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# BIOLOGISTS RECEIVE FUNDING TO STUDY CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON NATIVE FISH

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS WILL TEAM WITH PROFESSORS TO STUDY HOW FISH ADAPT TO RISING TEMPERATURES IN VIRGINIA'S WATERWAYS.**

by [Brian McGuire](#) | September 14, 2020

*Above: A student researcher works in the fish lab.*

*Read time: less than a minute*

The Virginia Academy of Science has awarded funding to two [biology](#) professors, Dr. David Collar and Dr. Jessica Thompson, to further their research on the effect of rising water temperatures in Virginia's estuaries on three native fish species.

A team of undergraduate research assistants will assist Collar and Thompson in studying the predator-escape abilities in mummichog, striped killifish and sheepshead minnow. The species are closely related, but each one lives in different areas of estuaries, where streams meet tidal currents.

By simulating threats to the fish in the lab and then capturing the fishes' behavior using high-speed cameras, the team hopes to determine if the fishes' ability to evade striking predators – powered by a temperature-sensitive muscle – varies among the species based on the variable water temperatures in their habitats.

"Climate change is leading to warmer estuarine temperatures overall, as well as greater fluctuations in water temperature," Thompson said. "Our study will help determine how well these ecologically important and abundant fish species will be able to adapt to these changing conditions."

