What is the Conservation Biology major?

The Conservation Biology Major is an interdisciplinary, science-based major housed in the Department of Botany and designed to provide students broad training in biological, ecological, and related disciplines most relevant to conservation. The program emphasizes basic knowledge of natural history; ecology and evolution; organismal, species, and field biology; and conservation biology.

The major is characterized by its flexibility in course selection with a broad range of opportunities to allow students to tailor the program to their interests. Our program has unique appeal for students passionate about conservation biology, from the social scientist to the theoretical ecologist, and empowers students to act as informed citizens of the natural world.

Advising in the Conservation Biology Major

All students are assigned to a team of two advisors. Students are encouraged to use their Conservation Biology faculty advisor to discuss undergraduate experiences that will help prepare for graduate work or a career after graduation. The Conservation Biology staff advisor can work with students to discuss course selection, registration, major and degree requirements, transfer credits, and tracking progress towards graduation, as well as connecting to important resources on campus.

Personal Statement Requirement

The Conservation Biology Personal Statement is a writing assignment completed during a student's senior year. It allows them to work with their faculty advisor and connect their UW-Madison experiences to future goals. Some personal statement examples include a personal plan for graduate school or a cover letter for a job or internship.

Conservation Biology Career Outcomes

When Aldo Leopold and Norman Fassett first initiated the major in the 1940s, they intended it to prepare individuals for careers as game wardens, ranger naturalists, and museum workers. As the major evolved, career opportunities evolved as well. Conservation Biology alumni have worked both domestically and internationally in:

- **Research and field jobs** (ex. Ecological Restoration, Urban Forestry, and Smithsonian Environmental research)
- **Environmental education** (ex. Environmental Consultants, Park Service Naturalists, and Teachers)
- **State and government agencies** (ex. Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Forest Service)
- **Graduate School** (ex. Masters or PhD programs in Evolutionary Biology, Environmental Conservation, or Policy)

**Conservation Biology Applied Opportunities**

Students are encouraged to participate in out-of-classroom experiences like research, internships and study abroad to provide an opportunity for students to connect their knowledge to the world around them and gain practical experience in the field.
The Conservation Biology Curriculum:
Honors in the major is available – see the website for details!

Because of the flexibility in requirements, joint majors and certificates are practical and encouraged. To ensure a coherent and customized program, prospective majors are encouraged to meet with advisors as early as possible.

Required Coursework
Due to the flexibility of course selection and sequencing, students should plan coursework strategically in consultation with the Conservation Biology advisors and other course planning tools.

Students are encouraged to seek volunteer, internship, research, and study abroad experiences and are also encouraged the plan ahead by working closely with their advisors to build these experiences into their plans.

I. Core Required Courses
◊ Introductory Biology sequence
◊ Chemistry, one course
◊ Physical Environment, one course
◊ Ecology & Evolution, two courses
◊ Statistics

II. Species and Field Courses
◊ 12 credits from a wide variety of courses including options from Agronomy to Zoology that focus on specific species or have field work included.

III. Elective Courses
◊ Social Science in the major
◊ Electives as need to complete 50 credits in the major.

Additionally, students must satisfy all university general education requirements and L&S degree requirements.

“Fun classes. Small major. Good advising. Flexible course schedule.”
- Conservation Biology Student

Visit our website for details.
www.conervationbiology.ls.wisc.edu