

## **Wildlife of Florida (Lab)—WIS 3402L**

Spring Semester 2025, University of Florida

- Instructor contacts:** Dr. Steve A. Johnson (He/His), Professor  
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- Contact/office hours:** Wed. 1:00-4:00PM in Newins-Ziegler Hall Room 216; Feel free to email any time in Canvas. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours.
- Course Grad TAs:** Elion Beaton (He/His) Email: [elion.beaton@ufl.edu](mailto:elion.beaton@ufl.edu)  
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(*Please contact the TAs directly using your regular email application, but **email Dr. J and Lameace in Canvas for all course-related communication***)
- 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 persevered specimens, field guides, and identification keys. Lab practicums (exams) must be taken in class during your normal lab section. There is no text, 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.
- Prerequisites:** WIS 3402 (lecture course)
- 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, gloves, van fuel, field guides, etc. The E fee pays to replace durable items, such a dissecting scopes, specimen cabinets, waders, and binoculars. Fees are charged to your UF account, like tuition.
- Course website:** Course materials and announcements will be posted at the course Canvas site. Email exchanges with the instructors 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 Spg 2025". You will need your Gatorlink username and password to log into Canvas at

<http://elearning.ufl.edu>. Be sure to click the *orange button* “Log In To E-Learning.”

**Suggested course texts:** There is not a required text for the course. However, there are numerous field guides and identification keys (e.g., field guides by Peterson, Audubon Society, Stokes, and others) that you may find useful and should consider purchasing. Copies of these guides will be available for reference in lab and at many of the question stations during lab practicums.

**UF Course Catalog description:**

Laboratory exploring the diversity of wildlife in Florida's ecosystems with emphasis on identification, natural history and ecology of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

**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 and guides to identify unknown species.

This is a very “hands-on” course, and students will work with many specimens (skins, skulls, pickled specimens) 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 several opportunities for field outings to observe animals in their native habitats, which will enhance species identification skills.

**Learning Objectives:**

- 1) Use a dichotomous key, field guides, and first-hand knowledge to correctly identify mammal, bird, amphibian, and reptile specimens to species and common name
- 2) Correctly identify the higher taxonomy of Florida's mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles
- 3) Describe distinguishing features of specimens of mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles
- 4) Identify specific morphological features of mammal, bird, amphibian, and reptile specimens

**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 on species identification and taxonomy as well as morphological features. Lab practicum 1 covers mammals; practicum 2 covers birds; practicum 3 covers reptiles; and practicum 4 covers amphibians—lab practicums are *NOT* cumulative. Lab practicums will be administered in class during regularly scheduled course periods (see lab schedule below). You must attend lab exams during the lab section for which you are registered unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructors.

**Due to the nature of the lab practicum format, exact missed lab practicums cannot be made up!** A missed lab practicum grade can only be replaced by a grade from a cumulative make-up lab exam administered by the instructors at the end of the semester. To be eligible to take a make-up lab exam, a student must provide a legitimate, documented excuse as to why a practicum was missed within 2 days of the missed practicum. ***PLEASE, PLEASE do not miss a lab exam!***

**Points and Final Grade:**

Points:	Lab Practicums (4 @ 100 points each) = 400 points
	<u>Total points for grade = 400 points</u>

Grades: **A** (360 or > pts), **B** (320–359 pts), **C** (280–319 pts), **D** (240–279 pts), **E** (<240)  
Scores on practicums are not curved. No plus or minus grades are given in this course.

**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. Exam gloves will be provided in lab**

## Lab Schedule for Wildlife of Florida—Spring 2025

January 16: Lab Introduction, using dichotomous keys and field guides

### **Mammals**

January 23: Mammals

January 30: Mammals

\*\*February 5 (Wednesday): Extra mammal study period—6-9 PM

☺ **February 6: Lab Practicum—Mammals**

### **Birds**

February 13: Birds

February 20: Birds

\*\*February 26 (Wednesday): Extra bird study period—6-9 PM

☺ **February 27: Lab Practicum—Birds**

### **Reptiles**

March 6: Reptiles—Snakes & Lizards

March 13: Reptiles—Turtles & Crocodilians

March 20: **UF Spring Break**

\*\*March 24 (Monday): Extra reptile study period—6-9 PM, last name A-L only

\*\*March 25 (Tuesday): Extra reptile study period—6-9 PM, last name M-Z only

\*\*March 26 (Wednesday): Extra reptile study period—6-9 PM, all students

☺ **March 27: Lab Practicum—Reptiles**

### **Amphibians**

April 3: Amphibians

April 10: Amphibians

\*\*April 16 (Wednesday): Extra amphibian study period—6-9 PM

☺ **April 17: Lab Practicum—Amphibians**

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

**Field Outings:**

To provide opportunities to observe wildlife in their native habitats there will be several field outings in this class. Ideally, all students would attend each field outing, but the class size and student schedules preclude this option. **Thus, *field outings are optional***, however, space is limited on some trips. Dr. J will post an announcement a week or so before each trip for students to sign-up for a trip. **If you sign up, please don't back out at the last minute, especially when space is limited. Note all trips are weather-dependent, and a lack of student interest may result in trip being cancelled.**

**Lab Field Outings—Spring 2025**

- 1) **1 February, Saturday:** Half-day trip at ***Paynes Prairie State Park*** (Alachua Sink) to observe birds and American alligators (no student limit) This is a 2-3 hour local trip. Since we will meet in the parking lot at the trailhead there is no student limit. You must arrange your own transportation, but Dr. J will drive a van there from campus so up to 14 students can catch a ride with him. Meet at the ***trailhead parking lot*** by 11AM. We will be done by ~1:30PM. Dr. J will send details about the trip.
- 2) **17 February, Monday:** Full-day trip to ***MINWR*** to observe birds (13 student limit): This is a long, all-day trip. We meet at the NZ breezeway at 7:00 AM and will be back possibly as late as 7 PM. Dr. J will send details about the trip.
- 3) **8 March, Saturday AM:** Half-day trip at ***Sweetwater Wetlands*** to observe birds (no student limit): This is a half-day local trip to Sweetwater Wetlands Park. Since we will meet there in the parking lot there is no student limit. You must arrange your own transportation, but Dr. J will drive a van there from campus so up to 14 students can catch a ride with him. Meet at the ***Sweetwater Wetlands*** parking lot by 8AM. We will be done by noon. Dr. J will send details about the trip.

## **University of Florida Policy Statements**

### **Grades and Grade Points**

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

### **Attendance and Make-Up Work**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

### **Online Course Evaluation Process**

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Academic Honesty**

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g., assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code – Regulation and Policy Hub \(ufl.edu\)](https://ufl.edu/student-honor-code).

### **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.

### **Services for 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 requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation

0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu>

### **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](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu) Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library  
Wellness Coaching
- *U Matter We Care*, [www.umatter.ufl.edu/](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/)
- *Career Connections Center*, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- *Student Success Initiative*, <http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu>

### **Student Complaints**

- Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>
- Online Course: <https://pfs.tnt.aa.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint>