

# SWOSU Students to Present Biodiversity Posters April 19-23

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Students in general ecology at Southwestern Oklahoma State University will present posters this Monday through Friday, April 19-23, in the Memorial Student Center on the Weatherford campus.

Faculty sponsor Dr. Peter Grant said the theme of the posters, biodiversity, was chosen to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day on Thursday, April 22, and the United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. The public is invited to view the posters and admission is free.

SWOSU students participating include:

Oil Spills	Danielle Eck	Waurika
Bioterrorism	Dana Poling	Oklahoma City
Overfishing	Wendy Jones	Mustang
Cheetahs	Takara Hawkins	Madill
Habitat Loss	Jessica Pillow	Elgin
Hurricanes	Lianna Mueller	Meno
Overhunting	Jade Maddoux	Sayre
Coral Reefs	Courtney Jakubik	Oklahoma City
Wolf Predation	Craig Hobson	Lahoma
Zebra Mussels	Brittany McGinn	Canton
Hydrothermal Vents	Logan Howard	Canton
Northern Snakehead Fish	Tanner Volz	Owasso
Large Marine Predators	Stacey Creger	Yukon
Oceanic Dead Zones	Kate Hollenshead	Cooper TX
Terrestrial Antarctic Animals	Melanie Graham	Carnegie
Tropical Rainforests	Vanina ToffessiTcheuyap	Yhounde, Cameroon

Grant said biologists estimate that there may be 8 to 14 million species of organisms in the world but only about two million have been described so far. Many of these species are facing threats that have caused them to be listed as either threatened or endangered. In the United States, 1,324 species are listed as either endangered or threatened by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 17 of which occur in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation lists an additional five species as threatened or endangered.

There are many threats to biodiversity including habitat loss or degradation, over-exploitation, invasive species, human disturbance, pollution, natural disasters, changes in native species dynamics, incidental mortality, disease and persecution.

Grant said many scientists have published data supporting how diverse ecosystems help to maintain an environment that supports life on earth. The benefits of biodiversity

include air and water purification, detoxification, decomposition of wastes, nutrient cycling, climate regulation, regeneration of soil fertility, biological control, pollination and ecosystem resistance to perturbations (for example drought).