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Ashley M. Dawdy

Postdoctoral scholar studying the movement and behavioral ecology of imperiled elasmobranchs

Education

Ph.D. – Florida State University Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Advised by Dr. Dean Grubbs, *June 2026*

B.S. – Florida State University Biological Science, *Magna cum laude, Marine Biology Honors in the Major, University Honors Program*, *Garnet and Gold Scholar* 2019

Research Experience

Aug 2026 – present **Postdoctoral Scholar,** *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory*
- Advancing conservation of imperiled species through publication, research, and public outreach

Aug 2020 – Aug 2026 **Doctoral Research,** *Florida State University Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*
- Investigating the movement behavior of elasmobranchs of conservation concern, including the Critically Endangered smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) and Atlantic cownose ray (*Rhinoptera bonasus*), to fill knowledge gaps inhibiting species management

May 2019 – Aug 2019 **Research Technician,** *Florida State University Coastal & Marine Laboratory*
- Conducting active and passive acoustic telemetry, paired longline and gill net GulfSPAN shark surveys, and acoustic receiver array maintenance via SCUBA; volunteer recruitment and coordination; teaching assistant for Biology of Fishes field course

Aug 2017 – May 2019 **Marine Biology Honors in the Major Thesis Student,** *Florida State University Biological Science*
- Assessing tidal and diel effects on fine-scale movement behavior of bonnetheads *(Sphyrna tiburo)* and bull sharks *(Carcharhinus leucas)* using active and passive acoustic telemetry

Aug 2017 – May 2018 **Directed Independent Study Program Student,** *Florida State University Biological Science*
- Constructing and testing longline shark bycatch deterrents

Oct 2015 – Apr 2016 **Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Student (UROP),** *Florida State University*
- Investigating the interaction between ecological shifts and evolutionary morphological changes in the Trinidadian guppy (*Poecilia reticulata)* after a selective mortality event

Relevant Teaching and Working Experience

Aug 2020 – Dec 2024 **Graduate Teaching Assistant,** Florida State University
- Courses include *Biological Science II Laboratory* (2020-2021), *Biology of Sharks and Rays field course* (2020-2025), *Animal Diversity Laboratory* (2021), *Eukaryotic Diversity* (2022), *Nonmajors Biology Lab*oratory (2022), *Saturday-at-the-Sea Camp* (2023), and *Marine Biology* (2024)

Jan 2021 – May 2021 **Lead Teaching Assistant (Honcho),** Biological Science II Laboratory, Florida State University
- Leading weekly 'wetlab' including tips for running labs for TA's; designing course material; overseeing student and TA progress during course; fielding student concerns

Aug 2019 – Apr 2020 **Lead Elasmobranch Aquarist,** Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park
- Designing animal training and enrichment plans; conducting immersive public education

Jan 2019 – May 2019 **Section Leader,** Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) Leader Training Course
- Training upcoming UROP leaders to guide undergraduates through their first research endeavors

Aug 2017 – May 2019 **Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Leader**, Florida State University
- Guiding early undergraduates through primary research experiences

Aug 2017 – May 2019 **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant,** Nonmajors Biology Lab, Florida State University

May 2017 – Aug 2017 **Fish & Invertebrates Intern,** *Ocean Voyager* Gallery, Georgia Aquarium
- Conducting enrichment and training sessions with a variety of elasmobranch and teleost species

Sep 2016 – Mar 2017 **Veterinary Clinic Assistant,** Lake Jackson Animal Hospital

Feb 2016 – May 2016 **Mobile Vaccine Clinic Assistant,** VIP Petcare

Jan 2017 – May 2017 **Undergraduate Research Ambassador,** Florida State University
- Promoting undergraduate research at university events such as spring preview and campus tours

Sep 2013 – Dec 2016 **Volunteer Gallery Educator,** Georgia Aquarium
- Promoting animal welfare and conservation; educating guests through active discussion

Sep 2013 – Dec 2016 **Veterinary Technician Assistant,** Steeplechase Veterinary Hospital
- Conducting diagnostic lab work including blood panels, urinalysis, fecal analysis; Assisting in routine medical handlings and surgeries; Administering subcutaneous injections and fluids

Leadership, Outreach, and Training

Jun 2025 – current	**Member in Good Standing,** American Fisheries Society
Aug 2023 – Aug 2024	**Elected Member,** American Elasmobranch Society Nominating Committee
Aug 2023 – Dec 2025	**Chair,** American Elasmobranch Society Student Affairs Committee

- Advocating for student interests on Board of Directors; overseeing SAC activities at the annual AES meeting, including the Student Social, Postdoc Social Hour, and AES fundraising store, raffle, and silent and live auctions to raise money for student travel and research awards

Aug 2022 – Aug 2023	**President,** Ecology and Evolution Research Discussion Group, FSU Ecology and Evolution
Dec 2020 – May 2024	**Boating Safety Committee Student Representative,** FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory

- Representing graduate student body in discussion of field boating safety maximization; Assisting in design of Boating Safety Course for incoming marine lab students

Oct 2020 – current	**Journal Reviewer**

- *Marine Biology, PLoS One, Marine Ecology Progress Series, Environmental Biology of Fishes, Marine Biodiversity, Estuaries and Coasts*

Aug 2020 – current	**Scientist in Every Florida School Outreach Speaker,** Thompson Earth Systems Institute

- Integrating current scientific research and career options into K-12 classrooms

Jul 2020– Aug 2023	**Auction/Donations Coordinator,** American Elasmobranch Society Student Affairs Committee

- Managing society corporate donations and planning annual conference auction events

May 2017 – current	**Scientific Diver,** American Academy of Underwater Sciences

- Deploying and maintaining research equipment via SCUBA; 115 logged science dives

Aug 2018 – current	**Member in Good Standing,** American Elasmobranch Society
Dec 2016 – May 2019	**Diving Safety Officer,** Seminole SCUBA Club

- Planning and coordinating dives; creating, implementing emergency response protocols

June 2011 – current	**SCUBA diver**

- Over 200 logged dives; Certifications include the following:

12-Jun-2011 **Open Water Diver** / PADI
8-Mar-2017 **Emergency Oxygen Provider** / PADI
8-Mar-2017 **Emergency First Responder** / EMERGENCY
26-Apr-2017 **Enriched Air Diver** / PADI
April 2017 **Scientific Diver** / AAUS
29-Apr-2018 **Advanced Open Water Diver** / PADI
14-Jan-2019 **Rescue Diver** / PADI
15-Sep-2021 **Divemaster** / PADI

Awards and Grants

Research Grants:

- **Small Grant,** *Save Our Seas Foundation*, 2024 ($8500) *Smalltooth sawfish migratory behavior*
- **Jack Winn Gramling Endowment**, Florida State University Biological Science, 2023 ($6000)
- **FSUCML Board of Trustees Graduate Student Research Fund**, *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory*, 2022 ($2500)
- **Lerner-Gray Grant for Marine Research,** *American Museum of Natural History,* 2022 ($3455)
- **Guy Harvey Scholarship Award**, *Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation*, 2021 ($5000)
- **Nelson Behavior Research Award**, *American Elasmobranch Society*, 2021 ($1000)
- **FSUCML Board of Trustees Graduate Student Research Fund**, *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory*, 2021 ($1000)
- **Small Grant,** *Save Our Seas Foundation*, 2021($9400) *Cownose ray movement behavior*
- **Helen Louise Lee Undergraduate Research Award**, IDEA Grant, *Florida State University*, 2018 ($4000)

Scholarships:

- **Student Travel Award**, *American Elasmobranch Society,* 2025 ($500)
- **Student Travel Award**, *American Elasmobranch Society,* 2024 ($500)
- **FACT Student Travel Award,** *Florida Atlantic Coast Telemetry* ($150), 2023
- **John Vernberg Student Support Award**, *Southern Association of Marine Laboratories*, 2022 ($500)
- **Martin Family Graduate Award in Biological Sciences,** *Florida State University Biological Science*, 2022 ($1000)
- **Ermine M. Owenby Jr. Fund to Promote Excellence,** *Florida State University*, 2022 ($500)
- **Captain Wayne Hasson Memorial Applied Marine Conservation Graduate Research Scholarship***, Women Divers Hall of Fame,* 2022 ($2000)
- **Bess H. Ward Thesis Award**, *Florida State University*, 2019 ($750)
- **John Mark Caffrey Endowed Scholarship**, *Florida State University*, 2018 ($1000)

Other Awards and Assistantships:

- **William R. and Lenore Mote Eminent Scholar in Marine Biology Research Assistantship**, *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory*, 2020, 2022, 2024 (stipend)
- **Coastal & Marine Conservation Graduate Student Award**, *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory*, 2022 (stipend)
- **Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award Nominee**, *FSU Program for Instructional Excellence,* 2021

Publications

Dawdy, AM, Poulakis, G, Kroetz, A, Wooley, A, Moe, B, Carlson, J, Wiley, T, Grubbs, RD. Migratory Behavior of Large Juvenile and Adult Smalltooth Sawfish in the Southeastern US. *In preparation*

Anderson, AQ, McAree, DM, Carlson, JK, Allen, PJ, **Dawdy, AM,** Drymon, JM. Temporal Shifts in Growth of Blacknose Sharks (Carcharhinus acronotus) in the Northern Gulf of America. *In review*

Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, RD. Drivers of Elasmobranch Community Structure in the Florida Keys and Everglades National Park. *In review*

Dawdy, AM. Investigating the Behavioral Ecology of Imperiled Batoids in Florida Coastal Waters. *Doctoral dissertation, The Florida State University.* 2026.

Carlson, JK, Kroetz, A, Hoover, A, Higgs, JM, Hendon, JM, Hamilton, BR, **Dawdy, AM**, Grubbs, RD, Gardiner, JM, Beaver, JA, and Wiley, TR. Shark nursery grounds and essential fish habitat studies: Report on 2021 field activities in the Gulf of Mexico shark pupping and nursery survey. *NOAA Technical report.* 2022. https://doi.org/10.25923/0g0m-se45

Dawdy, AM, Peterson, CT, Keller, BA, Grubbs, RD. Tidal and Diel Effects on the Movement and Space Use of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) and Bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*) in a Florida Estuary. *Environmental Biology of Fishes*. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10641-022-01264-2

Hamilton, BR, Peterson, CT, **Dawdy, AM,** and Grubbs, RD. Environmental correlates of elasmobranch and large fish distribution in a river-dominated estuary. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 688, 83-98. 2022. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps14019

Dawdy, AM. Go with the Flow: The Effect of Tidal and Diel Cycles on Activity Patterns and Spatial Use of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) and Bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*). *Diginole Online Publication*. Florida State University Libraries. 2019.

Presentations

Seminars:

Dawdy, AM, Unraveling a Sawfish Mortality Event: Insights from Long-Term Movement Data. *FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory Fall 2026 Public Lecture Series.* Oral. October 2026.

Dawdy, AM, International Sawfish Day: Insights on the Movement Behavior of Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the US. *Save Our Seas Foundation Distinguished Speaker Series.* Oral (virtual). October 2025.

Dawdy, AM, Migratory Behavior of the Critically Endangered Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the US: Implications for Conservation and Management. *Sawfish Conservation Society.* Oral (virtual). 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7sm-Trea8Y

Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, R.D. Movement Behavior of the Critically Endangered Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the Southeastern US. *FSU Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Seminar.* Oral. Tallahassee, FL. 2024.

Invited Speaker:

Dawdy, AM. Developing research questions. *Poole's Mill Elementary School 5th grade science*. Virtual. 2024.

Dawdy, AM. Marine Food Webs. *Safety Harbor Middle School 7th grade biology*. Virtual. 2024.

Dawdy, AM. Invited Speaker. *Adventures in Marine Biology*. FSU Marine Biology Course. Oral. 2023.

Dawdy, AM. Research Questions in Marine Science. P*oole's Mille Elementary School 5th grade classes*. Virtual. 2023.

Dawdy, AM. Cownose rays: movement behavior and conservation. *Settles Bridge Elementary School*. Virtual. 2022.

Dawdy, AM. Invited Speaker. *Adventures in Marine Biology*. FSU Marine Biology Course. Oral. 2022.

Dawdy, AM, Bonilla-Johnson, A. Paths to Graduate School. *Women in Math, Science and Engineering.* FSU Coastal and Marine Laboratory. Oral. 2022.

Dawdy, AM. How we use technology to track sharks and rays. *Scientist in Every Florida School*. Virtual. 2022.

Dawdy, AM. Featured Scientist. *Girls Excelling in Mathematics and Science.* South Florida Science Center. Oral (Zoom). 2021.

Dawdy, AM. Invited Speaker. *Students and Careers Research Symposium*. Ecological Society of America. Oral (Zoom). 2021.

Dawdy, AM. Mystery Scientist. *Scientist in Every Florida School Program*. Thompson Earth and Science Institute. Oral (Zoom). 2021.
Dawdy, AM. Invited Speaker. *Adventures in Marine Biology*. FSU Marine Biology Course. Oral. 2021.
Dawdy, AM. Investigating the Behavioral Ecology of Coastal Sharks and Rays Using Acoustic Telemetry. *Seminole SCUBA Club Educational Seminar*. Oral **(**Zoom). 2020.

Conference Talks:

Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, RD. Movement matters: migratory contingents and differential mortality in smalltooth sawfish during the Florida Keys spinning fish event. *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. New Orleans, LA. 2026.
Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, RD. Migratory Behavior of Endangered Smalltooth Sawfish (Pristis pectinata) in the United States. *American Fisheries Society National Annual Meeting.* Oral. San Antonio, TX. 2025.
Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, RD. Ontogenetic Patterns of Cownose Ray *(Rhinoptera bonasus*) Movement Behavior and Habitat Use in Apalachicola Bay, FL. *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. St. Paul, MN. 2025.
Dawdy, AM, Grubbs, RD. Patterns in Movement Behavior of the Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the Southeastern United States. *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. Pittsburgh, PA. 2024.
Dawdy, AM and Grubbs, RD. Movement Behavior of Large Juvenile and Adult Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the Southeastern US. *Florida Atlantic Coast Telemetry (FACT) Winter Meeting.* Oral. St. Augustine, FL. 2024.
Dawdy, AM and Grubbs, RD. Movement Behavior of Large Juvenile and Adult Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in the Florida Keys and Everglades National Park. *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. Norfolk, VA. 2023.
Dawdy, AM and Grubbs, RD**.** Movement Behavior and Habitat Use of Cownose Rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) in Apalachicola Bay, FL**.** *Apalachicola NERR Symposium 2023.* Oral. East Point, FL, 2023.
Dawdy, AM and Grubbs, RD. Movement Behavior and Habitat Use of Cownose Rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) in Apalachicola Bay, FL**.** *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute.* Oral. Fort Walton Beach, FL, 2022.
Dawdy, AM and Grubbs, RD. Movement Behavior and Habitat Use of Cownose Rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) in Apalachicola Bay, FL**.** *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. Spokane, WA, 2022.
Dawdy, AM, Peterson, CT, Grubbs, RD**.** Drivers of Community Structure of Coastal Sharks in Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys. *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Oral. Phoenix, AZ. 2021.
Dawdy, AM, Peterson, CT, Keller, BA, Grubbs, RD. The Effect of Tidal and Diel Cycles on Movement and Spatial Use Patterns of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) and Bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*) in Apalachicola Bay, FL**.** *2020 Virtual Meeting of the American Elasmobranch Society.* Oral (Zoom). 2020.
Dawdy, AM, Peterson, CT, Keller, BA, Grubbs, RD. The Effect of Tidal and Diel Cycles on Spatial Use Patterns of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) and Bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*). *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.* Poster. Snowbird, Utah. 2019.
Dawdy, AM. Invited presenter. Go with the Flow: The Effect of Tidal and Diel Cycles on the Activity Patterns and Spatial Use of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) and Bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*). *College of Arts and Sciences Celebration of Philanthropy.* Poster. Florida State University. 2019.
Dawdy, AM. Go with the Flow: The Effect of Fluctuating River Flow, Salinity, and Tidal Cycles on the Activity Patterns of Bull Sharks (*Carcharhinus Leucas)* and Bonnetheads *(Sphyrna Tiburo). President's Showcase for Undergraduate Research Excellence.* Oral. Florida State University. 2018.
Dawdy, AM, and Menezes, J. The Event: Impact of Morphological Evolution on the Selective Mortality of *Poecilia reticulata. 16th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium*. Poster. Florida State University. 2016**.**

Student Mentorship

2025	*Directed Independent Study:* Carter Strode
2024	*Undergraduate Students:* Iliza Aguiar
	Directed Independent Study: Carter Strode, Stephanie Perez
2023	*Undergraduate Students:* Joshua Assink, Iliza Aguiar
	Directed Independent Study: Stephanie Perez, Grant Walsh
2022	*Undergraduate Students:* Joshua Assink
	Directed Independent Study: Grant Walsh, Cali Falkenstein, Leslie Salmond, Sadie Mack
2021	*Undergraduate Students*: Ezra Holbrook, Hannah Watkins
	Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program: Sadie Mack, Alicia Wilson
	Directed Independent Study: Laura Matheson, Leslie Salmond, Cali Falkenstein, Sadie Mack
2020	*Undergraduate Students*: Ezra Holbrook, Sabrina Wilner, Nora Jolowsky, Adin Domen
	Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program: Sadie Mack, Alicia Wilson

Media and Public Engagement

Alien Sharks: Untamed America. Discovery Channel, Shark Week, 2026. Featured participant/research team member

Mystery of the Spinning Fish. Changing Seas, Season 17. South Florida PBS, 2025. Featured participant/research team member

The Mysterious World of Sawfish. Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom: Protecting the Wild, 2025. Featured participant/research team member

Why Sharks Attack. BBC One, Windfall Films, 2023. Featured participant/research team member

Rachel Hendrix (2023). Feature film directed by Victor Nuñez, starring Lori Singer. Background scientist (extra).

Student Spotlight: Ashley Dawdy. Florida State University College of Arts & Sciences. 2019. Featured scientist

Underwater Scholar. FSU Spectrum Magazine. 2019. Featured scientist

Student Star. Florida State University News. 2019. Featured scientist

Professional Development

Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA) Workshop: North America and Caribbean Atlantic Region. *IUCN,* 2026.

Sawfish blood panel preparation for Florida Keys mortality event investigations. *Ripley's Aquarium,* 2024.

Smalltooth sawfish mortality event emergency response. *Smalltooth Sawfish Recovery and Implementation Team,* 2024.

Ultrasound Methods Workshop. *Disney Veterinary Staff*, 2022.

Space-use and behavioral state estimation from animal telemetry data. Data Workshop. *National Science Foundation,* 2022.

Giving & Receiving Feedback, and Self-Regulated Learning. Teaching Workshop. *Program for Instructional Excellence.* Florida State University. 2021.

How to best support our Diverse Students: Inclusive Teaching Practices Workshop. Teaching Workshop. *Program for Instructional Excellence.* Florida State University. 2021.

Analyzing Acoustic Telemetry Data Using Actel and RSP Packages in R. Data analysis workshop. 2021.

Intro to Visualization and Analysis of Acoustic Telemetry Data Using R. Data workshop. *FACT and Ocean Tracking Networks*, 2020.

Summarizing Telemetry for Report Writing Using R. Data analysis workshop. *FACT and Ocean Tracking Networks*, 2020.

Professional Skills

Fishery-independent sampling*:* drift and anchored longline (pelagic and bottom longline to 500m depth), block rigs, anchored gill nets, beach seines, otter trawl, various fish traps, various hook and line methods, visual surveys via SCUBA

Tagging*:* passive integrated transponders (PIT tags), archival transmitters, satellite transmitter attachment, nylon dart tags, M-style dart tags, t-bar tags, internal anchor tags, Roto tags, Peterson disc tags, internal and external acoustic transmitter implantation, suture methods. Handled more than 1,000 sharks and rays, including >50 endangered smalltooth sawfish.

Telemetry*:* manual and passive tracking receivers, array design/deployment/long-term maintenance of passive monitoring receivers (~7 years managing of an array of ~30 receivers), management of large acoustic databases, participation in acoustic data exchange platforms including iTAG, FACT, and Ocean Tracking Network (OTN)

Animal care*:* animal handling and restraint (fishes, mammals, reptiles), design and implementation of captive enrichment, monitoring and documenting animal behavior and health (ethograms), tube feeding, intravenous and subcutaneous injections/fluids, biological field sampling (muscle biopsy, blood, coelomic fluid), diagnostic sample preparations (blood smear, blood chemistry and electrolytes (IDEXX), urinalysis, fecal analysis, bacterial culturing)

Software: R and RStudio, ArcGIS, Microsoft suite, PRIMER-e, Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat, Tracks, VUE, Fathom

Other skills: Vessel operation up to 30' (over 450 days at sea; over 200 days at the helm), museum specimen preservation, aquarium setup and maintenance, basic carpentry and plumbing, underwater specimen excavation, surface supply diving, underwater search and recovery in zero-visibility environments