

FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Greater Everglades Student Memorial Scholarship



We are pleased to announce that **Christian Fernandez** is the recipient of the 26th annual scholarship for undergraduate studies, administered by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society. He is expected to graduate in May 2024 from the University of Florida with a BS in Natural Resource Conservation, and minors in both International Development and Humanitarian Assistance and Wildlife Ecology & Conservation.

Christian's focus has long been to bridge the gap between people and nature, and to promote inclusion of many ideas, values, attitudes and perspectives in natural resource management. As an animal care intern at Zoo Miami, he learned how zoos make wildlife accessible to urban and suburban residents. As a freshwater fisheries research intern with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Christian learned how stakeholders are directly incorporated into research and management of our state's freshwater bodies. As a black bear technician with North Carolina State University, he explored human-wildlife conflicts and how collaboration can work to benefit all parties and help find solutions. And as the creator and coordinator of UF/IFAS Extension's inaugural 'Fang Fest', Christian is integrating his experience across wildlife conservation, social science, human-wildlife conflict, education and communications, and event planning to promote snake coexistence with north-central Floridians.

Christian's career goal is to be a natural resource professional who uses his training and understanding of human dimensions to promote positive change in people's behaviors and attitudes toward wildlife. Specifically, he is interested in human-wildlife conflict, wildlife damage management, educational and Extension program development, and habitat management and restoration. He has been actively involved with The Wildlife Society at all levels, serving as the UF Student Chapter Beast Feast coordinator for 2 years, helping at FLTWS Spring conferences, participating on TWS Wildlife Damage Management and Human Dimensions Working Groups, attending a Student Conclave, and two national conferences.

The FLTWS Undergraduate Student Scholarship was established in 1998 to recognize and financially assist undergraduate students pursuing a career in wildlife biology at a 4-year school in Florida, during their Junior or Senior year. In 2008, the scholarship was renamed the *Greater Everglades Student Memorial Scholarship* in honor of 3 FAU students tragically lost during a wading bird survey. Applicants for the scholarship are judged based on extracurricular activities, demonstrated leadership, professional potential, financial need, personal goals, contribution to Florida wildlife and a letter of reference from a wildlife professional.

As this year's recipient, **Christian** will receive a check for \$1,500. He will be recognized at the FLTWS Spring Conference, 24-26 April 2024 in Cape Coral, FL.

To attend our Spring Conference, register at: <https://fltws.org/>.

Monica Folk
Chair, FLTWS Scholarship Committee