

Thank you for your interest in graduate study in my lab. At Yale, graduate students apply directly to the department (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology) through the graduate school and are admitted by the department rather than by a specific faculty member. There are a limited number of positions each year, and the application process can be very competitive. Good grades and GRE scores help as well as excellent letters of recommendation and previous research experience (which should be described in the 'personal essay' along with your future research interests). However, it is also helpful to have contact with faculty in the department with whom you might study or 'rotate' and if you do this it should be mentioned on your application. For more general information on the graduate program in the department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology please consult the department web page (<http://www.yale.edu/eeb/>). For more information about the application process please consult the graduate school (<http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/admissions/index.html>).

In my lab, we study behavioral and evolutionary ecology using a combination of empirical and theoretical approaches. I conduct field work on the ocellated wrasse in the Mediterranean and the tessellated darter which occurs in Connecticut and most of eastern North America. I use a combination of modeling techniques including population genetics, game theory, dynamic programming and individual-based simulations that combine optimality and genetic methods. Although I do not require that every student combine theory and empirical approaches for their own research, I do require that my empirically-minded student acquire a deep understanding of theory and that the theoretically-minded ground their theory with an empirical understanding of what animals actually do and how theory can be tested I am interested in having students join my lab that want to study the evolution and ecology of reproduction especially sexual selection and life history patterns. I do not require that my students work on my empirical systems, or even just on fish. However, if you are interested in working on other organisms, it will require that you have or find the expertise for working on those species yourself. Although I can tell you how to find, catch, observe and mark small fish, I can't provide this kind of expertise for other species. Fortunately, however, our department does have people who work on a wide variety of organisms from bacteria to birds. Please understand that if you work on organisms other than fish, it will simply mean that you must develop this aspect of your research independently. However, in my research group we share a general conceptual approach and an interest in the evolution and ecology of animal behavior and life histories rather than being a lab that studies fish. For more information on my own research please consult my web page (<http://www.yale.edu/eeb/alonzo/index.htm>).

I am interested in having motivated students join my lab. My style as an advisor is that I expect you to be genuinely interested and motivated which means that you work independently with my help and guidance rather than me being your 'boss'. My aim is to have students become independent colleagues as they gain experience and develop their own research projects and ideas. I expect my students to develop their own projects with my help and guidance, and I do not place students into a project of my own. I am also happy to have students work on my empirical systems if they wish and if our interests overlap sufficiently. My students don't need to work on exactly what I do, but we do

need to have sufficient overlap in our research so that I can be a good advisor. Although, I usually have research grants that may be able to support students, if you work on an independent project then you will also be involved (again with my help) in finding independent funding. Graduate students accepted to the program in the Department of Ecology and Evolution usually receive a stipend and some departmental research funds are also available. However, it is also highly recommended that you apply for fellowships such as the National Science Foundation pre-doctoral fellowship if you can and that you also seek outside funding for research during your graduate study.

If you are still interested in joining my lab and applying for graduate school at Yale, please do send me your CV and any written work (e.g. papers or proposals) you may have from undergraduate or other projects in which you have been involved. Please be certain to describe your research experience and future research interest in your application. Please also let me know if and when you apply to the EEB program directly so that I can keep an eye out for your application. Again, thank you for your interest in joining my lab and please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Everything best,

Suzanne Alonzo