

EEB 3898

Field Herpetology



Instructor

- Andrew Frank
- PhD candidate in Dr. Elizabeth Jockusch's lab
- Work on Californian blue-tailed skinks
- Did TFA for 2 years before graduate school
- Contact information on eebedia page



What am I going to learn?

- How to identify local amphibians and reptiles
 - By sight **and** sound
- How to identify habitat types
- How to predict which species you should expect to find in that habitat
- How to catch amphibians and reptiles, and handle them once you've caught them
- How to ask and answer a scientific question about amphibians and/or reptiles



What's this class like?



- About one hour of lecture (or less), then outside!
 - It's a field course, duh
- You **WILL** be handling live, wild animals
 - If you have a spine, you are very special to UConn (more on this later)
- You **WILL** get dirty and/or wet
 - I hope nobody is wearing flip flops (yeah, I totally did this)

Syllabus (eebedia page)

Project: Week 1

- Project proposals due this **FRIDAY (email it to me before class begins)**
 - Basically, pitch me your project idea, so you don't try something bonkers
 - One page, double spaced (Times New Roman, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, you know the deal)
 - You'll need to include
 - Your partner's name (only if you choose to work in as a pair)
 - What species (1 or more) you'll be working on
 - The question you want to answer
 - How you think you'll go about answering that question
- Project ideas are posted on the website!

Field Notebooks

- Field notebooks are probably the most important tools in this class.
- Climate data, location data, time-of-year, populations numbers.
- Potential for huge long-term data sets



Setting up your Grinnellian Field Notebook

Page #

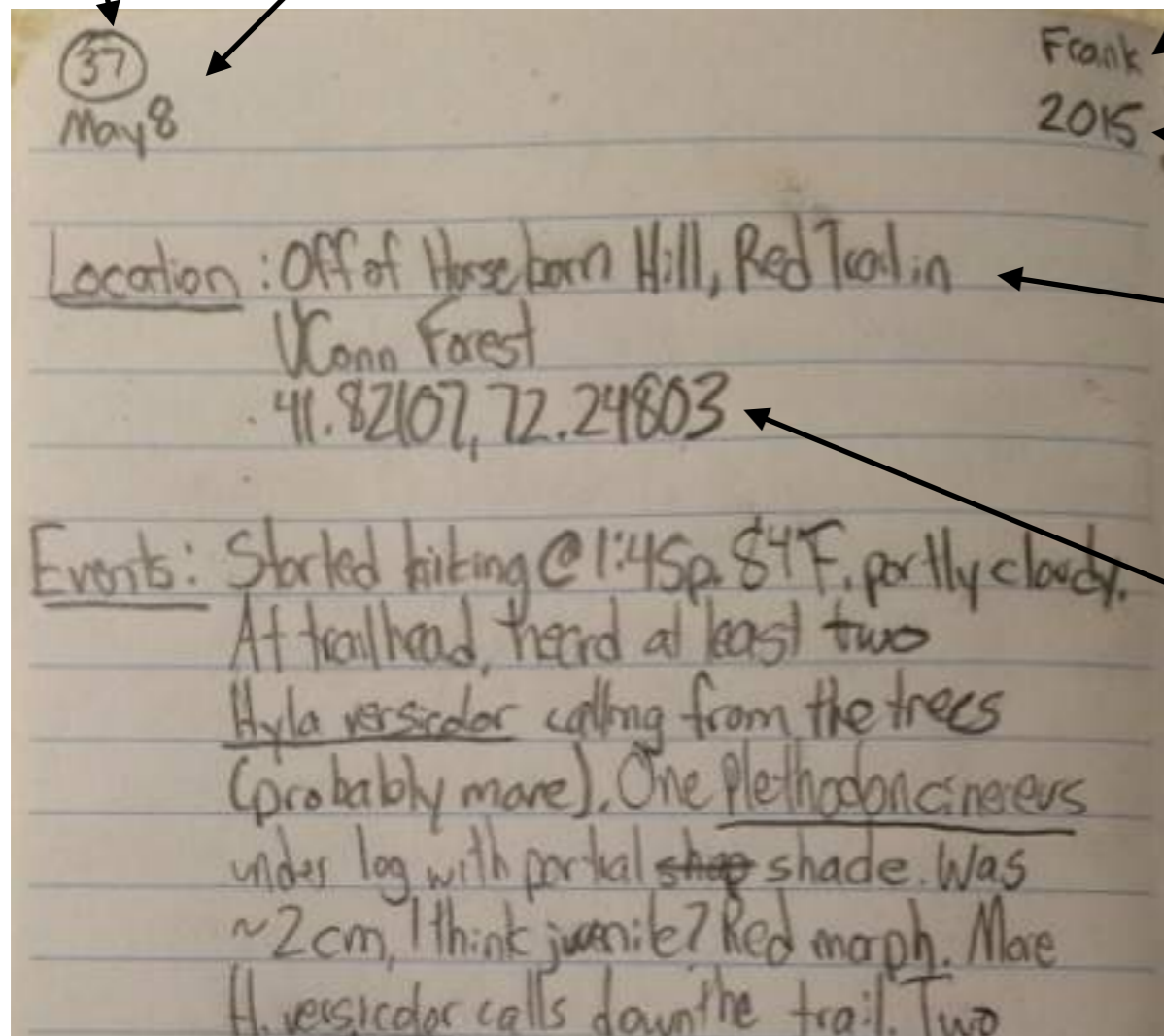
Date

Last Name

Year

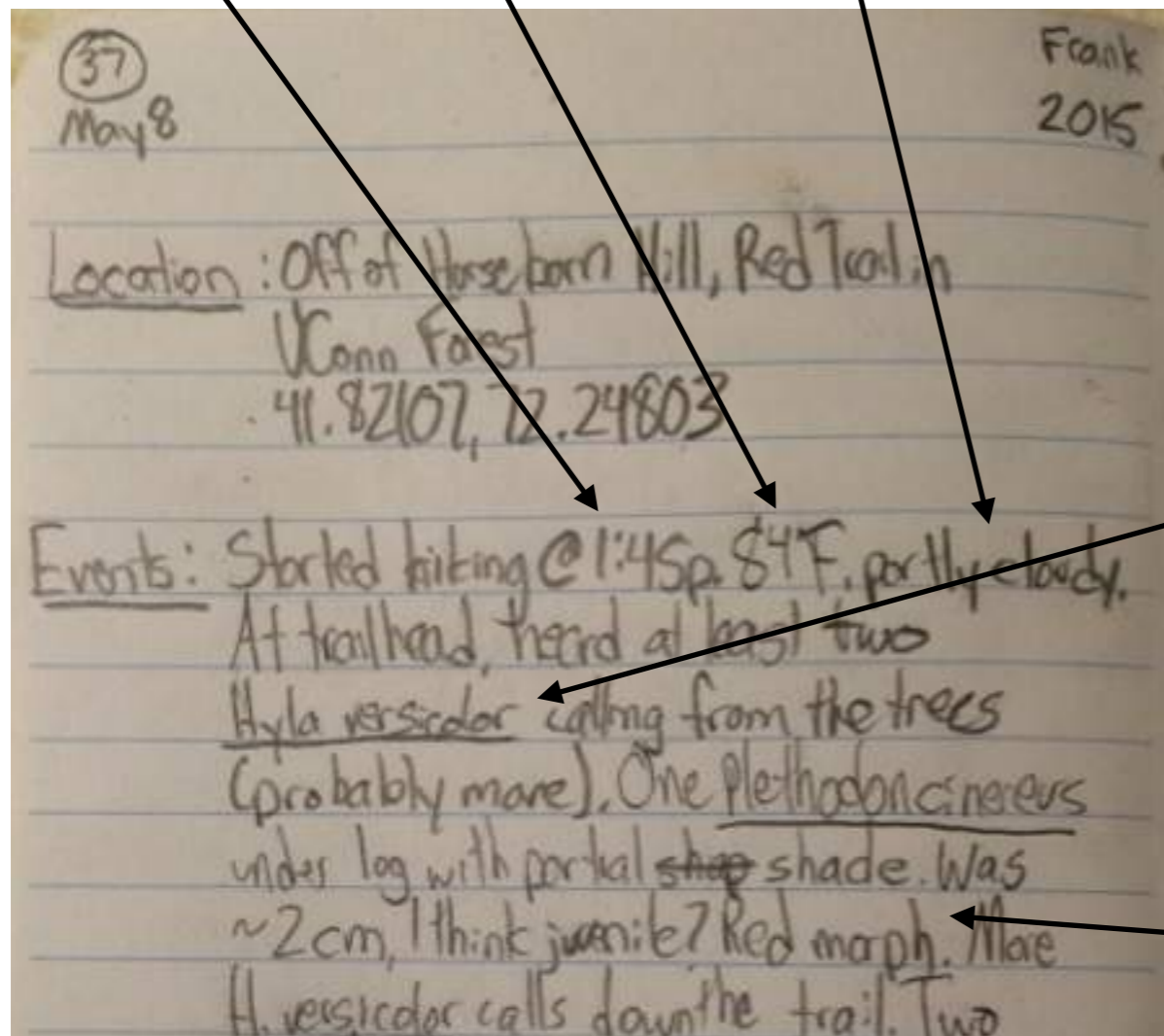
Starting location description

Starting location GPS coordinates



Setting up your Grinnellian Field Notebook

Time Temp Weather



Always use scientific names when you know them, and underline them

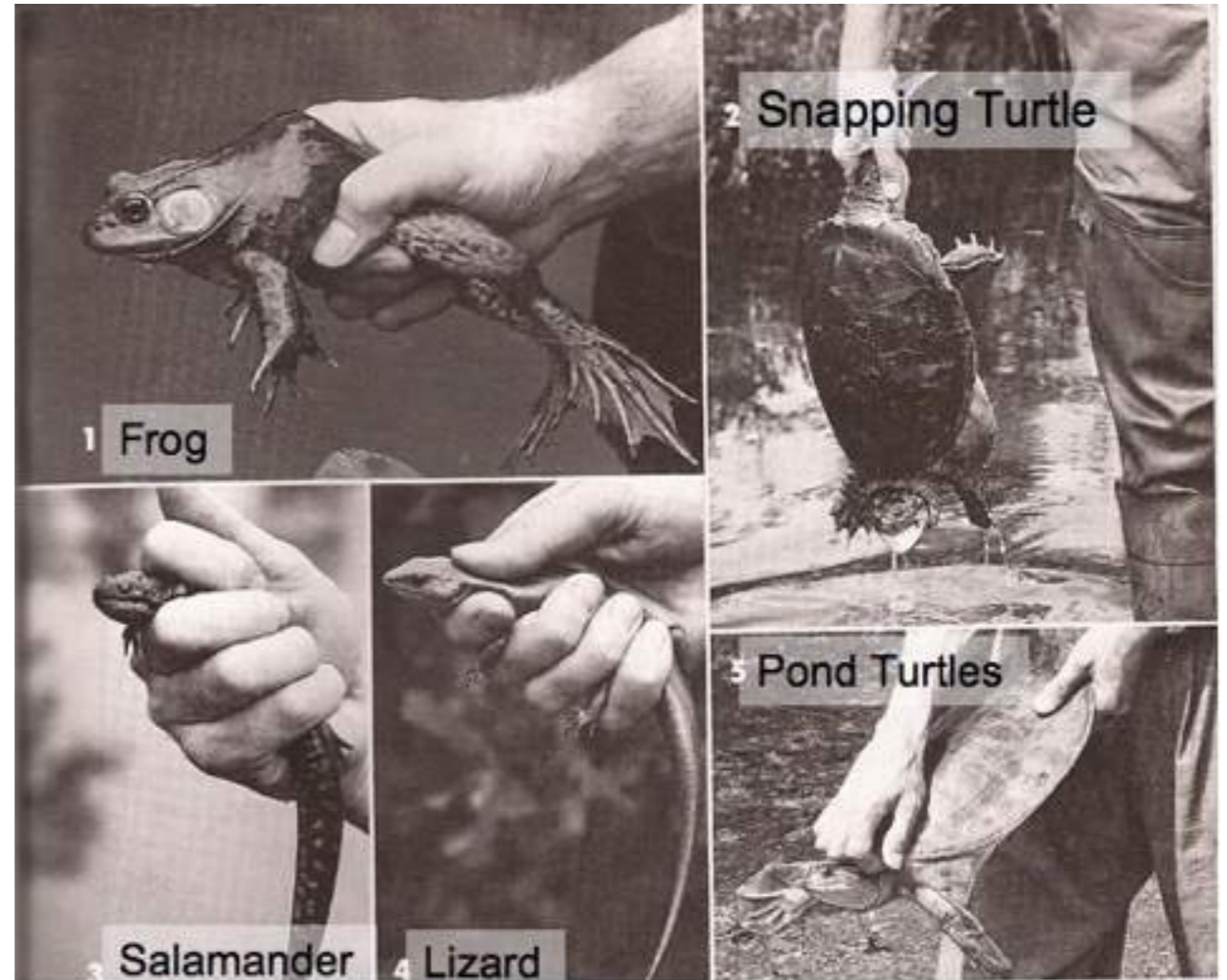
Relevant life history details (see Miller 1942)

IACUC Training

- <http://research.uconn.edu/iacuc/>
- “The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is charged with responsibility for reviewing the University of Connecticut’s program for the humane care and use of animals in research and teaching as described in its Assurance and University Policy.”
- **Before you work with wild animals, you need to learn some basics on handling vertebrates in the field**

IACUC Training

- **Proper care of amphibians and reptiles in the field**
 - Hold the animal correctly (pages 18 & 19 in your field guides)
 - Small salamanders: cup in your hands
 - Snakes: similar to large salamander or lizard grasp, but with other hand securing the body
 - Gently pin down head with stick before picking up (page 16 of your field guide)



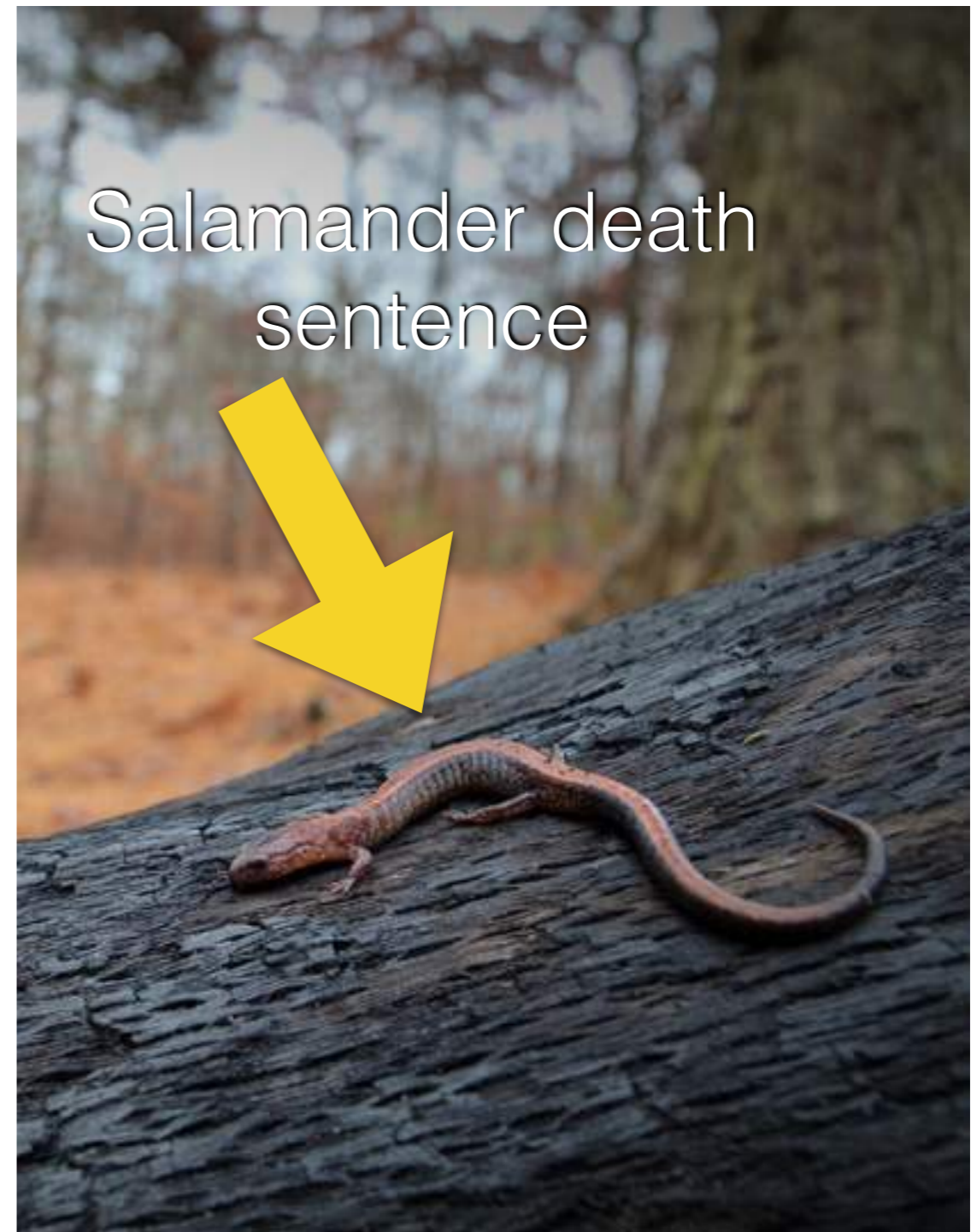
IACUC Training



- **Signs of stress and illness**
- **Expected signs:** Musking, biting, vocalization (frog release call)
- **Unexpected signs:** Increased respiration, lethargy, regurgitation, voiding bladder & bowels
 - *Put the animal down!!*

IACUC Training

- **Environmental sensitivity & releasing at the site of capture**
 - Put animals back *exactly* where you found them
 - If for some reason you can't, put it in the closest possible habitat that mimics the original
 - Always wash your hands before and after you go out into the field and handle animals
 - Protects amphibian skin from bacteria on your hand
 - Protects you from possible salmonella



IACUC Training

- **Field hazards**
 - Poison Ivy
 - Ticks and mosquitos
 - Sunburn
 - ~~Venomous snakes~~
 - We will **not** encounter or handle copperheads or timber rattle snakes

