She was catching frogs while other girls were playing with Barbie™, and when it came to school, science and math came easier. Senior Jenny DuBay cherishes time spent fishing with her dad, and she credits him with instilling her interest in nature and setting her on a course to major in wildlife management.

DuBay is not one to hang back when it comes to preparing for the future. She has been involved in two internships with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. One of them with the Shallow Lakes Survey Project, designed to assess current habitat conditions and management effectiveness, and the other banding ducks. The former had DuBay working for Alumna Jessica VanDuyn ’08.

Her mode of operation is to take on only projects she is determined to finish, including organizing students to attend their first-ever Student Conclave at the annual conference of The Wildlife Society. It also meant competing at the conference in the Wildlife Quiz Bowl and taking home first place as member of the team.

She has served as the vice president of the Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the Crookston Student Association representative for the Natural Resources Club. Most recently, DuBay has been involved in an undergraduate research project with Assistant Professor Katy Smith. Together, Smith and DuBay are examining the certain plants and the hyper-accumulation of phosphorus. The project has been going on for more than a year and it will conclude for DuBay with the completion of a senior thesis on the work. However, the research will
be ongoing as funding was recently secured for continued work on the project.

Her first trip to the campus in Crookston sold DuBay on the degree program. She was a community college transfer student who knew what she was after and found Crookston to be a great fit. She was also persuaded when she received a handwritten note from Professor Dan Svedarsky after her visit. “I felt I had found what I was after on my initial visit,” says DuBay. “And, a few weeks into the semester, I knew I had.”

She loved classes in ecology, taught by Assistant Professor Matt Simmons, and ornithology taught by Associate Professor John Loegering. “The prescribed burn and radio telemetry was a lot of fun with Matt Simmons,” she says. “And, it is hard not to pick up on the passion John Loegering has for birds. The birding labs were just awesome.

“I hit the ground running when I came here,” DuBay continues. “I wanted to make up for the time I had missed, but now I try not to spread myself so thin.” That is a bit hard to believe when she talks about her experience in the major. She has been bud capping, woodcock banding at the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge to assist a U of M graduate school student with a research project, duck banding, and attending as many conferences and networking opportunities as possible. She attributes her success to the help of her advisor Phil Baird and the other natural resources faculty.

“I treat this student experience as much like a professional as I can,” DuBay remarks. “I want to make connections that will help me in the future. I want to leave here more than ready for the next challenge.”

It would seem DuBay is well on her way.