking
- Possibility of academic credit for successful completion of the project, as an independent study or integration of fellowship project into course curricula

**Eligibility:** Graduate students from any college or university within the U.S. are eligible to apply and if awarded the Fellow must submit a W-9 and provide proof of valid work authorization to receive stipend payment. Applications are invited from students in all disciplines and are not limited to environmental studies majors. Current and former employees of National Wildlife Federation and former NWF Campus Ecology Fellows are ineligible to apply. Former NWF interns are eligible to apply following one year from their final work date. The name on the application must be limited to **one individual** and the Fellowship reporting, training, or other requirements cannot be transferred to or shared with another student. Additional involvement should be

noted in the proposal. The applicant must be enrolled in school through the duration of the 4-month grant period.

**Grant Terms:**

The Fellowship is for a term of 4-6 months, depending on Fellow's schedule. The fellow will begin in May of 2026, with the specific date TBD. Fellows spend various amounts of time on their projects each week. The average amount of time spent is 10 hours weekly or 40 hours monthly. The time invested by each student is typically considerable, but it is also flexible to account for schoolwork and other commitments and the working style of each Fellow.

**Stipend:**

Fellows will receive a stipend for their work. Any Fellowship-related expenses accrued during the Fellowship period should be covered by the stipend.

Payments are dispersed in two installments: First installment of grant awards are made within two weeks of awarding the fellowship and finalizing fellowship agreement. The second installment will be made by August 31, 2026. Grant funds will be distributed to the student directly (with submission of a W-9). Grant funds may be taxable; consult your tax advisor for U.S. Internal Revenue Service reporting requirements.

**How to Apply:**

1. Carefully review the information provided in this document.
2. Complete and [submit the application form](#) for the 2026 NWF EcoLeader Graduate Student Fellowship:
3. Submit an electronic letter of recommendation from your identified Advisor via PDF attachment either in your application or emailed directly to [Fellows@nwf.org](mailto:Fellows@nwf.org). If sending via email, please make sure your name is in the subject line of the email.

*All applicants must identify and work with an Advisor for the duration of the grant period. An advisor is a member of the staff, faculty, or administration on your campus who is willing to serve in an advisory capacity for the duration of the grant period. The advisor should be from the department on campus this is most closely related to your fellowship and can validate that the project is one that is supported by the department and/or campus.*

*Please secure an electronic copy of a letter of recommendation from the Advisor explaining the qualifications of the applicant and his or her role in advising the student and submit the letter as a PDF attachment to the application or sent via email to [Fellows@nwf.org](mailto:Fellows@nwf.org) with the applicant's name in the subject line.*

**The deadline to submit applications is April 5, 2026 by 11:59pm PT.**

Applications are reviewed by a committee to determine which meet the selection criteria. All applicants will be notified of their status within one month of their application deadline.

**Applications will be evaluated based on the following:**

- Interest in wildlife and habitat conservation
- Demonstrated knowledge of and/or skillset in market research
- Initiative to overcome barriers and seek alternative avenues when necessary
- Proactive approach to ensure project successfully achieves goals