



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESEARCH IN THE BAHAMAS
National Science Foundation Funded, Summer Research Experience



**Conservation Biology of a Critically Endangered Species:
The Bahama Oriole Project**



Project Director - PI: DR. KEVIN OMLAND, Biological Sciences
Co-PIs: Dr. Colin Studds, GES; Dr. Matt Fagan, GES; Dr. Jane Lincove, Public Policy

ABSTRACT

The Bahama Oriole is a critically endangered songbird endemic to The Bahamas that is currently restricted to a single island. Previous research suggested that there might be fewer than 300 individuals remaining. This research suggested they nested almost exclusively in developed habitats in introduced coconut palms in developed areas near the coasts.

However, during the last three years, UMBC students working with Bahamian students documented large numbers of orioles breeding throughout the island's remote pine forests. The students were the first to find nests in both a Caribbean Pines and in native Thatch Palms. We recently published a paper with six UMBC student authors.

Our team was awarded a three year National Science Foundation grant to train students in tropical ecology and environmental research, and increase the diversity of students doing ecological field research. The challenges faced by the orioles include introduced predators such as feral cats and rats, rising sea levels and fire due to climate change, and invasive cowbirds (nest parasites). We will take teams of students to The Bahamas each of the next three summers to investigate these threats to this critically endangered species. Those chosen will have travel expenses covered and will be paid a stipend. Students should be prepared for challenging field conditions, early mornings and long afternoons, as well as fascinating research on a spectacular island.

WHEN? Summer 2019, Summer 2020, Summer 2021

WHO? Anyone interested in ecology, conservation & environmental science

WHAT? Exciting fieldwork, early mornings, bugs, radio tracking birds

ALSO? Amazing forests, snorkeling in coral reefs, Bahamian culture

CLASS? Summer following sophomore year ideal, freshmen & juniors too

CONTACT? Dr. Kevin Omland, omland@umbc.edu

APPLICATIONS? Due ~Feb. 1, 2020



**Bahama Oriole, close cousin of Baltimore Oriole
But restricted to a single island in The Bahamas**

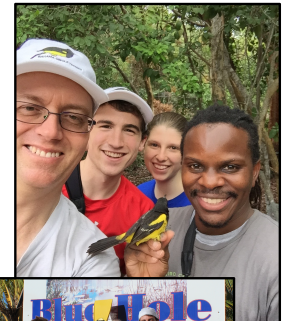
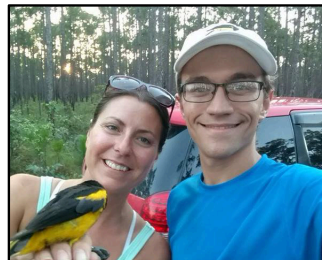


Previous researchers focused almost exclusively on developed areas along the east side of the island (Price et al. 2011).
UMBC students published first evidence orioles nesting in inland pine forests (Daniel Stonko, UMBC Class of 2017*).

REFERENCES

Price, M. R., V. A. Lee, and W. K. Hayes. 2011. Population status, habitat dependence, and reproductive ecology of Bahama Orioles: A critically endangered synanthropic species. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 82:366-378.
* Stonko, D. C., Rolfe, L. E., Johnson, S. B., and Omland, K. E. 2018. New documentation of pine forest nesting by the critically endangered Bahama Oriole (*Icterus northropi*). *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*, 31: 1-5

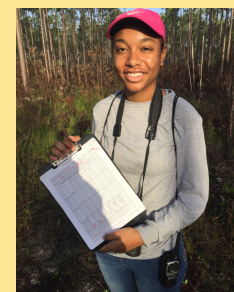
FIELD STATION – Forfar Field Station, Andros Island



Example Research Topics: feral cat densities in remote pine forest.



conservation genetics, radio tracking, habitat mapping



Send email with application form, resume, unoff. transcript to omland@umbc.edu
(also contact Dr. Studds or Dr. Fagan - UMBC Dept. of Geog. & Env't. Systems. LIKE US ON FACEBOOK)