

Environmental Biology

Department of Biological Sciences, College of Arts & Sciences



Program of Study

The Environmental Biology option in Biology provides a broad and diverse background of evolution, ecology, and biodiversity topics for students who plan to enter field-oriented conservation careers such as wildlife biologist, natural resource specialist, endangered species biologist, and biological science technician.

Faculty

Department of Biological Sciences faculty hold doctoral degrees from distinguished universities across the United States such as the Universities of Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland College Park, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and New Mexico; Colorado State; Cornell; Eastern Illinois; Iowa State; Louisiana State; MIT; Miami University–Ohio; Northern Illinois; Southern Illinois; and Texas A&M.

Academic Awards

GPA-Based Scholarships – No Application

The following scholarships are awarded by the Scholarship Committee based on overall grade point average and the number of hours attended at WIU. Students selected for these scholarships will be notified in mid-Spring semester. We also award the Mary A. Bennett Award in the Fall to the outstanding graduating Fall senior:

- **Roy M. Sallee Award** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Freshman; *Major, Other Requirements*: Biology major; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200
- **H. D. Waggoner Memorial Award** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Sophomore; *Major, Other Requirements*: Biology major; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200
- **Mary A. Bennett Award** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Senior; *Major, Other Requirements*: Biology major; awarded in Fall (for Fall graduating seniors) and Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200
- **R. M. Myers Award** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Junior; *Major, Other Requirements*: Biology major; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200
- **Jean S. and Roger M. Morrow Award for Biology Education** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Junior; *Major, Other Requirements*: Biology Education major; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200
- **Robert Henry Biological Sciences Award for Botany** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Full-time undergraduate majoring in Biology; *Major, Other Requirements*: Plant Biology/Botany; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$150
- **Samuel L. Singer Award for Microbiology** – *GPA, ACT, Year in School*: Outstanding GPA, Senior; *Major, Other Requirements*: Microbiology; awarded in Spring; *Award Amount*: \$200

Scholarships Requiring an Application

The following scholarships require an application at various times of the year. Their forms are posted in PDF format next to each award description or the link wiu.edu/cas/biological_sciences/info/scholarships.php.

- **P. James Nielsen Science Award**
- **George M. Ward Scholarship for Environmentally Concerned Students**
- **Paul Nollen Biology Honors Scholarship**

Honors in Biology

To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15% of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. A comparable SAT score is acceptable. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 GPA on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. In the Biology major, honors students take courses for honors credit and, as seniors, complete research and prepare an honors thesis under the direction of a department faculty member. Successful completion of the departmental honors requirements is noted on the official transcript, and program graduates receive special recognition at Commencement.

Research Inspiring Student Excellence (RISE Program)

This program provides students with unique research and academic experiences to help them become tomorrow's leaders. It focuses on

- Inquiry-based learning
- Academic support and a learning community
- Learning and professional development

Learn more about Scholarships and Awards through the RISE Program: wiu.edu/cas/academics/rise/rise_cas.php.

Student Activities

Biology students can participate in several departmental organizations such as the Beta Beta Beta Honor Society, Pre-Professional Club, Zoology Club, American Fisheries Society, and Sportsman's Club. A wide variety of student activities and organizations are available to all Western students. Learn more at <https://purplepost.wiu.edu/Organizations>.

Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station

Dr. Alice Kibbe, a well-known botanist, had a dream of starting a field station to promote teaching and research in field biology and ecology. Her ideals of promoting teaching, research, and conservation are the cornerstones on which the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station has been built. The Kibbe Life Science Station rests on 1,689 acres of natural area along the Mississippi River owned by Western, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. The facilities provide housing for 48 people, a community kitchen, a large gathering room, and two classrooms. To schedule research, events, or field courses, contact Sean Jenkins at (309) 298-2045 or James Lamer at (217) 256-4519.

Study Abroad Programs

Biology majors have the opportunity to take classes in popular countries such as Australia, Finland, China, New Zealand, and England. Previous Biology students have traveled to Costa Rica and studied the tropical environment, ecosystems, and habitats. There are many classes to choose from which all must be pre-approved by the Department Chair. Courses offered vary every semester; therefore, course availability cannot be guaranteed.

After College

Environmental biologists are needed for a variety of careers such as field biologists with expertise in plant and animal populations, communities, and ecology. Careers are available with conservation organizations; local, state, and federal government agencies; and in the private sector as environmental consultants.

For More Information

You can learn more about the Department of Biological Sciences by visiting wiu.edu/biology or by calling the department office at (309) 298-1546.

wiu.edu/biology

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Waggoner Hall 372 • Western Illinois University
1 University Circle • Macomb, IL 61455-1390
Phone: (309) 298-1546



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