

WIS 4443C Wetland Wildlife Ecology

Spring 2026
Hybrid, 4 Credits

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Instructor Office Hours and Communication

Office hours are Mondays, 2–4 PM in person or by zoom; any time by cell phone or email; or by appointment. I will be available Mondays 9–11 AM unless I am traveling. I have an open-door policy but call or make an appointment to make sure I will be available. When I'm not available in the office, cell phone calls are welcomed. Don't hesitate to call and leave a message if you get my voicemail—I will get back to you as soon as possible.

The preferred method of communication is by Canvas email. Emile or I will respond within 48 hours except on weekends. For technical issues and questions regarding the navigation and use of Canvas, contact the UF Help Desk online at helpdesk@ufl.edu or by phone at (352) 392-HELP, selecting option 2. We will occasionally send an email via Canvas regarding updates to the syllabus, clarifications of assignments, or changes to due dates. You should be checking your email on a regular basis.

Course Description

The course is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the terminology, history, and ecological concepts associated with wetland ecology and the wildlife species that are dependent on wetlands. To this end we will focus on answering the questions:

- What are wetlands?
- What make wetlands unique and important?
- What are the ecological processes that make them unique?
- How do we classify wetland types?
- What are the wildlife species most associated with and dependent upon wetlands?
- How do we identify these wetland wildlife species?

Field trips will be used to view different types of wetlands and the wildlife associated with them. Through in person lectures, recorded lectures, field trips, and discussions, students will explore the integration of ecological principles with political and economic realities which are necessary for the management, restoration, and conservation of wetlands and the wildlife they support.

Learning Objectives

Following this course, a student should understand:

- The structure, function, and importance of major wetland types
- The types of animals that use wetlands; their abundance and distribution within and among wetlands; and their ecological roles and relationships
- Various management practices used in wetlands and challenges facing the future of wetlands

Following this course, a student should be able to identify and classify representatives of wetland wildlife groups (birds, amphibians, mammals).

Prerequisites

Ecology course or permission of instructor.

Textbooks

Highly Recommended:

1. *Priceless Florida: Natural Ecosystems and Native Species*, by Ellie Whitney, D. Bruce Means, and Anne Rudloe
2. *Wetlands*, 5th Edition, by William J. Mitsch and James G. Gosselink
3. A field guide for bird identifications. Recommendations:
 - a. National Geographic Society, 1987. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*.
 - b. Robbins et al., 1983. *Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification*.

Course Structure

Credit Hours:

This is a 4 credit "C" course, which means there is a lab associated with this course. Three credits of lecture equate up to three hours (150 min. + breaks) of contact time per week, and one credit of lab equates up to three hours of contact time per week. This totals 93 hours of contact time throughout the entire semester. We will have 3 hours of lectures per week, and lab hours will be distributed across Tuesday class periods (wildlife identification) and full day Saturday field labs (double lab periods). One or two of your lectures each week will be recorded with a required quiz. Additionally, for each hour of contact time in class, the student is expected to spend at least 2-3 hours per week out of class for assignments, study time, and class/lab preparation, viewing videos.

Lecture and Lab:

Tuesday. 5 – 8 pm Central, Building 4800, Room 4822

Lecture and lab are integrated in this class, and you receive a single grade which reflects both lab and lecture material. Most weeks (unless otherwise notified) you will spend the first 30 minutes to 1 hour of class time in “lab” learning to identify wetland wildlife including waterfowl, water birds and amphibians. An in-person laboratory quiz will be given at the beginning of each class. The laboratory quiz will cover identification of wildlife species and characteristics used in classification and identification.

As much as one hour of lecture material will be recorded and available through canvas. Lecture recordings (where applicable) will be posted for each week in the respective Module in Canvas. A weekly quiz covering material in lecture recordings will be given in class each week. Mandatory class meetings will occur on Tuesdays at 5:00 – 8:00 pm (Central) to discuss additional lecture material and/or conduct outdoor mini labs and to complete weekly lecture material quizzes.

Students are expected to actively participate during the class meetings. Be prepared to answer questions, and work on group activities. Where applicable, students must watch the recorded lectures before class on Tuesdays at 5 PM (Central) and be prepared for the in-class quiz.

Mandatory field trips will occur off campus on 3-4 Saturdays throughout the semester (see the course schedule below for dates) to reinforce and strengthen the concepts learned in class through hands-on activities. The field labs will be conducted at several locations off campus. Whenever field (outdoor) labs are scheduled, wear appropriate clothing (long pants and sturdy shoes) and bring water, sunscreen, and insect spray. Also, be prepared to take notes (clipboard, pen, and paper, or audio recorder) and pictures (if you have a camera). Outdoor lab work is conducted as scheduled regardless of weather conditions. Never assume lab is canceled. **FIELDTRIP ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. Make-up lab assignments will only be allowed for preapproved, excused absences (i.e. sickness, family emergency etc.). Make up assignment will be a 10-page paper appropriate to the missed lab and assigned by the instructor.**

Course Evaluation

Several evaluation methods will be used to assess how well we achieve our goals and objectives. Because students vary in the evaluation tools that best demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, my evaluations will be based on a combination of test scores (test will include both multiple choice, short answer and long answer questions), participation in discussions and field experiences, and written synthesis of field exercises. Course grading is consistent with [UF grading policies](#).

Assignment Type	Point Value (700 total)	Percent of Final Grade
Lecture Exams	200 (2 at 100 pts each)	29%
Final Exam (not comprehensive)	100	14%

Assignment Type	Point Value (700 total)	Percent of Final Grade
In-class Participation (not just attendance)	25	4%
Class Exercise and Presentation	75	11%
Laboratory Quizzes	100 (11 at 10 pts each, lowest score dropped)	14%
Online Lecture Quizzes	50 (10-11 at 5 pts each)	7%
Field Trips	150 (10 points for participation; 110 total for write-ups)	21%

Grading Scale:

Grade	Percentage
A	93.00-100.00
A-	90.00-92.99
B+	86.00-89.99
B	83.00-85.99
B-	80.00-82.99
C+	76.00-79.99
C	73.00-75.99
C-	70.00-72.99
D+	66.00-69.99
D	63.00-65.99
D-	60.00-62.99
E	<59.99

Late Work Policy

Most assignments and quizzes are turned in electronically via Canvas. Refer to the syllabus schedule or Canvas assignments tab for due dates and times. Without an excused absence, students will not have the option to complete a quiz after the established close date/time. Late work will be penalized 10% for the first day and 5% per day thereafter (weekend days count too!).

Make-up exams will be given only when circumstances beyond a student's control (e.g., illness) are reported and when possible documented (e.g., doctors note). I should be notified of your circumstance before the exam or immediately after the exam. Arrangements for a make-up exam should be made at that time. The make-up exam should be taken **no later than 1 week** after the initial exam unless valid scheduling conflicts make this impossible.

Field trips are **REQUIRED**. If a circumstance beyond your control occurs, you must let me know immediately (before the trip is preferred). The optional assignment (generally an 8-10-page paper on a subject that I feel best substitutes for the field trip) can be used as a makeup for a missed fieldtrip only with my permission (contingent on legitimate excuse for missing required fieldtrip). Write-ups from field trips will be due 1.5 weeks after the trip (the second-class period) unless otherwise indicated.

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/>.

Technical Support

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> | 352-392-4357

Weekly Course Schedules

Lab and Lab Quiz Schedule:

Week	Topic
1	Introduction, Waterfowl Identification
2	Lab Quiz 1: Waterfowl Identification
3	Lab Quiz 2: Waterfowl Identification
Saturday, January 31	FIELD TRIP: St. Marks & Wakulla Springs Read: Priceless Florida, Ch. 11, 13, 14, 16-19 before the trip.
4	Lab Quiz 3: Waterfowl Identification
5	Lab Quiz 4: Waterfowl Identification
6	Lab Quiz 5: Waterfowl Identification
7	No lab (Exam 1, see below) St. Mark's and Wakulla write-up due Feb. 24 at 5 PM
8	Lab Quiz 6: Waterfowl & Waterbird Identification
Saturday, March 7	FIELD TRIP: Wetland Delineation at UWF
9	Lab Quiz 7: Waterbird Identification
10	SPRING BREAK
11	Lab Quiz 8: Waterbird & Amphibian Identification Wetland delineation write-up due March 24 at 5 PM
Saturday, March 28	FIELD TRIP: Area Wetlands at Blackwater, Eglin AFB
12	Lab Quiz 9: Amphibian Identification
13	No lab (Exam 2, see below)
14	Lab Quiz 10: Amphibian Identification Area Wetlands write-up due April 14 at 5 PM
15	Lab Quiz 11: Amphibian & Reptile Identification Mobile Bay write-up due April 23 at 5 PM
Saturday, April 18	FIELD TRIP: Mobile Bay Airboat Tour
16	No lab (Final Exam, see below)

Lecture, Readings, and Quiz/Exam Schedule:

Week	Topic	Reading from <i>Wetlands</i>	Reading from <i>Priceless Florida</i>
1	Syllabus, Waterfowl Identification	-	-
2	Wetland Introduction and History; Review of Ecological Terms	Ch. 1	-
3	Wetland Definition; Tidal Wetlands Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 1	Ch. 2-3 (pp. 48-67), 8, 13 (pp. 455-464)	Ch. 8,16,18
4	Wetland Status and Human Impacts; Inland Wetlands Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 2	Ch. 14,15,16	Ch. 9,11,12,13,14
5	Coastal Wetland Development and Loss; Wetland Birds Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 3	Ch. 14, 15, 16	-
6	Ecosystem Services and Wetland Values; Delineation Concepts; Waterfowl Review Recorded lecture Lecture Quiz 4 Subject for class exercise due Feb. 17 at 5 PM	Ch. 16	-
7	Exam 1	-	-
8	Wading Birds; Wetland Soils Lecture Quiz 5	Ch. 5	-
9	Shorebirds; Hydrology Parts 1 & 2 Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 6 Lecture Quiz 7 Literature review exercise due Mar. 10 at 5 PM	Ch. 4	-
10	SPRING BREAK	-	-
11	Wetland Presentations	-	-
12	Wetland Biogeochemistry Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 8	Ch. 6	-
13	Exam 2	-	-
14	Wetland Development and Succession Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 9	-	-
15	Plant Adaptations; Amphibians; Mammals Recorded Lecture Lecture Quiz 10 Class exercise (written management plan) due April 14 at 5 PM	Ch. 7	Ch. 9, 10, 11
16	FINAL EXAM (covers material since Exam 2)	-	-

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/topics> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact [UMatterWeCare](#) for additional and immediate support.

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. UF CALS offers direct mental health counseling FREE OF CHARGE for students at distance locations (REC's) through an embedded counselor – Dr. Philip Daniels. He has a welcome video which can be viewed here: [Dr. Daniels Welcome Video](#). If you are a student at a UF/IFAS Research and Education Center, you will be directed to Dr. Daniels for consultation and referral services. Email communication has limited confidentiality and is reserved for scheduling, pdaniels@ufl.edu if you are in need of an appointment, please email or call Dr. Daniels directly (352) 392-1575.

Student Complaints:

- Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-studentconduct-code/>.
- Online Course: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

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.

In-class Recordings:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

Privacy and Accessibility Policies

- Instructure (Canvas)
 - [Instructure Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Instructure Accessibility](#)