



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release
2013

UA Foundation awards migratory bird research grant



The University of Alaska Foundation announces Tyler Lewis and Adam DuBour as the recipients of the 2013 Angus Gavin Memorial Migratory Bird Research Grant.

Lewis and DuBour, post-graduate students in biological sciences and wildlife biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, received the \$15,000 award with their joint proposal entitled “Ecosystem Change in Boreal Wetlands and its Relation to Waterbirds: the Importance of Aquatic Invertebrates” and “Feeding Ecology of Lesser Scaup Ducklings in the Boreal Forest: An Examination of a Trophic Mismatch.” The concurrent projects collaborate on research related to management and conservation of waterbirds on the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska. Both projects examine relationships between waterbirds and their aquatic food sources and how such relationships may be influenced by recent climate change.

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. Boreal wetlands and lakes account for 50 percent of global lake surface area and are internationally important breeding areas for a variety of waterbird species. It is important to examine long-term changes in the wetlands and the effects of these changes on waterbird communities.

Research shows the boreal wetlands are drying up. Information gained on the boreal wetlands could be applied to other areas of Alaska related to how changes in climate will influence food sources in wetlands and waterbird abundance and distribution. Dr. Joel Schmutz, research wildlife biologist at the University of Alaska Anchorage and UAF, states these projects “have great potential for important insights about the ecological functioning of boreal forest wetlands and their sensitivity to climate change.”

This grant, part of the UA Foundation’s consolidated endowment trust, was established in 1981 with a gift from the Atlantic Richfield Co. to honor the memory of Angus Gavin, an environmental scientist and 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’s work was instrumental in helping ARCO and the scientific community 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.