



## ALASKA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY



THE ROUGH SKINNED NEWT, MOST NOTABLE CHARACTERISTIC IS THE RED/ORANGE BELLY.

## Amphibians, Reptiles, and YOU!

The Alaska Herpetological Society is a brand new organization that focuses on involving the public in the study of amphibians and reptiles in the 49th! Our mission is to educate our members and to promote sound responsible citizen science. While many people do not realize that herpetofauna

(reptiles and amphibians) occur this far north, Alaska is home to at least eight species:

- Wood Frog
- Columbia Spotted Frog
- Boreal Toad
- Pacific Chorus Frog (Introduced Species)
- Red-Legged Frog (Introduced Species)
- Northwestern Salamander
- Long Toed Salamander
- Rough Skinned Newt



Boreal Toad (*Anaxyrus boreus*)



Wood Frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*)



Rough Skinned Newt (*Taricha granulosa*)



# AHS Partners With SYSTEMS

The Alaska Herpetological Society has partnered with the SYSTEMS Program (Say Yes to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in Schools) in 2012 to develop an amphibian-oriented Service Learning Project (SLP) in Southeast Alaska. Five rural schools are participating in this program including Wrangell, Craig, Klawock, Hydaburg and Metlakatla. We are excited to promote citizen science and the field of herpetology in K12 schools!

STEM education is a process that offers all students an opportunity to make sense of the world holistically. STEM education removes traditional barriers and integrates separate subject areas into a cohesive teaching and learning model. It offers students opportunities to make sense of the world and take charge of their learning, rather than focusing on isolated bits and pieces of content. It is an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work, and the global enterprise. The SYSTEMS Project will find common ground between Alaska Native and Western science and thinking. The project's staff is trained in culturally relevant methods and will have the benefit of working with Alaska Native elders who are able to help address the Alaska Native worldview. Our place-based learning approach focuses on the local community of a student. It provides learners with a path for becoming active citizens and stewards of the environment in the place where they live. We emphasize hands-on, real world experiences that challenge students to learn and solve problems.



## JOSHUA REAM

A DOCTORAL STUDENT AT UAF, PURSUING A DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY HERPETOLOGY. HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF LOCAL HERPETOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND OF HUMAN-AMPHIBIAN INTERACTIONS ON LOCAL LANDSCAPES.



## JOE MORRIS

BORN AND RAISED IN OREGON, JOE MOVED TO ALASKA IN 2009 AFTER FOUR YEARS IN THE MARINE CORPS. CURRENTLY A SOPHOMORE AT UAF WORKING ON HIS UNDERGRAD DEGREE IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. THIS PAST SUMMER HE WORKED WITH U.S.F.W. AS A BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE TECH ON A WOOD FROG STUDY ON THE KENAI PENINSULA.



## GREG CAZEMIER

A RESIDENT OF JUNEAU, GREG IS NEW TO THE HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND A NEW CITIZEN SCIENCE MEMBER. PICKING UP A ENDURING LOVE FOR HERPETOLOGY AND IT'S HISTORY WITHIN THE STATE OF ALASKA. HE IS A 17 YEAR VETERAN OF THE NAVY AND IS EXPECTING TO RETIRE AND REMAIN IN ALASKA.

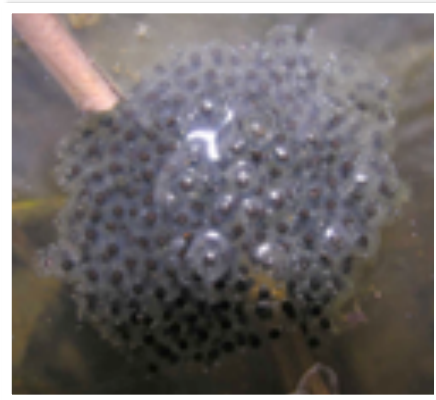
# Did you know...Wood Frogs are the only Amphibian Found North of the Arctic Circle...

## FACTS ABOUT WOOD FROGS:

1. Wood Frogs can be found far from water, in open forest, grassland, tundra and muskeg!
2. The Wood Frog is most easily recognized by its “robber mask.” This black band stretched past both eyes to the eardrums.
3. They are the most widespread of Alaska Amphibians and are even expected to occur on the North Slope, north of the Brooks Range!
4. They turn from eggs to tadpoles to adults rapidly and freeze almost solid in the winter allowing them to survive at high latitudes!
5. They produce a natural anti-freeze to keep the inside of their cells from freezing in the winter!

6. Their voice is a “rapidly repeating duck-like staccato.” They are often confused for ducks!

Adults: 3.1-8.1 cm (1.25-3.25 in) from snout to vent. Have dark “eye mask” that is flanked by a white or cream jaw stripe. Smooth skin. Some individuals have light stripe along spine. Underside is white or cream. They have dorsolateral ridges – two raised lines running down their back. The thumb base of males is dark and enlarged.



**RIGHT: WOOD FROG EGGS**  
**BELOW: LIFE CYCLE**

## CITIZEN SCIENCE INITIATIVES



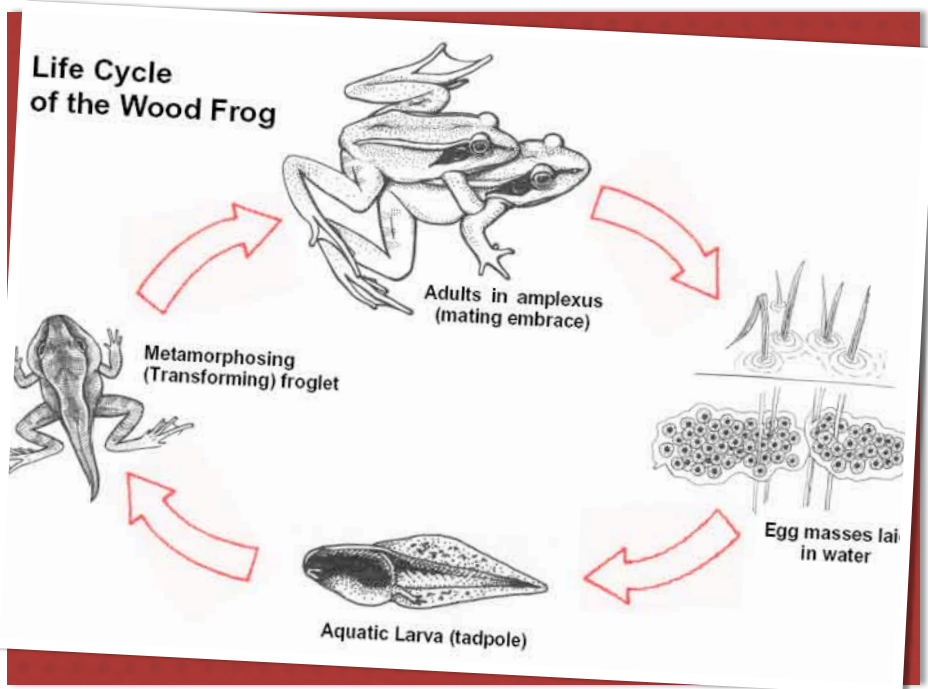
Tlingit Frog Grave House-Chilkat. Picture by Pond 1896-1913. Borrowed from Alaska State Library - Historical Collection. Accessed through Alaska Digital Archives.

The Alaska Herpetological Society (AHS) is committed to promoting the use of citizen science in the study of amphibians and reptiles in Alaska. Not only do citizen science programs provide an excellent opportunity for education and outreach, but they can also result in valuable data that supports the research and management of species. It is our hope that citizen science can help us to improve our knowledge of amphibian and reptile diversity, distribution, abundance, health and population trends in the state - subjects that are currently lacking baseline data.

AHS currently has two central citizen science initiatives that allow the general public to submit their amphibian observations to a central database. Smartphone users can utilize the free application "EpiCollect" to submit photographic vouchers from both Apple and Android platforms.

For those that are interested in submitting their observations but do not have or want to use our smartphone program, observational data can be submitted through our website using our voucher submission.

For more information please visit us: <http://www.akherpsociety.org> (Click on “Citizen Science”)



Life Cycle of Wood Frog borrowed from UAA:  
([http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/herps/amph\\_life.htm](http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/herps/amph_life.htm))



# From the Desks of the AHS Staff:

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## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER:**

Fellow Herp Enthusiasts,

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to Alaska's newest nonprofit organization and the only official entity in the state dedicated to the study and management of amphibians and reptiles. Many of us have a special place in our hearts for these animals that are so often overlooked on the landscape. Despite our limited herpetofaunal species diversity in the North, our representative taxa are severely understudied and poorly understood. Finally Alaska can join the ranks of herpetological organizations across the nation to help rectify this information gap but also to provide a social forum

## **SECRETARY'S CORNER:**

I am very excited to be able to be a part of the beginning of this exceptional Society. We have many great plans in the works that I think you will find educationally enriching, fun and motivating. In the last year I've learned an exceptional amount of information and can't wait to share it and learn more as we all work together.

In the great State of Alaska, there are so many opportunities for our group, and for you as an individual,

## **TREASURER'S CORNER:**

I am honored to be apart of the Alaska Herpetological Society for the early stages of its development and have a say in shaping how the organization follows through with our mission of promoting sound research, providing opportunities in outreach, education, and citizen science for individuals who are

for researchers, managers, pet owners, hobbyists and any individual that shares an affinity for these amazing critters!

I am extremely excited and optimistic about the future of this young organization. Your officers have put in many long hours to get it off the ground and we will continue to do so passionately moving forward. With your help, I envision quick growth, prosperity and success! I invite you to be as actively engaged in the organization as you are willing and able to be. From camping trips to volunteering with school groups, from conferences to citizen science initiatives and art contests, there is something here for everyone.

to get out there, study and learn about herps. There are so many ways for you to be involved already; whether you're a student, educator, or just an interested citizen like me.

Do you ever feel like you just aren't sure what you're looking at or where to look!? We have some great information available on our website, along with some links that will help you along your way. If you are interested, but don't know where to start, please contact any of

interested in amphibians and reptiles. In order for us to accomplish our goals and continuing our mission it is my duty as treasurer to manage the societies funds and seeing how we are in the development stages of our group our funds are limited. That is why I would like to ask you to help me

As with any organization, the strength of our programs will be dependent on member participation. Over time we will mold ourselves and evolve into the entity that our members desire while maintaining our focus on herpetological issues. Your input is incredibly important and will never be ignored. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, comments or concerns. Also, if I can help you in any way, do not hesitate to ask for assistance.

I look forward to meeting and interacting with each of you. Go herps!

Sincerely,

Joshua T. Ream

us, or come to one of our events. Check out our website and see how you can join in today!

Please feel free to contact me for anything. If you are in the Juneau area and want to setup a field trip, hike or a get together to talk herps, contact me! Look forward to all of our upcoming events. Please pass our information and website along to all your friends and family, and "like" us on Facebook!!

~Gregory Cazemier, Treasurer

and your fellow members to get the word out about our great organization and invite your friends to join AHS. I look forward to meeting you at future meeting or events and feel free to drop me line if you have any questions or concerns about AHS.

~Joseph Morris, AHS Treasurer



# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## Upcoming Events

- Mother's Day Frog Walk at Creamers Field, Fairbanks
  - Photo Contest for 2013 Alaska Herp Calendar
  - Guest lectures in coordination with the Anchorage Audubon Society and The Wildlife Society
  - Campbell Creek Science Center student activities
  - Summer camping / herping trip to Denali National Park and Preserve
  - Spring Migration Celebration in Fairbanks
- ...and many more!!

## AHS on the Web

AHS is on the Web! Join us on Facebook: Alaska Herpetological Society.

The AHS Website (<http://www.akherpsociety.org>) has many exceptional tools for your use! Here we will highlight just a few of these.

With our Citizens Science program and SYSTEMS partnership we have an exciting survey that can be filled out either on your iPhone or Android via the EpiCollect app, or online. Not only is this great for education and outreach, this survey will help the research and management of species throughout Alaska. Download the EpiCollect app or fill out the Voucher online today! There is also a field data form available for your use.

There is a large amount of information available regarding the six native amphibians and two introduced species. Have you seen these species, or other species that are not mentioned? All the information, photos and locations of species that you have encountered are helpful, and can be submitted via the above app or voucher.

On the world-wide web there is a large amount of information available. We have some great links to help you in your pursuit of education and to assist in your research.

Feel free to contact any of our board members with any questions, our e-mail addresses are located on the "Contact Us" page.

## Board Meeting Highlights:

The first AHS Board Member meeting was held on March 23, 2012 in Anchorage, AK. The following highlights are provided:

- Preliminary officer positions were accepted.
- Society bylaws adopted, available on our website.
- Alaska Articles of Incorporation accepted.
- Membership dues set at \$10.00 / person

- Official website identified
- Resolution I passed: A Resolution to recognize the University of Alaska's Museum of the North as the central depository of Herpetological Vouchers in Alaska.
- Tentative Annual Meeting date set: Saturday, October 26, 2012, in Anchorage, AK.

\* Minutes are available at <http://akherpsociety.org>

