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Endowment Committee

1088 Academic Surge

Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology

University of California, Davis  
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend Yifang Zhang for the Lloyd W. Swift Summer Research Award through the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at UC Davis. Yifang plans to develop an independent, student-driven research project seeking to understand the role of Putah Creek and farmland irrigation in alleviating heat stress in Tree Swallow and Western Bluebird nestlings in agriculture.

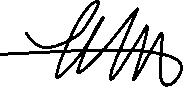
To do so, she will partner with the Museum of Wildlife and Fish Biology to deploy humidity monitors at sites nearby Putah Creek in both agriculture and natural habitats. In March, Yifang will receive training from me, a federal subpermittee with Master Bander Daniel Karp, in how to measure and band birds. Then, for 10 hours per week during Spring quarter and 15 hours per week until early August, Yifang will work directly with me to deploy sensors and cameras, monitor nests, collect blood samples for stress assays, and collect thermal and video data. During Fall 2024, Yifang will work with me to conduct statistical analyses and prepare a report detailing her findings.

Yifang has demonstrated her aptitude and interest in wildlife care through her current employment as a wildlife rescue technician. She has spent about a year triaging, monitoring, and feeding a variety of birds and mammals. She has also supervised interns and volunteers during this work, demonstrating her leadership potential and ability to learn and teach delicate handling skills. Exploring the world of research represents the next step in her career trajectory. Yifang will be trained in new field skills, statistical analyses, and scientific writing.

I will be using my own funding to purchase the requisite humidity monitors and blood sampling equipment for this project, but do not have enough funding to pay Yifang’s salary. Thus, obtaining a Swift Summer Research Award is vital to allow her to engage in this research project. Her proposed research is ambitious, novel, and could produce concrete conservation recommendations for agricultural land managers in the Central Valley. I plan to work with Yifang to write up her results and publish the resulting product. I will also ensure a thank you note is written. In summary, receiving a Swift Summer Research Award would provide essential fuel to Yifang’s continued growth as a conservation scientist.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Katherine S. Lauck

PhD Candidate, Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology

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