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UA Foundation awards migratory bird research grant

The University of Alaska Foundation announces Chris Harwood as the recipient of the 2012 Angus Gavin Memorial Migratory Bird Research Grant .

Harwood, a graduate student in wildlife biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, received the \$15,000 award for his research proposal entitled "Breeding Ecology of Whimbrels in Interior Alaska." Harwood will conduct this research in conjunction with the Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The award is provided to support research on bird species found either permanently or seasonally in Alaska or its coastal waters, including their biology, general ecology and habitat relationships. With his award, Harwood intends to understand the cause of the bird's decline by studying its breeding period. Whimbrels are a subspecies of the curlew.

Michael Spindler, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge manager, underscored the importance of Harwood's research. "Chris' research will help identify potential breeding locations for whimbrels throughout Interior Alaska and therefore further conservation of this species on federal, state and private lands."

This grant was established in 1981 with a gift from the Atlantic Richfield Co. to honor the memory of Angus Gavin, an environmental advisor to ARCO. Gavin was hand-picked by ARCO Chairman Robert O. Anderson to observe, categorize and quantify the little known flora and fauna of Prudhoe Bay in 1969. Gavin was to draw conclusions, pro or con, about the impact of oil field development on the ecology of the North Slope and to recommend operational changes that would minimize or negate any adverse effects on the environment.