

## INTRODUCTION

The Herpetology Conference, including the All Florida Herpetological Event, is an annual international meeting held in Florida, U.S.A. (<https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/herpetology-conference/home/>). Walter Auffenburg (1928–2004) and Ray Ashton (1945–2010) were the original founders of the All Florida Herpetological Event. They along with professional herpetologists, students, and private citizens interested in amphibians and reptiles held their first meeting in 1978. All but one of the meetings (Miami) were held in Gainesville, FL, in association with the Florida Museum of Natural History of the University of Florida. Over the years it has attracted people from Florida, the Southeast and beyond, and from around the world. Recognition of the broad geographic coverage of the participants led to a change in its name by adding the “Herpetology Conference” to the title in 2002. The conference includes keynote and oral presentations, posters, a banquet, vendors, and oral and silent auctions. The Reptile and Amphibian Conservation Corps (RACC) founded by Max Nickerson in 2002 underwrites the fiscal responsibilities for the meetings and manages a variety of conservation research projects. Since 2004 all board-approved herpetological funding has been transferred to the RACC Fund of the UF Foundation 501©(3) nonprofit organization. Nickerson also conceived publishing issues of the Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History (hereafter Bulletin) devoted to herpetological papers by attendees of past conferences.

There have been three titles for the Bulletin. It began in 1956 as the Bulletin of the Florida State Museum, Biological Sciences Series. The title was changed to Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History, Biological Sciences Series in 1990 (Vol. 35), and in 1995 (Vol. 37) it became the Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History. Previous issues contained 65 papers on herpetological topics such as natural history, morphology, parasites, and fossils. The first herpetological paper in the Bulletin was by Richard Highton (1956. Systematics and variation of the endemic Florida snake genus *Stilosoma* 1:73–96).

Amber Pitt edited the first issue of the Bulletin comprised papers on amphibians and reptiles by conference attendees (Volume 51, Number 4, 2012). These peer-reviewed papers were the effects of MS-222 on amphibian growth and behavior, population structure of hellbenders in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, population structure of snapping turtles in a northern Florida river, decline of turtle populations in an Ozark river, and movement ecology of Timber Rattlesnakes in South Carolina. The current issue (Volume 54, 2016) demonstrates a growing interest in publishing conference-related manuscripts in the Bulletin with a doubling in the number of papers. Peer-reviewed papers in this issue include: 1) a review of the cascade of events following deforestation on Ozark Hellbenders in Missouri; 2) two papers on introduced lizards in Florida, of the genera *Leiolepis* and *Agama*; 3) geographic variation in body condition of the American Alligator; 4) estuarine ecology of American Alligators; 5) a historical review of American Crocodile distribution in south Florida; 6) multi-species population structure of turtles in a spring-fed, northern Florida river; 7) assessment of diets for captive Amazon Yellow-spotted River Turtle; 8) genetic variation of two species of sea turtles in Oman; and 9) a critique of climate change models for sea turtles. We expect continued interest and plan to publish future issues on amphibians and reptiles by conference participants.

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Joseph C. Mitchell, Editor of Volume 54