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Harper Named Lewis Chair of Biology

January 20, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University's Professor of Biology R. Given Harper has been named the George C. and Ella Beach Lewis Endowed Chair of Biology. Endowed professorships and chairs honor faculty members who have distinguished themselves in terms of teaching, research and service.

An avian ecologist with diverse research interests, Harper's scholarly work ranges from documenting DDT and heavy metal contaminants in North American gray wolves, to estimating the breeding populations of red-tailed hawks and American Kestrels in Illinois. He has been called upon to offer expert testimony during legislative hearings on the impact of development on wildlife, such as strip-mining affecting the nesting of eagles in rural Illinois. National and area media have sought his input on topics that can vary from contaminants found in migratory birds to the effects of climate change.



Professor of Biology
Given Harper

Harper received a bachelor's degree in biology in 1980 from Transylvania University in Kentucky. He earned a master's degree from Western Illinois University (WIU) in zoology in 1983, and earned a doctorate in biology from Illinois State University (ISU) in 1990. He taught at Bradley University, WIU and ISU before coming to Illinois Wesleyan in 1992.

While at Illinois Wesleyan, Harper has served as chair of the Biology Department and co-chair of the Premedical/Pre dental Advisory Committee. He has been active in sustainability efforts on campus, and served as the co-director of the Green Task Force, the co-chair of the Committee for a Sustainable Campus, and the co-director of Environmental Studies. He and the current Director of the Environmental Studies Program Abigail Jahiel contributed a chapter in *Strategies for Sustainability: Stories from the Ivory Tower* (MIT Press, 2004).

Harper's work has been recognized with grants by the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Joyce Foundation. He has presented his research across the United States and the globe, from the American Ornithologists Union in Quebec to the International Ornithological Congress in New Zealand. His work has been published in the *American Naturalist*, *Environmental Pollution*, *Chemosphere*, *Journal of Field Ornithology*, *Archives of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology*, *Journal of Avian Biology*, *Ecology and Behavioral Ecology*.

He is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences, American Association of University Professors, Beta Beta Beta (National Biology Honor Society), Cooper Ornithological Society, National Center for Science Education, Phi Kappa Phi, and the Raptor Research Foundation.

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