

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY
Division of Biology Presents:

**Seasonal Shrinkage and Shrinking Seasons: Using Museums to
Illuminate Phenotypic Plasticity in Small Mammals**
Monday, November 9th, 2026 • 3:30 PM • 232 Ackert Hall



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Successful biodiversity monitoring relies on understanding how organisms apportion energy towards growth, maintenance, and reproduction. Phenotypic proxies can be useful for inferring these processes, but open and freely available trait data remain sparse for most clades, including mammals. This talk will discuss research on energetically expensive traits that are seasonally plastic in some small mammals, including body size, brain size, and gastrointestinal size and form. I will discuss my lab's work to leverage these exciting proxies for energetic insights in small mammals in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. I will also discuss the global landscape of available phenotypic trait data for mammals, and highlight new collaborative efforts to digitize specimen-level traits by a consortium of North American mammal collections. Assembling both standard and non-standard trait data from specimens holds amazing promise for advancing mammalogy, monitoring mammal populations globally, and introducing a new generation of STEM students to ecological and evolutionary concepts using digital specimen data.

If you would like to visit with Dr. Bryan McLean, please contact Dr. Andrew Hope at ahope@ksu.edu.

Coffee & snacks served preceding the seminar in Ackert Hall, Room 225