5th North Carolina Congress of Herpetology
Joint Meeting of NCPARC & NCHS
May 5-7, 2023
NC Zoo, Asheboro

Sponsors:
Friday, May 5th

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.  Arrival, check-in, and silent auction drop-off

1:00 – 1:30  Welcome, NCPARC – NCHS overview, SEPARC update

1:30 – 2:00  Looking back and moving forward: the Herpetology Club at NC State  
Nathan Vaughan, North Carolina State University

2:00 – 2:30  Investigating the spatiotemporal range dynamics of the Neuse River Waterdog (Necturus lewisi)  
Eric Teitsworth, North Carolina State University

2:30 – 2:45  Break

2:45 – 3:15  Pipe snakes on the Blue Ridge Parkway  
John Sealy, Timber Rattlesnake Conservation Alliance

3:15 – 3:45  NCWRC Alligator Surveys  
Alicia Davis Wassmer, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

3:45 – 4:00  Break

4:00 – 4:30  A silent winter: the concerning decline of the Ornate Chorus Frog (Pseudacris ornata)  
Nathan Shepard, NC Natural Heritage Program

4:30 – 5:00  Reluctant legend: the life and contributions of William McKee Palmer (1935-2023)  
Jeff Beane, North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences

5:00 – 5:15  Announcements

5:15 – 6:00  Break & Social

6:00 – 9:30 p.m.  Poster Session, Silent Auction, and Social (food served 6-8pm)
Saturday, May 6th

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.  Arrival, welcome, and announcements

9:00 – 9:30  Utilizing genetics to develop conservation management plans for the Timber Rattlesnake in North Carolina
Matt Estep, Appalachian State University

9:30 – 10:00  Ecological and fitness correlates of personality in Eastern Box Turtles
John Roe, UNC-Pembroke

10:00 – 10:15  Break

10:15 – 10:45  So anyway, I started blasting: using a pressure washer to save Gopher Frogs
Mike Martin, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

10:45 – 11:15  Intraspécific and Interspecific Aggression in Plethodon cheoah and P. teyahalee and their Implications for the Elevational Distributions of These Species
Carter Ricks, Western Carolina University

11:15 – 11:30  Break

11:30 – 12:00 p.m.  Cold-stunned sea turtles in North Carolina: When, where, how and why?
Matthew Godfrey, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

12:00 – 12:30  The work of the Carolina Wetlands Association
Rick Savage, Carolina Wetlands Association

12:30 – 1:30  Lunch

1:30 – 2:30  NCHS Business Session, and NCPARC working group reports

2:30 – 3:30  Live Auction

3:30 – 4:00  Obstacles and unexpected outcomes in Gopher Frog conservation research
Adam McFall, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, University of Georgia

4:00 – 4:30  Quantifying habitat degradation and restoration potential of breeding sites for the imperiled Carolina Gopher Frog (Rana capito)
Tucker Stonecypher, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, University of Georgia

4:30 – 5:00  The effects of competition on populations of Plethodon montanus
Scott Brueshaber, North Carolina State University

5:00 – 6:00  Raffle Drawing, Announcements, & Social

6:00 – 8:00  Taco Bar

6:00 – 9:30 p.m.  Social, Poster Session, Silent Auction (ends at 8:30)
Field Opportunities:

1. **Uwharrie National Forest**
Join Jeff Beane, State Museum Herpetology Collections Manager, and Stephanie Horton, Special Projects Coordinator for the NC Natural Heritage Program, for a look at habitat and herpetofaunal diversity in the Uwharrie National Forest. The Uwharries represent North Carolina’s oldest mountains, and the largest block of relatively intact forested habitat remaining in the Piedmont. Habitats we will visit may include oak-hickory forest, mixed woods, rock outcrops, streams, seeps, old fields, and ephemeral woodland pools. At least 71 amphibian and reptile species have been documented from the Uwharries. Among those we may expect to encounter are marbled salamander, spotted salamander, northern dusky salamander, southern two-lined salamander, white-spotted slimy salamander, American and Fowler’s toads, northern cricket frog, eastern box turtle, green anole, fence lizard, five-lined and ground skinks, eastern worm snake, black racer, ringneck snake, northern water snake, and queen snake, but many other species are also possible.

2. **Grissom Tract**
Come and explore a Randolph County private property with NCWRC staff Jeff Hall and John Isenhour. The property has had some restoration work completed with some rock veins, pond to ephemeral pool conversion, and some older ponds which are perennial but have limited fish populations. Upland forested areas have plenty of rock outcroppings and Timber Rattlesnakes have been found in the area. The surrounding open area is early succession with either volunteer or planted species. We will discuss management of the property and help with recommendations for the future. We may also visit an upland depression on the edge of the Uwharrie National Forest. This site offers great opportunities for a variety of herp species and little of the herp diversity has been documented, so we will use this field trip as a mini bioblitz to document what we find.

3. **Sandhills Gameland (Scotland Co., NC)**
Join NCWRC staff Mike Martin and Kabryn Mattison, along with Natural Heritage biologist Nate Shepard on a herp-fueled trip through the Sandhills Gameland. Comprised of approximately 65,000 acres, the Sandhills Gameland is owned and managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Many different natural communities can be found on the property, supporting a variety of some of North Carolina’s rarest reptiles and amphibians and including newly described species. We will likely target recently burned upland longleaf where we can help participants understand the importance of prescribed fire in maintaining the diversity of plant and animal life that makes this property one of the best places for enjoying nature in the southeast. Will we hear Pine Barrens Treefrogs calling from shrubby seeps, find a Pine Snake soaking up the warmth on a recent burn, uncover Carolina Sandhills Salamanders along boggy drainages, or spot a Southern Hognose crossing a road? Join us to find out! Also use this as an opportunity to gain familiarity with the HerpMapper app for your smartphone to maintain records of your encounters while also aiding conservation.

4. **Self-tour of the NC Zoo (provided free of charge)**
Spend the day on your own among the many wonderful exhibits with species from all over the world at the NC Zoo.
Additional Meeting Details:

MEETING information (speaker abstracts, poster abstracts, etc.) is available here: https://www.ncparc.org/congress-of-herpetology-2/. Registration will include heavy hors d’oeuvres Friday night, lunch Saturday, dinner Saturday night, and snacks and drinks throughout the meeting.

The NCHS HERP SHOP will have items for sale including an assortment of T-shirts, books, posters, greeting cards, mugs, jewelry, and other items. Do all your Mothers’ Day, Fathers’ Day, and summer birthday shopping in one spot! (Volunteers may be needed to help staff the Herp Shop during the meeting. If you are available and interested, please contact Sandy Durso.)

AUCTIONS: Always one of the more entertaining features of our meetings, we will have both a live and silent auction. Auctions will feature the usual (or unusual) assortment of herpetologically-oriented items. Bring money and a bidding attitude. Credit cards will be accepted. If you have items to donate (literature, prints, photos, posters, artwork, cages, hooks, field equipment, decorative items, toys, clothing, jewelry, etc.), please bring them to the meeting (early), or get them to Jeff Beane or Jeff Hall before the meeting. No live herps or herp parts will be auctioned, but almost anything else goes (as long as it lies somewhere near the realm of legality). Items donated to the auction are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Proceeds will be split between NCPARC and NCHS.

RAFFLE: This meeting’s raffle will again feature an item made and donated by Joe Morgan. This time around, Joe has donated a horned frog – see pic below. Raffle tickets will be available at the registration table for $1 each. You may buy as many as you want, and you need not be present to win. The drawing will be held at the end of the meeting.
Both Friday and Saturday nights will feature a **SOCIAL** with **POSTER SESSION**. Plan to stay for these if you can—our socials are always enjoyable, and an excellent way to get to know other members. Attendees wishing to bring a poster can email abstracts to jeff.hall@ncwildlife.org. Abstracts of posters will be made available to all attendees closer to the meeting.

**FIELD TRIPS** will be held on Sunday. Trips are listed above. Final details will be announced at the meeting. There are no additional fees to attend the field trips on Sunday, but attendees must be registrants of the meeting.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Comfort Inn  
1113 E Dixie Dr  
Asheboro, NC 27203  
336-636-5222  
Must call to book the rates and mention – Zoo Reptile Meeting/ZRM  
We have 40 rooms in the block **until April 21:**  
$89 rate for king or 2 double bedrooms  
30 double bedrooms and 10 king bedrooms are in the block

Quality Inn  
825 W Dixie Dr  
Asheboro, NC 27205  
336-493-4046  
Must call to book the rates and mention – NC ZOO REPTILE  
We have 10 rooms in the block **until April 15:**  
$77 rate for king rooms based on two people  
$87 rate for 2 queen size beds