



AZFO Youth Scholarship Recipient Essay 2024

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This past weekend I was granted the opportunity to attend the annual AZFO WBBA JAM on behalf of the Arizona Field Ornithologists youth scholarship program. As a senior attending Northern Arizona University I feel as though right now is one of the most important years in my life. Through attending the joint annual meeting I was able to connect with people of similar interests, and network with others. Though I already had plans to earn my masters degree right after graduation, I came to the realization that this is truly what I am passionate about, and want to pursue as a career.

Kicking off with workshops on Friday I was able to learn about bird banding, more specifically hummingbirds. Rafe had provided the Hummingbird Conservation Networks with incredible tools made specifically to band hummingbirds in order to help solve the issue of unsafe banding practices due to their unique anatomy. Out of the whole weekend this definitely had to have been my favorite experience because I have a very big soft spot for hummingbirds.

Since the meeting adjourned a week ago I have been looking into becoming a certified bird bander. I am currently working towards submitting my Masters program application, furthering my education at Northern Arizona University, and getting in touch with banders across the state to attend workshops. I cannot wait to come back to the AZFO WBBA JAM next fall, 2025 and share with others what I have been doing within the past year. Without the help of the Youth Scholarship I would not have gained such valuable experience that I now have in order to pursue a career in natural sciences with the goal of becoming a field ornithologist.