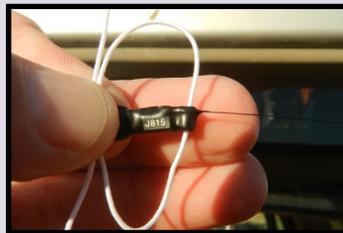


Charles H. Musick — BRI Undergraduate Researcher

My name is Charlie Musick, and I am a junior at Sul Ross State University where I am studying Natural Resource Management with an emphasis on wildlife management. I was raised enjoying the outdoors near the small town of Blanket, Texas, in eastern Brown County. I spent most of my time in high school studying agriculture, especially in range and wildlife related fields. I competed in wildlife, and environmental and natural resources career development contests through the FFA. When I started at SRSU in fall 2015, I immediately became an active member of the Sul Ross Range and Wildlife Club. I served as secretary of the club as a sophomore, and am now serving as the wildlife vice president. Through the club, I joined the plant identification and wildlife quiz bowl teams. I was also able to volunteer on projects such as pronghorn, deer, and bird captures where I made contacts that helped me join the Undergraduate Research and Mentorship Program (URMP) with Borderlands Research Institute. I have participated in the program for two years, studying shorebirds and waterfowl for my first project, and desert grassland sparrows for my second research project. Experiences and contacts gained through the URMP have helped me attend and present at conferences such as Texas Section Society for Range Management, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and the national meeting of The Wildlife Society. They have also prepared me for internships with Elizita Ranch near Hebbronville, Texas, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Following graduation in December 2018, I plan to continue to a full-time position with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Comparing Winter Home Range Sizes of Grassland Birds in the Chihuahuan Desert, Texas

16 January — 31 May 2017

I am currently working on a study on the Dixon Water Foundation's Mimms Unit in the Chihuahuan Desert, just north of Marfa, Texas, in northwest Presidio County. My project focuses on comparing the home range sizes of Bairds Sparrows and Grasshopper Sparrows in their wintering habitat in the grasslands of the Chihuahuan Desert, which have been affected in many places by unsustainable agriculture and grazing practices in recent years. In addition to my research, I am also assisting my mentor, graduate student Denis Perez, with her thesis project: Habitat Relationships of Grassland Birds in the Chihuahuan Desert. For this, I help with tracking the sparrows using radio telemetry as well as sampling vegetation within the study site. Both studies aim to help inform landowners, managers, and biologists about the ecological conditions required to support grassland bird populations, especially in the Chihuahuan Desert, where desert grasslands are a critical ecosystem for many plants and animals, particularly migratory birds.



The BRI Undergraduate Research and Mentorship Program is proudly supported by a grant from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.