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Statement of Purpose

The decision to pursue a graduate degree is one that comes with extreme passion for your field, especially in the world of environmental studies. Acceptance into a Masters program would grant me the opportunity to dive deeper and become an expert in the natural subjects that interest me, especially since I would like to conduct my own research one day.

Birding and the natural world has been a lifelong passion of mine and I have always been curious and eager to learn about it. I found great fulfillment as a tour guide at Alturas Wildlife Sanctuary, where I led tourists and locals on guided walks through the sanctuary and introduced them to its ambassador animals. It was up to me to educate these visitors on the natural history of Costa Rican fauna, as well as human-caused dangers that often bring wildlife to the sanctuary's rehabilitation center. At the end of the tour, visitors often left feeling inspired to do something to make the world better for wildlife. As a field trip leader for Black Hills Audubon and the South Sound chapter of the Feminist Bird Club, I can continue to share my passion for nature and conservation with people from a wide array of backgrounds. In January of 2023, Black Hills Audubon began forming a Field Trip Committee, in which I was invited to serve on. I believe that I was invited to serve because of my enthusiasm, confidence, and communication skills.

In 2022, I completed my undergraduate degree from the Evergreen State College. During my time as a Greener, I found myself thriving in the kinesthetic education style. I felt myself absorbing information in various natural science fields, such as marine biodiversity, vertebrate zoology, field ornithology, and symbiosis. Throughout these courses, I not only grew confident in my ability to communicate scientifically, but in my ability to think critically and write scientific papers. Upon graduating, I felt ready to take on the world thanks to the skills that Evergreen instilled upon me.

I immediately dove into field work, specifically focusing on my favorite group of animals: birds. Being an avian field research assistant has allowed me to get up close to birds and has given me the opportunity to observe them from a new perspective as opposed to the birding I do as a hobby. Recently, I traveled to the remote outback of Australia, where I had the opportunity to work alongside researchers who were studying how high temperatures affected the embryonic development of wild Zebra Finches. This position required me to learn new skills, such as handling tiny chicks and eggs and processing samples while working both individually and with others. I took my first bird banding class in August of 2021, where I learned the basics of banding according to the guidelines set up by the Institute of Bird Populations and MAPS. Since this experience, I have had the opportunity to scribe and assist in the capture of Swainson's Thrushes in British Columbia, to assist beginning banders in a passerine banding workshop in White Pass, Washington, and to band ducks at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Southeast Oregon. Having this background, I've become more comfortable with locating and identifying birds with color bands, observing behaviors, setting up mist nets, extracting birds, taking measurements, and safely handling birds. My most recent position took me back to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in a longer position with more responsibility. In this position, I was entrusted to conduct various avian and botanical surveys and point counts independently. Community outreach, particularly geared towards indigenous involvement, was also a key factor in this position and I enjoyed leading the groups that came to visit. Additionally, I gained experience using recording units and analyzing the data using BirdNet.

I appreciate your time and consideration. I hope that my enthusiasm and eagerness to continue learning makes me a strong candidate for the MES program.