

**FINAL REPORT**  
**Professional Development Grant Spring 2017**

In February 2017 I received a Professional Development Grant to cover expenses associated with attending the Ecological Society of American Conference August 6-11, 2017, in Portland, OR. This funding allowed me to attend the conference and give an oral presentation that included research I have been conducting at Arkansas Tech University. Specifically, I presented research investigating the hypothesis that bird feeders influence mosquito prevalence. This research was conducted between March and August 2017 on the ATU campus with the assistance of six undergraduate students. One of the students received undergraduate research credit to test this specific hypothesis, whereas the other five were paid research assistants. This provided an ideal opportunity for these students to participate in the scientific process and to contribute toward a scholarly product. This conference provided an ideal venue at which to disseminate my findings, as many of the experts in the field of urban ecology, animal behavior, and evolutionary biology were in attendance. I received positive and constructive feedback that will prove beneficial as I prepare these results for publication in a national or international journal such as *Ecology*, *Animal Behaviour*, *Evolutionary Ecology*, or *The Auk*. Attached are the details of my presentation as provided on the ESA website.

Additionally, this conference provided an unrivaled opportunity for me to familiarize myself with current ecological research. This premier conference attracts top ecologists from around the world, many of whom do research closely related to my own work. Through formal and informal interactions across the week I strengthened existing relationships and forged new collaborations. I ultimately expect this experience will facilitate the continued integration of cutting-edge science into the courses I teach at ATU.