

Liz Oaster, M.S. Thesis Candidate



My name is Liz Oaster. I was born and raised in Hanover, Pennsylvania. Growing up with the woods of Pennsylvania as my backyard I spent a majority of my time outside camping, riding horses, or just exploring trying to find wildlife. Spending this much time outside drove my curiosity and passion for wildlife. In 2014 I earned my B.S. from the University of Wyoming in Zoology. As an undergraduate I worked and volunteered for a variety of projects, such as chipmunk mark-recapture, coyote chemical sterilization, and prairie nesting birds. I also had the opportunity to visit the Mindo Cloud Forest in Ecuador and Laikipia in Kenya. Visiting these places has shown me that every culture has its own view on wildlife and how it should be managed. This is what drove me to pursue a Master's in Wildlife Management. I will be doing my Master's on Montezuma quail in New Mexico under Dr. Ryan Luna.

Thesis Project: Ecology of Montezuma Quail in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico

Not much is known about Montezuma quail ecology because they are cryptic, crouch close to the ground and seldom flush when approached. Mostly what is known about Montezuma quail are anecdotes without data to back them up. My study will be looking at how Montezuma quail populations respond to controlled burns and thinning by the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico. With the help of trained bird dogs I will be catching Montezuma quail and attaching a backpack radio transmitter to monitor their movements. Upon capturing a Montezuma quail measurements and other data, such as sex and age will be taken to help with questions regarding population characteristics. I will also be performing vegetation surveys throughout the study site pre- and post-treatment to look at how the plant community changes during the treatment.

