

Ecology Across Borders, British Ecological Society

December 11-14, 2017

Isabella Durham, College of Forest Resources

On December 11, 2017, I presented my research project *Adaptation to “dishonest” environmental systems: insights from an experimental microcosm* at Ghent, Belgium for the Joint Annual Ecology Across Borders conference. This presentation consisted of my research on perceived/ actual habitat quality for the past two years in the College of Forest Resources (CFR) and in the Entomology Lab. This trip was funded by the Shackouls Honors College and the Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program within the CFR and provided me the opportunity to explain my work to a myriad of professors, PhD students, and master’s students.

This conference provided me with an amazing opportunity to network and see what exactly it means to be a researcher in the wildlife field. Being one of the only, if not the only, undergraduate student to present, I was able to surround myself with superiors in my field to learn what they do, the purpose in their research, and then explain what I did. Although I was one of the youngest students there, I was able to fully explain my work to those many years my senior and answer any and all questions they asked. I attended multiple talks on animal movement, population dynamics, animal behavior, and many more, allowing me to not only learn information pertinent to my field, but also learn how to better myself as a professional. Even though presenting my research and learning more about my field were amazing opportunities, the best opportunity I had was being able to meet others in my field and forge connections for future internships and jobs. For example, one of the professors I met there, located in Swansea University, offered me an internship position to work with tortoises on Round Island, off of Madagascar. This is just one of the many examples of the connections I made while in Belgium. Overall, this was an incredible experience abroad, further expanding my knowledge in wildlife, professionalism, research, and the cultures of other countries.