

Kumar Mainali

M.S. Biology (2007)

Kumar, a native of Nepal, is currently a postdoctoral associate at the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2007, he finished his Master of Science in DES under the supervision of Dr. Scott Heckathorn. During his time at UT, Kumar's research focused on the impact of heat waves on plant-soil links in tall-grass prairies. He describes his time at UT as one of most memorable years of his life and recalls the hot summer days of field work as the best learning experience. After his M.S. he went to the other UT (University of Texas at Austin) to join their doctoral program in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior where he concurrently completed a Ph.D. in Ecology and an M.S. in Statistics. Kumar worked on species distribution modeling, climate change impacts at the tree lines of the Himalayas, spatial conservation prioritization and spatial analysis of human microbiomes. He has authored papers in high profile journals and noted that working with Dr. Heckathorn helped his scientific writing tremendously.



“The best thing about my research in DES was that I performed both lab and a field experiments. This involved thinking about many aspects of research design and was a great learning experience. To be successful, a graduate student must have a strong foundation in ecology and a good grasp of statistics. My time at UT prepared me for both.”