

In memory of Damion Marx

1972 - 2008

Damion E. Marx lost his life on March 13, 2008 while conducting an aerial survey of wading birds nesting in and around Lake Okeechobee. The Cessna 172S he was flying in crashed in a pasture in rural western Martin County at 8:23 am, instantly killing all four men aboard. Damion was a Ph.D. candidate in Integrative Biology at Florida Atlantic University. Also killed were Philip Heidemann and Gareth Akerman of Florida Atlantic University, and the pilot Jeff Rozelle of Kemper Aviation.



The aerial survey was part of Damion's dissertation research on the influence of patch structure on wading bird foraging patterns. His research combined field studies with a modeling approach to elucidate linkages between wading bird foraging patterns and reproductive parameters. He was also interested in the human dimensions of ecosystem restoration, and studied the history of Lake Okeechobee water management practices. Damion's work was deeply important to him because he understood the connection between ecological restoration of Lake Okeechobee and the availability of water for South Florida's urban areas.

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Damion earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Oregon in 1997 and his Master's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University in 2003. He then went on to pursue his Ph.D. at Florida Atlantic University, which was conferred to him posthumously in May 2008. In addition to his passion for wildlife biology, Damion had many interests and hobbies including poker, fishing, traveling, and spending time with family. He excelled in sports including baseball, soccer, and basketball.

Damion is remembered by family and friends as a creative, inquisitive, and confident man who seemed to be able to find a solution for any difficulty confronting him. He believed that he could achieve whatever he set out to do. He was an expressive person whose humor, generosity, and exuberance for life attracted a lively circle of friends. Damion was an entertaining conversationalist who was known to love a good debate. At the same time, friends and acquaintances appreciated him as an uncritical and empathetic person who was able to bring out the best in others.

Damion is survived by his wife Luli and their unborn son Austin Earle Marx, his mother René, his father Doug and wife Charity, his sister Danielle and her husband Troy, his sister Maya, his brother Duncan, and his grandmothers Irene and Clarissa.

