



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release
2015

UA Foundation awards migratory bird research grant



The University of Alaska Foundation announces two winning proposals for the 2015 Angus Gavin Memorial Migratory Bird Research Grant.

Molly McDermott, a post-graduate student in biological sciences at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, received \$6,122 to support her proposal entitled “Food Availability and Breeding Success of Tundra-nesting Passerines in Western Alaska.” The project concentrates on the study of insect prey available as food for migratory birds in the arctic. McDermott is collaborating with the US Geological Survey as part of the Changing Arctic Ecosystems Initiative, which studies the impact of climate change on birds in Alaska.

Heidi Pearson, assistant professor of marine biology, and Trevor Haynes, a recent doctoral graduate in fisheries, also received \$8,878 to support their joint proposal entitled “The Role of Avian Predators in Nutrient Transport in a Glacially Fed Southeast Alaska Estuarine Ecosystem.” The project relates to an ongoing study, which is looking at the linkages within and between the ecosystem of the Juneau Icefield to the estuarine ecosystem of Berners Bay, as well as examining the impact of climate dynamics on these two ecosystems.

The Gavin Award is provided annually 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. These two projects will assist in understanding how climate change may affect Alaska’s avian population over time.

The Gavin Grant, part of the UA Foundation’s consolidated endowment fund, 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.