

**WIS 3402**  
**Wildlife of Florida**  
Fall Semester 2008  
University of Florida—IFAS Plant City Education Center

- Instructor:** Dr. Steve A. Johnson, tadpole@ufl.edu  
Office 813-757-2273, Cell 813-217-3692
- Office hours:** Wednesdays 2:00-6:00 p.m., or by appointment
- Office location:** PEPC Bldg., Rm 106
- Lecture/Lab Schedule:** Thursdays 5:00-9:00 p.m., Room 107 NRC Lab, extra lab time will be available as arranged by students and Dr. Johnson
- Course Texts:** 1) *Priceless Florida: Natural Ecosystems and Native Species* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., E. Whitney, D.B. Means, and A. Rudloe, Pineapple Press, Inc.  
2) *A Key to the Amphibians and Reptiles of the Continental United States and Canada*, R Powell, J.T. Collins, and E.D. Hooper, Jr., University Press of Kansas (copies of this guide will be checked out to students for the semester)  
\*Although not required, there are several field guides that I strongly recommend that students purchase. These will be discussed in class.

**Course description, objectives, and format :**

This course is designed to familiarize students with the ecology, behavior, and identification of many of Florida's native (some introduced species too) birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. Students will also learn about Florida's diverse natural communities, which serve as habitat for the state's vertebrates. This is a "hands-on" course with significant laboratory and field components. In the lab students will learn to identify species through detailed study of preserved specimens. Students will become knowledgeable about Florida's natural communities and the habitat preferences of wildlife through lectures and class outings to natural areas throughout the state. Students will also learn some of the field methods used to study vertebrates. By the end of the course students will possess the skills to be able to identify many of Florida's vertebrates in the field based on external characteristics, behaviors, and vocalizations. Students will also be able to identify a diversity of upland and wetland habitats.

Information delivery will consist of lectures, supplemental handouts, class discussion, assigned readings, and field outings. Attendance will not be taken, but students are required to attend lectures, participate in discussions, and attend field outings. Because this course requires students to learn how to identify many of Florida's native species, there is a significant laboratory component. In the lab students will work with many specimens (skins, skulls, pickled specimens) in order to learn characters that allow identification to species. Species identification will be enhanced by visits to native habitats in order to observe living wildlife in natural surroundings.

### **Exams and assignments :**

There will be 5 exams given during the course. Four of these will be lab exams administered in a “lab practicum” format. There will be one lab exam for each vertebrate group: mammals; birds, amphibians, and reptiles. Because there is a very large amount of material to learn in lab sessions, students are strongly encouraged to make time to study specimens during “non-class” hours. The one lecture exam will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, short answer, and brief essay. Exam questions will come from material presented in lectures and from assigned readings in Priceless Ecosystems (PE).

You are responsible for learning both the common and scientific names of each lab specimen (with the exception of birds), and the higher taxonomy for the 4 major vertebrate groups emphasized in the course. The specific higher taxonomy you are responsible for varies per group and will be assigned when each group is presented in class. Taxonomic names must be spelled correctly on exams or they will be marked incorrect.

### **Points and Final Grade:**

Points:            Lab Exams (4 @ 100 pts.) = 400 pts.  
                          Lecture Exam 100 pts.

Grades: **A** (90%>), **B** (80 - 89.9%), **C** (70 – 79.9%), **D** (60 – 69.9%), **E** (<60%) Final grades are based on percentages of total points possible. Scores on exams are not curved.

### **Class Field Outings:**

In my opinion, the best way to learn is via “hands-on” experience. To provide you with opportunities to observe natural ecosystems and native species there are numerous field outings scheduled for the semester. Although attendance of the outings is not mandatory, you are strongly encouraged to participate. You will learn a lot on these trips and have fun. These are your opportunities to see Florida wildlife live and in natural settings. Doing so will significantly enhance your identification abilities. To reward students that attend field outings there will be bonus questions on the lab and lecture exams that you will only be able to answer if you attend the field outings. The schedule for field outings is listed below; additional details for each trip will be discussed in class.

### **Class Field Outing Schedule:**

- 1) Saturday, 13 September: **One-day trip to Ocala National Forest**
- 2) Friday, 19 September: **One-day trip to Rainbow Run**
- 3) Friday-Sunday, 17-19 October: **Weekend trip to Ordway Biological Station**
- 4) Sunday, 23 November: **One-day trip to Merritt Island NWR**
- 5) Thursday-Sunday, 4-7 December: **Weekend trip to Florida Panhandle**

Note: The weekend trips will involve tent camping.

## Class Schedule for Wildlife of Florida

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assigned Readings*</u>
1	28 Aug.	Course and student introductions; Specimen care; Taxonomy, Intro to birds, Bird identification lab	
2	4 Sep.	Intro to Florida; Bird identification lab	PF: Ch. 1-2
3	11 Sep.	Interior Uplands; Bird Identification Lab	PF: Ch. 3-7
4	18 Sep.	Guest lecture and lab: Ryan C. Means—Coastal Plains Institute Pleistocene megafauna, Fossil lab	
5👏	25 Sep.	Bird specimen review, <b>Bird Lab Exam</b>	
6	2 Oct.	Intro to reptiles; Reptile identification lab	
7	9 Oct.	Reptile identification lab	
8	16 Oct.	Interior Wetlands and Waters; Reptile identification lab	PF: Ch. 8-14
9👏	23 Oct.	Reptile specimen review, <b>Reptile Lab Exam</b>	
10	30 Oct.	Intro to mammals; Mammal identification lab	
11	6 Nov.	Coastal Uplands and Wetlands; Mammal identification lab	PF: Ch. 15-17
12👏	13 Nov.	Mammal specimen review, <b>Mammal Lab Exam</b>	
13	20 Nov.	Intro to amphibians; Amphibian identification lab	
14	27 Nov.	<b>Thanksgiving—No Classes</b>	
15	4 Dec.	<b>Class trip to Florida Panhandle—Class time used for travel</b>	
16👏	11 Dec.	Amphibian specimen review, <b>Amphibian Lab Exam</b>	
👏 <b>TBD</b>		<b>Lecture Exam</b>	

\*Supplemental materials will be distributed in class.

👏Exam dates

This schedule is tentative and may change slightly to meet the needs of the students or instructor.

## ***University policies and 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 wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health Services provide 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. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health Services is located on the second floor of the Student Health Care Center in the Infirmary.

- *University Counseling Center*, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)
- *Career Resource Center*, CR-100 JWRU, 392-1602, [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/)
- *Student Mental Health Services*, Rm. 245 Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, [www.shcc.ufl.edu/smhs/](http://www.shcc.ufl.edu/smhs/)
  - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)
  - Center for Sexual Assault / Abuse Recovery & Education (CARE)
  - Eating Disorders Program
  - Employee Assistance Program
  - Suicide Prevention Program

### **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. 0001 Reid Hall, 392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)