

## **WLE 435 – Ecology and Management of Waterfowl and Gamebirds.**

### **Spring 2016 Course Description and Syllabus**

#### **Instructor:**

Dr. Erik Blomberg  
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**Number of credit hours:** 3 **Prerequisites:** Instructor Permission

**Class Meeting Times:** Lecture MW 10:00-10:50 p.m. Lab F 1:00-4:00 p.m.

**Classroom:** Nutting Hall Room 218.

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Course Overview:** This course is intended to provide a broad survey of topics relevant to the ecology and management of the ducks, geese, grouse, quail, and woodcock that are native to North America. We'll place particular emphasis on species that regularly occur in Maine. In doing so we will cover a number of areas related to avian biology in general, including taxonomy, physiology, behavior, and species' conservation. The course content will include a mix of lectures, class discussions, group and independent projects, and field trips. Evening and early morning field trips may be required for this course, as will two weekend field trips.

*Lecture-* The "lecture" component of the course will consist of both traditional lectures and non-lecture activities. The latter may consist of class discussions, group activities, and in-class student presentations.

*Lab-* Lab will consist of both classroom activities and field labs. We will have one long weekend fieldtrip to the Schoodic Peninsula and at least one other day trip that will be scheduled outside of normal lab periods (see schedule below). We will also have a number of short (<3 hour) field labs during the regular lab period, or during mornings and evenings as needed for specific objectives (e.g. an early morning grouse survey), that we identify as a class as the semester progresses.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*Course Goals* – My goal for this course is to improve your understanding of the biology and conservation of these important avian species. In addition to these specialized subjects, the course will also provide you with more general knowledge and skills that are relevant to all areas of wildlife ecology.

*Expected Outcomes* – After completing this course, students will be able to 1) articulate ecological and evolutionary principles that are relevant to waterfowl and upland

gamebirds, 2) identify these taxa to species and classify important age and sex classes, 3) collect data in the field that is useful for monitoring and research, and 4) understand relevant conservation issues and management practices.

**Required Readings:** There is no required textbook for this course. I will provide you with supplemental readings as needed for lecture and/or lab activities. These readings will be available either as pdf's posted on Blackboard or as e-reserve readings through the Fogler Library. I will alert you to additional readings in class as they are needed for specific portions of the course.

**Electronic Resources:** We will use Blackboard as the primary online platform for the course. You should be able to access the Blackboard Course page through your mainstreet portal or at [www.courses.maine.edu/](http://www.courses.maine.edu/). I will use Blackboard for posting assigned readings and other course materials (assignments, course syllabus, etc). You should check to make sure you can access the class Blackboard page and familiarize yourself with its layout.

### **Course Requirements:**

*Grading* - Grading in this course will be split between exams (~30%; 300 points), individual projects (~20%; 200 points), group projects (~30%; 200 points), and participation (~20%; 200 points). All assignments are due for submission on Blackboard before the beginning of class on the date listed unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will receive a 5% deduction for each day they are turned in late up to seven days, at which point you will not receive credit for that assignment.

Your final grade will be assigned as follows:

A = 93.33 - 100 %  
A- = 90 – 93.32 %  
B+ = 86.67 - 89.99 %  
B = 83.33 – 86.66 %  
B- = 80 – 83.32 %  
C+ = 76.67 – 79.99%  
C = 73.33 – 76.66 %  
C- = 70 – 73.32 %  
D = 65 -69.99 %  
F = < 65%

*Exams* – There will be three exams during the semester each worth 100 points. The first exam will focus on waterfowl identification and will be held in lab. The second and third exams will be held during lecture and will cover waterfowl and upland gamebirds, respectively. Each exam will be worth 10% of the course grade. There is no final exam.

*Independent Projects* – For the independent projects you will write a Species Account for a species native to Maine, and will then publishing that information on a website we will develop as a class. We'll discuss this project in greater detail during class.

*Group Projects* – Habitat Management Plan. During the latter part of semester we will devote a significant amount of time to writing habitat management plans for an actual piece of property in the Orono/Old Town Area. We will work as a class to develop a management planning framework (i.e. what are the important components of a habitat management plan) and we will spend a significant amount of time in the field collecting data and conducting surveys in support of the plan. We will discuss the management plan in greater detail during class.

*Participation and Professionalism* – A large portion of this course involves collaborative work and interactive exercises, and these will be most successful if everyone participates equally. Therefore I am making a large component of the grade (20%; the equivalent of 2 exams) related to participation. Assume you start the semester with the full 20%, and I reserve the right to adjust based on your attendance of field trips and guest lectures, participation in class discussions and activities, your contributions to group projects, and general professionalism during class. Any supplemental assignments associated with labs or field trips will be incorporated into this portion of your grade.

**My Take on Professional Integrity:** I expect that students in my classes will hold themselves to a high standard as professional biologists. I expect that you will work hard, respect your peers (and yourself), and be honest with me and your classmates. I will not tolerate plagiarism (see <http://www.plagiarism.org/>), cheating, copying, or otherwise presenting work as your own that was in reality produced by others, and I will deal with such actions in accordance with University policies. With that said, our profession is one of collaboration. I encourage you to discuss assignments, study together, and generally help one another to understand the topics we cover in class. Just make 100% sure that anything turned in to me with your name on it represents your own thoughts, ideas, and efforts, and yours alone, unless the assignment is explicitly defined as a group project.

In addition to University policies and my own views, our respective professional societies provide us with guidance on standards of professional conduct and ethics.

The Wildlife Society:

[http://joomla.wildlife.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=769](http://joomla.wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=769)

The American Fisheries Society:

[http://fisheries.org/cert\\_standardsprofessionalconduct](http://fisheries.org/cert_standardsprofessionalconduct)

The Society for Conservation Biology:

<http://www.conbio.org/about-scb/who-we-are/code-of-ethics>

### Schedule of Lectures:

Subject	Week	Subject	Supplements <sup>a</sup>
	Jan 20	Course Intro	
Anatidae	Jan 25	Taxonomy and Identification	1,2
	Feb 1	Physiology and Morphology	3
	Feb 8	Mating Systems and Reproduction	4
	Feb 10	Habitat and Conservation	
	Feb 15	Guest Lectures	
	Feb 22	Conservation and Exam 2	
Scolopax	Feb 29	Morphology, physiology and behavior	
	Mar 7	Spring Break – No Class	
	Mar 14	Spring Break – No Class	
	Mar 21	Habitat and Conservation	
Galliformes	Mar 28	Taxonomy and Identification	
	Apr 4	Physiology and Morphology	
	Apr 11	Mating Systems and Reproduction	
	Apr 18	Habitat and Conservation	
	Apr 25	Conservation and Exam 3	
	May 2	Buffer week	

<sup>a</sup> This is an incomplete list. I will add additional readings and materials as we work through the semester and update the files and reading list posted on Blackboard. I'll announce additions in class at least 1 week prior to a scheduled activity.

### Important Dates (Lecture):

Feb 15 – Guest lecture by Brad Allen of MDIFW – attendance is mandatory

Feb 17 – Guest lecture by Dr. Christian Hagen of OSU – attendance is mandatory

Feb 24 – Exam 2 on Waterfowl Ecology

Mar 4 – Species account draft due.

April 15 – Website draft due.

April 27 – Exam 3 on Upland Bird Ecology and Identification

**Schedule of Labs:** *Notice – Due to the unpredictable nature of field work, this schedule should be viewed as tentative and is subject to change at my discretion.*

Subject	Date	Lab
Waterfowl	22 Jan	No Lab
	29 Jan	Waterfowl Wing Identification (resource – Carney 1992)
	5 Feb	Waterfowl Wing ID Practice
	12 Feb	Waterfowl Identification Exam (Wings, Photo, Latin Names)
	19-21 Feb	Ecology of Wintering Waterfowl Field Trip - Schoodic Peninsula
	26-28 Feb	Backup weekend (weather) or data analysis
	4 Mar	No Lab
	11 Mar	Spring Break - No Lab
	18 Mar	Spring Break - No Lab
Upland Birds	25 Mar	Turkey Capture Setup - Whitter Farm Umaine
	1 Apr	Management Plan Brainstorming Session
	8 Apr	Management Plan Work Day
	15 Apr	Management Plan Work Day
	22 Apr	Management Plan Work Day
	29 Apr	No Lab
	30 Apr	Frye Mountain Field Tour (Saturday)
	6 May	Management Plan Work Day

**Important Dates (Lab):**

Feb 12 – Exam 1 on Waterfowl Identification

Feb 19, 20, 21 – Schoodic Field Trip

Feb 26,27,28 – Backup weekend for Schoodic Field Trip or Data Analysis from trip.

Apr 22 – Meet with Erik on or before this date to discuss Management Plan progress.

Apr 29 – Draft management plans due to me for review.

April 30 – Frye Mountain Field Tour (Saturday)\*.

May 10 – Final Draft of Management Plan due by 5:00 p.m.\*\*

\*This is tentative. If everyone in class is available for an all-day Friday field trip, we can do that as an alternative. We may also have to adjust schedule depending on access conditions at Frye Mountain.

\*\* Yes, this is a due date during finals week. However you will have over a month to work on your Management Plans, and you're welcome to turn them in earlier.

## ***University of Maine Administrative Policy Statements***

### Academic honesty:

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

### Students with disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Disabilities Services, 121 East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term.

### Course schedule disclaimer (disruption clause):

In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

### Sexual violence policy:

Sexual discrimination reporting: The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell any of your teachers about sexual discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Behaviors that can be “sexual discrimination” include sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct, and gender discrimination. Therefore, all of these behaviors must be reported.

## **Why do teachers have to report sexual discrimination?**

The university can better support students in trouble if we know about what is happening. Reporting also helps us to identify patterns that might arise— for example, if more than one victim reports having been assaulted or harassed by the same individual.

## **What will happen to a student if a teacher reports?**

An employee from the Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity will reach out to you and offer support, resources, and information. You will be invited to meet with the employee to discuss the situation and the various options available to you.

If you have requested confidentiality, the University will weigh your request that no action be taken against the institution's obligation to provide a safe, nondiscriminatory environment for all students. If the University determines that it can maintain confidentiality, you must understand that the institution's ability to meaningfully investigate the incident and pursue disciplinary action, if warranted, may be limited. There are times when the University may not be able to honor a request for confidentiality because doing so would pose a risk to its ability to provide a safe, nondiscriminatory environment for everyone. If the University determines that it cannot maintain confidentiality, the University will advise you, prior to starting an investigation and, to the extent possible, will share information only with those responsible for handling the institution's response.

The University is committed to the well-being of all students and will take steps to protect all involved from retaliation or harm.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000.

For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>