

Valentina J. Alaasam

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia
Undergraduate Student, Department of Biological Sciences
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EDUCATION

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

B.S. Biology, College of Science

Minor Green Engineering

In progress 2011-2015

GPA: 3.92 (top 6% of class) **GRE:** Verbal 166 (96%), Quantitative 162 (83%) Writing 4.5 (80%)

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

William A. Hopkins Laboratory: FLeDGE program

August 2013-May 2015 *in progress*

Thesis: Morphology and physiology of eastern hellbenders (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*) in alternative reproductive states: Investigating factors (testosterone, corticosterone, prolactin, age, body condition, and acute stress response) associated with brooding and non-brooding males.

- Literature search and review
- Preparation of written proposal
- Formal presentation of proposal to faculty and students
- Data collection and analysis
- Written manuscript submitted for publication
- Formal presentation of results.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FIELD TECHNICIAN, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation

May 2014-September 2014

- Project Title: Associations Between Land Use and Occurrence, Demographic Rates and Physiology of the Hellbender (*C. alleganiensis*) in Virginia
- Duties: Hiking through rough terrain carrying heavy loads (50-70lbs), capturing and handling hellbenders, drawing blood and processing blood samples, PIT tag implantation, snorkeling, canoeing, construction and installation of artificial hellbender shelters into streams, ArcGIS and Microsoft excel data entry.

RESEARCH TECHNICIAN, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Department of Forest Resources

August 2013-Present

- Project Title: Correlating soil and foliar 15N natural abundance signatures to ecosystem N retention.
- Duties: Identification and partitioning of growth cohorts in loblolly pine and douglas-fir branches, preparing samples using ball-mill grinding, using fine mass balance (<5g) and managing data sets.

OTHER SKILLS

- Microsoft office
- ArcGIS Data entry
- Small mammal trapping
- Mist netting, small bird handling
- GPS navigation
- Hiking rough terrain
- Camping
- Snorkeling in fast waters
- Canoeing
- Amphibian Leukocyte identification

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, Wildlife Ecotoxicology & Physiological Ecology Lab

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA

August 2013-May 2014

- Project Title: Individual and interactive effects of trace dietary and maternal mercury in freshwater turtles: Common snapping, soft shell, stink pot, and slider.
- Duties: Animal Husbandry, performance trials (terrestrial locomotor performance, and righting response), management of data sets, collection of body mass and measurements

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, Wildlife Ecotoxicology & Physiological Ecology Lab

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA

February 2012-May 2013

- Project Title: Maternal effects in wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*): Effects of incubation temperature on stress hormones and fitness.
- Duties: Animal husbandry, egg dissections, egg candling to determine stage of development.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Education Chair, The Wildlife Society at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA May 2014-Present

Plan, organize, and lead education events within the community

Mentor/Tutor, Coalition for Refugee Resettlement

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA October 2014-Present

Teach ESL, basic speaking and literacy skills to relocated adults and children

Peer Tutor, Virginia Tech Student Success Center

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA October 2012-December 2012

Assisted first and second year college students in introductory chemistry and biology courses.

Tutor, Cherry Run Elementary

Fairfax, VA Summer 2010

Taught elementary school students age 8-10 in phonics and reading skills, as well as writing and focused learning.

HONORS/AWARDS

- **(\$4000)** 2014 Fralin Life Science Institute Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship
- **(\$2,228)** 2014 Leonard and Melva Harris Scholarship
- **(\$1,095)** 2014 Joe and Barbara Cowles Scholarship
- **(\$5,545)** 2012-2015 Multicultural Academic Opportunities Scholarship
- **(\$1900)** 2011 William O. Ross Scholarship
- Semesters on Dean's List: Fall 2011 through Fall 2014
- University Honors: 2012-2015

LEADERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP

- Phi Sigma Biological Honors Society (2014-Present)
- Coalition for Refugee Resettlement (2014-Present)
- Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society, Education Chair (Fall 2011-Present)
- Project Hawar, Treasurer (Spring 2015)
- "The Big Event" Day of Service, Group Leader, Blacksburg, VA (2012, 2013, 2014)
- Humane Society Volunteer, Blacksburg, VA (Fall 2013-Present)
- Dog Walker, Teaching and Research Animal Care Support Service, Blacksburg, VA (Fall 2011)

PRESENTATIONS

Valentina J. Alaasam, Catherine M. B. Jachowski, Ignacio T. Moore, William A. Hopkins. Morphology and physiology of brooding and non-brooding male hellbenders (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*). Undergraduate Research Symposium 2014, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. July 2014 *Poster presentation*.

Valentina J. Alaasam, Catherine M. B. Jachowski, Ignacio T. Moore, William A. Hopkins. Research Proposal: Morphology and physiology of brooding and non-brooding male hellbenders (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*). Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. March 2014 *Oral presentation*.

REFERENCES

Dr. William A. Hopkins

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