

# Olga Milenkaya

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## Current Position 2015 – Present

Assistant Professor of Biology (tenure-track)  
Program Coordinator of Sustainability Minor  
Young Harris College (YHC), Young Harris, Georgia USA

## Education

- Ph.D. Biological Sciences, Virginia Tech (VT), Blacksburg, Virginia 2013  
Validating body condition indices as indicators of individual quality:  
does condition explain intraspecific variation in reproductive success and survival  
among crimson finches (*Neochmia phaeton*)? Advisor: Jeffrey R. Walters
- B.A. Environmental Studies, Warren Wilson College Asheville, North Carolina 2003

## Teaching

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (tenure-track), Young Harris College 2015 – Present

### Upper-level courses

Animal Behavior  
Conservation Biology + 3 hr lab  
Ecology + 3 hr lab  
Vertebrate Zoology + 3 hr lab  
Special Topics: Ornithology  
Independent Study: Captive Animal Biology

### Introductory courses

Ecological & Environmental Studies + 2 hr lab  
Intro. Environmental Studies & Sustainability  
Introduction to General Biology I + 2 hr lab  
Introduction to General Biology II + 2 hr lab

BIOLOGY INSTRUCTOR (tenure-track), Laredo Community College (LCC), Laredo, Texas 2014

Biology for Science Majors I + 2 hr lab  
Biology for Science Majors II + 2 hr lab  
Biology for Non-Science Majors I + 2 hr lab

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 2008 – 2013

Ornithology Lab  
Principles of Biology Lab  
Various guest lectures in Ecology and Ornithology

## Mentoring & Academic Advising

Undergraduate research projects in biology	4 students, YHC	2017 – Present
Sustainability Minor capstone project	1 student, YHC	2017 – Present
Academic advising	10 students/semester, YHC	2016 – Present
Honors Program independent research projects	2 students, YHC	2016 – Present
	5 students, LCC	2014

## Peer-reviewed Publications

12. Kindel, J., Legge, S., **Milenkaya, O.**, & J.R. Walters. 2017. Male-male pair bonding, nesting and egg incubation in a wild passerine. *Journal of Ornithology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10336-017-1495-y>
11. McKay, J.L., Marantelli, P., & **O. Milenkaya**. 2017. *Apalone spinifera* (Spiny Softshell). *Herpetological Review* 48(1): 121.
10. McKay, J.L., & **O. Milenkaya**. 2016. *Stegonotus batjanensis*: diet. *Herpetological Review* 47(2): 316–317.
9. **Milenkaya, O.**, & J.L. McKay. 2016. Observation in the Wild of the Poorly-Known *Varanus yuwonoi*. *Biawak* 10(1): 13–17.
8. **Milenkaya, O.**, Catlin, D., Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2015. Body condition indices predict reproductive success but not survival in a sedentary, tropical bird. *PLOS ONE*. 10(8): e0136582. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136582
7. Catlin, D.H., **Milenkaya, O.**, Hunt, K.L., Friederich, M.J., & J.D. Fraser. 2014. Can river management improve the piping plover's long-term survival on the Missouri River? *Biological Conservation* 180: 196–205.
6. **Milenkaya, O.**, Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2014. Body-condition indices are repeatable across short, but not long, time periods in crimson finches *Neochmia phaeton*. *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology* 87(4): 550–558.
5. **Milenkaya, O.**, Weinstein, N., Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2013. Variation in body condition indices of crimson finches by sex, breeding stage, age, time of day, and year. *Conservation Physiology* 1: doi: 10.1093/conphys/cot020.
4. **Milenkaya, O.**, Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2011. Breeding biology and life history traits of an Australasian tropical granivore, the Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*. *Emu* 111: 312–320.
3. Maurer, G., Double, M.C., **Milenkaya, O.**, Süsser, M., & R. Magrath. 2011. Breaking the rules: sex roles and genetic mating system of the pheasant coucal. *Oecologia* 167: 413–425.
2. Hall, M.L., Murphy, S.A., Churchwell, R., & **O. Milenkaya**. 2010. Interspecific feeding across feeding guilds – male purple-crowned fairy-wren feeds nestling crimson finches. *Corella* 34: 49–50.
1. Doody, J.S., **Milenkaya, O.**, Rhind, D., Eastley, T., & K. Penrose. 2010. *Varanus mitchelli* (Mitchell's Water Monitor) diet and foraging behavior. *Herpetological Review* 41: 233–234.

## Conference & Seminar Presentations

9. **Milenkaya, O.** 2017. Validating body condition indices as indicators of individual quality: Does condition explain intraspecific variation in reproductive success and survival among crimson finches (*Neochmia phaeton*)? Invited seminar presentation at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina, USA.
8. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2013. Testing the condition-quality hypothesis: is body condition a meaningful proxy for individual quality? Invited seminar presentation at Radford University, Radford, Virginia, USA.
7. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2013. Testing the condition-quality hypothesis: condition indices are repeatable but do not predict reproductive success or survival. Oral presentation, Wilson Ornithological Society Meeting, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA. Awarded best graduate student oral presentation (see Awards below)
6. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2012. Condition indices among Crimson Finches are repeatable but do not predict reproductive success or survival. Oral presentation, North American Ornithological Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
5. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2012. Interpreting condition indices as individual quality: a cautionary tale. Poster presentation, VT Research Day, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA.
4. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2012. Condition indices do not predict survival in a wild passerine. Poster presentation, Society for Integrated and Comparative Biology Annual Meeting, Charleston, South Carolina, USA.
3. **Milenkaya, O.** & J.R. Walters. 2011. Variation in avian health parameters across age, sex, year and breeding stage. Poster presentation, VT Research Day, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA.
2. **Milenkaya, O.**, Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2010. Life history and the evolution of clutch size in a tropical granivore. Poster presentation, International Ornithological Congress, Campos do Jordão, São Paulo, Brazil.
1. **Milenkaya, O.**, Legge, S., & J.R. Walters. 2009. Breeding biology and life history traits of a tropical granivore, the Crimson Finch. Oral presentation, Australasian Ornithological Conference, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia.

## Awards, Grants & Sponsorships

YHC Honors Program research grant for K. Eden (undergraduate mentee, granted \$900)	2017
Most Valuable Professor – Awarded by a graduating senior student athlete, YHC	2017
Research Grant – Highlands Plateau Audubon Society (granted \$1020)	2016
Research Grant – Highlands Plateau Audubon Society (granted \$594)	2015
Alexander Wilson Prize for best student oral presentation, Wilson Ornithological Society	2013
Wilson Student Membership Award, Wilson Ornithological Society	2013
Student Travel Award, Wilson Ornithological Society	2012
Conference travel grant, Travel Fund Program, Graduate Student Assembly, VT	2012
Charlotte Mangum Student Support Program, Soc. for Integrated & Comparative Biology	2011
Postgraduate Student Sponsorship, Birds Australia	2009
Ralph E. Carlson Memorial Scholarship in Ornithology, VT	2009
Alton F. Pfaff Cup Award nominee, Warren Wilson College	2004
Community Service Scholarship, Warren Wilson College	2000

### Professional Service

Serve on two Masters advisory committees, Western Carolina University	Fall 2016 – Present
Peer-review manuscripts for various journals: <i>PLOS ONE, Restoration Ecology, Wildlife Society Bulletin, J. of Avian Biology, &amp; others</i>	2012 – Present
Co-chair, Sustainability Committee, YHC	Fall 2017 – Present
Sustainability Committee, YHC	Fall 2016 – Present
Student Conduct Committee, YHC	Fall 2015 – 2017
Biology Search Committee, YHC	Spring 2016
Honor Council Jury, YHC	Fall 2015
General Education Committee, LCC	2014
Undergraduate Research Awards Committee, Dept. Biological Sciences, VT	2012 – 2013
Peer-review grants, Graduate Research Development Program, VT	2010 – 2013
Active member, Biology Graduate Student Association, VT	2008 – 2013
Social Chair, Biology Graduate Student Association, VT	2010 – 2012

### Current Professional Memberships

American Ornithological Society (formerly American Ornithologists' Union)	2010 – Present
Wilson Ornithological Society	2013 – Present
Society for Conservation Biology	2017 – Present
Georgia Academy of Sciences	2017 – Present

### Community Outreach & Volunteerism

Board member of Highlands Plateau Audubon Society, Highlands, NC	2017 – Present
Invited lecturer, Center for Life Enrichment, Highlands NC	2017
Invited lecturer, Zahner Conservation Lectures, Highlands Biological Foundation	2016
Volunteering with a birding club at United High School, Laredo, TX	2014 – 2015
Service to the organizing committee of the Laredo Birding Festival	2014 – 2015
Active member of the Monte Mucho Audubon Society	2014 – 2015
Birding Skills Workshop, birding club, United High School, Laredo, TX	2015
Trip leader at the Laredo Birding Festival	2015
Service as a "Global Ambassador," Cranwell International Center, VT	2012 – 2013
Volunteering with international students, Cranwell International Center, VT	2011 – 2013

### Additional Experiences As Field Technician & Research Assistant

Australian Wildlife Conservancy – Mornington Sanctuary, Australia	Intermittent 2006 – 2008
International Wildlife Consultants, Ltd. – Mongolia	Jun – Aug 2006
Max Planck Institute – Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary, Australia	Mar – May 2006
Australian National University – Northern Territory, Australia	Nov 2005 – Mar 2006
U.S. Forest Service – Redwood Sciences Laboratory, CA, USA	Apr – Oct 2005
National Audubon Society – Seabird Restoration Program, ME, USA	Jun – Aug 2003