

## PRESS RELEASE

## KATHERINE ORIYO NAMED 2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Katherine Oriyo of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, has been named a 2022 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

“The Distinguished Senior Award is the most prestigious undergraduate award in CFAES, recognizing the top graduating seniors from each of the academic units on the Columbus campus,” said Steven Neal, CFAES professor and associate dean and director of academic programs.

Oriyo, a forestry, fisheries, and wildlife major from Franklin County, was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that she personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

“One of the hallmarks of our college is an emphasis on student success, and it is heartwarming to see it exemplified through the accomplishments of our students,” Neal said. “Recipients are our future innovators and leaders who have already made an impact within the academic environment at this university and beyond.”

One thing Oriyo is proud of in her time at Ohio State is her ability to pivot.

“The most rewarding experience I have had in my undergraduate career at Ohio State was completing my research project during a pandemic,” she said.

She had originally planned to focus on invasive versus native species—Lake Erie Round Goby and Bluegill Sunfish—in different water conditions in Lake Erie. But the pandemic hit and shut down the lab she was working with. She hoped to delay rather than cancel that research, but the continuing pandemic and lab restrictions finally caused her to shift to similar research in Columbus waterways.

“The whole process was honestly nerve-racking, as I was worried I wouldn’t be able to do my project, but I needed to be flexible and keep communicating with my advisor for any alternative options I could do, which led to my current project being completed over the past year.”

Oriyo is a member of the student chapter of the Fisheries & Wildlife Society and a participant in the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation program, which assists universities in helping underrepresented students attain STEM degrees. She was a student board member of the college’s planning committee for Ohio State’s 150th anniversary—something else that was put on hiatus because of the pandemic.

After graduation, Oriyo plans to take a gap year and pursue the kind of internship experience that the pandemic did not allow.

“Pursuing a career focusing on research, specifically aquatic animals, may be a part of my future,” she said. But she might explore other options with a wildlife agency. She also will consider graduate school. And if she does pursue graduate research, she said she might yet get to Lake Erie to complete her original plan for research, taking a close look at her Lake Erie Round Goby and Bluegill Sunfish.

Due to persisting impacts of the pandemic, celebration of this year’s CFAES Distinguished Seniors took place during a by invitation reception at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center on The Ohio State University’s Columbus campus on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. At the recognition celebration hosted by CFAES dean and vice president for agricultural administration Cathann A. Kress and associate dean and director of academic programs Steven Neal, recipients were presented with special award packages. A YouTube video recognizing the award recipients on the Ohio State—College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences YouTube channel was also released on that same day. View the recognition video at [go.osu.edu/CFAES2022DSA](https://go.osu.edu/CFAES2022DSA).

While this year’s recognition took on a varied format from previous years for the 2022 recipients, Neal said, “We were pleased to be able to acknowledge their commitment to their education and dedication to their time as a student in CFAES by recognizing them with the YouTube video, and via social media and professional networking platforms.”

In autumn 2021, there were 2,859 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing 22 majors and 34 minors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at [go.osu.edu/B4V2](https://go.osu.edu/B4V2).



## **KATHERINE R. ORIYO**

**REYNOLDSBURG, OH**

FORESTRY, FISHERIES, AND WILDLIFE - HONORS

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Photo available by sending a request to [flood.13@osu.edu](mailto:flood.13@osu.edu)

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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