

Wildlife of Florida Lab—WIS 3402
Spring Semester 2017, University of Florida

- Instructor contacts:** Dr. Steve A. Johnson, Associate Professor
Email: tadpole@ufl.edu (*Please email Dr. J in Canvas!*)
Phone: Office—352-846-0557, Cell—352.300.6119
- Contact/office hours:** M, W, F 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. by appointment in Newins-Ziegler Hall Room 322; Feel free to email any time via Canvas.
- Course TAs** Ms. Samantha (Sam) Baraoidan, Email: sbaraoidan@ufl.edu
Mr. Travis Thomas, Email: travis.thomas@ufl.edu
Ms. Tessie Offner, Email: toffner@ufl.edu
(*Please contact the TA's directly using your regular email application*)
- Course schedule:** Sec. 9053 Thr. periods 7-8 (1:55-3:50), Newins-Ziegler Hall Room 219
Sec. 9054 Thr. periods 9-10 (4:05-6:00), Newins-Ziegler Hall Room 219
Sec. 2A18 Thr. periods 11-E1 (6:15-8:05), Newins-Ziegler Hall Room 219
- Course format:** This is a face-to-face lab course. Students will work extensively with preserved specimens and identification keys. Lab practicums (exams) must be taken in class, but various materials (e.g., syllabus, learning aids) will be posted for students to download at the course Canvas site. Announcements and email communication will also take place in Canvas.
- Course Fees:** There is \$50 Materials & Supplies fee and a \$30.00 Equipment fee for this lab course. The M&S fee covers expendable supplies such as specimen preparation supplies, storage jars, fuel, field guides, etc. The E fee pays to replace durable items such as dissecting scopes, specimen cabinets, waders, and binoculars. Fees are charged to your UF account, similar to tuition.
- Course website:** Course materials and announcements will be posted at the course Canvas site. Email exchanges with the instructor should also occur in Canvas. As a UF student registered for the class you should have access to this site: "WIS3402L: Wildlife of Florida Lab, Spring 2016". You will need your Gatorlink username and password to log into Canvas at <http://elearning.ufl.edu>. Be sure to click the *blue button* "Log In To E-Learning."
- Suggested course text:** 1) *Key to the Herpetofauna of the Continental United States and Canada* (2012), 2nd edition. R. Powell, J.T. Collins, and E.D. Hooper, Jr., University Press of Kansas (Copies will available in lab for student use.) There are numerous other field guides (e.g., field guides by Peterson, Audubon Society, and Stokes) that you may find useful and

should consider purchasing. Copies of some of these guides will be available for reference in lab.

Do not bring any food or drinks into the lab (water is okay) to avoid attracting insect pests that could damage the study skins! Also be sure to wash your hands with soap & water before and after handling lab specimens.

Course objective, description, and format:

This lab course is designed to familiarize students with the taxonomy and identification of many of Florida's native (some introduced species too) birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. The major goal of the course is for students to be able to identify to species, many of the terrestrial vertebrates (native and introduced) of Florida based on morphological characteristics, behaviors, and vocalizations and to learn to use dichotomous keys to identify unknown species.

This is a very "hands-on" course, and students will work with many specimens (skins, skulls, pickled specimens) in order to learn characters that allow identification to species. Students will learn to identify species through detailed study of preserved specimens and use of dichotomous keys and field guides. Information delivery will consist of study of preserved museum specimens, use of dichotomous keys and guides, brief lectures, class discussion, and field outings.

This is a somewhat self-paced class and attendance will not be taken. However, given the limited amount of scheduled lab time and the large number of species, students are strongly encouraged to make efficient use of lab time. Students who come to lab late, leave early, and generally make poor use of their time in lab will not do well in the course. There will be numerous opportunities for field outings to observe animals in their native habitats, which will enhance species identification skills.

Exams:

There are 4 exams given during the course, and these exams will be in lab practicum format. Practicums will be administered in lab and will consist of numerous stations at which students must answer various questions. Practicums will be timed and students will only have ~2 minutes per station to answer questions. Questions will focus largely on species identification and taxonomy, but may include other questions too. Lab practicum 1 covers mammals; practicum 2 covers birds; practicum 3 covers amphibians; and practicum 4 covers reptiles—lab practicums are not cumulative. Lab practicums will be administered in class during regularly scheduled course periods (see lab schedule below).

Due to the nature of the lab practicum format, missed lab practicums cannot be made up! A missed lab practicum grade can only be replaced by a grade from a cumulative lab exam administered by the instructor at the end of the course. In order to be able to take such a cumulative exam, a student must provide a legitimate, documented excuse as to why the practicum was missed within 3 days of the missed practicum. ***If you know ahead of time that you must miss a scheduled practicum, please immediately inform Dr. J.***

Field Outings:

To provide opportunities to observe wildlife in their native habitats there will be numerous field outings in this class. Field outings are optional, but students are encouraged to attend at least one outing: however, space is limited on most trips. Details will be discussed in lab. **If you sign up for a field outing and cancel later you may be penalized 25 points.**

Lab Field Outing Schedule

- 1) January 27, Friday: Full-day trip to **Crystal River** to swim with manatees and visit **Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park** to see native wildlife Focus: many species
- 2) February 17, Friday: Full-day trip to **Merritt Island NWR** Focus: birds
- 3) March 25-26, Saturday-Sunday: Weekend trip to **Seahorse Key** Focus: herps
- 4) April 1, Saturday AM: Half-day trip at **Sweetwater Wetland** Focus: birds, herps
- 5) April 1, Saturday PM: Half-day trip at **UF's Natural Area Teaching Lab** Focus: herps
- 6) April 4, Tuesday PM: Evening visit to **UF's Bat House** Focus: bats, obviously 😊

University of Florida Policy Statements

Academic Honesty

In 1995 the UF student body enacted a new honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students. In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code. **The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.** On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."** The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior. Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court. (Source: 2007-2008 Undergraduate Catalog) It is assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the instructor. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual

violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/*
 - Counseling Services
 - Groups and Workshops
 - Outreach and Consultation
 - Self-Help Library
 - Wellness Coaching
- U Matter We Care, www.umatter.ufl.edu/
- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu/*

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.