RGGS-AMNH Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program: Student and Alumni Achievements (Spring 2025)

The Richard Gilder Graduate School at the American Museum of Natural History's Comparative Biology Program Ph.D. students publish papers in leading academic journals during their enrollment or subsequently based on research from studies during their dissertation programs. RGGS Ph.D. students and graduates also are highly successful in securing distinguished grants and fellowships, awards, and positions following graduation.

For example, of the dozens of RGGS-AMNH Comparative Biology Ph.D. students eligible for prestigious 3-year U.S. National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships, an exceptional 50% percent have been awarded to date; with additional honorable mentions, ~75% of all eligible RGGS Ph.D. students have received GRFP recognition by NSF. Other prestigious fellowships have included Fulbright, CNPq (Brazilian National Science Foundation), German DAAD, and Gates Millennium, one student earned an NSF EAPSI Fellowship (for dissertation research in China), and three received honorable mentions from the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship program, including one alternate award.

Prior to NSF ending its biology Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant program in 2017, 63% of RGGS Comparative Biology Ph.D. students who applied received these substantial research awards, and the only eligible student who applied to date for the continuing DDRIG program in NSF Biological Anthropology received this award. Students also have been highly successful in garnering substantial research grants from professional societies, foundations, and other non-governmental sources. They are active in presenting their research at, and have secured travel awards to attend, national and international professional conferences, and many have won prestigious student awards at these conferences.

To date, RGGS-AMNH has graduated 51 Ph.Ds. in Comparative Biology, almost all of whom are employed in science, academic, educational, governmental/NGO, or museum fields and organizations. Museum curator, administrative leadership, and tenure/career-track research appointments have included Director of Collections and Research at the Swedish Museum of Natural History and others at the Royal Ontario Museum (Canada), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris, France), and Museum für Naturkunde (Berlin, Germany), as well as numerous faculty positions at universities/colleges across the U.S., including 6 in the NYC metropolitan area alone. Examples of other appointments for RGGS-AMNH Ph.D. graduates include as data scientists at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Senior Bioinformatics Scientist, Tempus Labs, Inc.; Digital Product Manager, Aetna/CVS Health; Next Generation Sequencing and Bioinformatics Specialist, Association of Public Health Laboratories; Senior Scientist for Research & Development, Universal Sequencing Technology; Enterprise Reporter at "The Transmitter", a neuroscience research news publication supported by the Simons Foundation; Museum Specialist, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; Outreach & Communications Specialist, USDA; Biologist & Science Assessor, U.S. EPA; or Program Analyst for the National Invasive Species Council at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

RGGS-AMNH Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Alumni Placements (51 Ph.D. graduates; placements reported/available as of Spring 2025; total % rounded to nearest 0.5 increment)

67% Tenure-track/Career-track Appointments
- 37% tenure-track/career-track faculty and curator positions
- 21.5% career-track, full-time research and scientist professional positions
- 8% other professional appointments in non-profit, government, and private sector organizations

17.5% Early career postdoctoral fellowship positions

8% Term faculty positions

8% Independent research or other