

Alum Spotlight



Department of Environmental Sciences

Dr. Matthew E. Neilson: Ph.D. in Biology (2009)

Dissertation: “Evolution, systematics, and phylogeography of Ponto-Caspian gobies”

Dr. Matthew Neilson completed his doctorate in Biology at the UT Lake Erie Center under the supervision of Dr. Carol Stepien. He also holds an M.S. from California State and a B.S. from the University of New Hampshire. Matt worked as a research and teaching assistant while completing his dissertation. He mentored several undergraduates under the NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates program. Dr. Neilson authored several publications studying the systematics, biogeography, and phylogeography of Ponto-Caspian gobies.

After graduating, Matt worked as a visiting instructor at the University of South Florida and the University of Florida teaching introductory biology classes.

Matt continued at the University of South Florida as a research scientist monitoring fish and vegetation communities at the Lost River Reserve. He later became a biologist at Jacobs Technology in Tampa Florida, where he did contract research with the USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species (NAS) program performing data analysis, literature review, and collaboration with federal and state agencies. Matt is now a fishery biologist at the USGS and continues his work with the NAS program at the Wetland and Aquatic Research Center in Florida.



“One of the best things about DES is the interdisciplinary nature of the department, which has the inherent potential for collaboration and for learning broadly on topics not directly related to one's personal research focus or concentration. Be sure to use it wisely!”