

Avian Biology ZOO4472 | 2026

Lectures: Tuesdays (12:50-2:45) and Thursdays (12:50-1:40) – 211 Bartram Hall

Labs: Tuesdays (section A) or Thursdays (section B) (8:30-12:35) – 120 Carr Hall or field trip
+ 3 optional Saturday field trips

Instructor:



Dr. Glaucia Del-Rio – she/her
(g.delrio@ufl.edu)
phone: 352-273-1968
320 Dickinson Hall
www.gdel-rio.com

Teaching Assistants:

Shelby Palmer (shelbypalmer@ufl.edu); phone: 660-864-4222; 520A Bartram Hall – she/her
Huy Truong (truong.huy@ufl.edu); 325A Dickinson Hall – he/him

Office hours:

Glaucia Del-Rio, by appointment
Shelby Palmer, TBD
Huy Truong, TBD

Course objectives and goals:

By the end of the course, students will have developed essential skills in ornithological fieldwork and museum collection research techniques. **Students will be capable of identifying the most common Florida's bird species** and will gain a thorough

understanding of avian biology. This includes comprehensive knowledge of bird evolution, systematics, anatomy, physiology, behavior, and ecology.

Grading:

6 lab quizzes: 40 points each → 240 points

2 hourly exams each worth 130 points, no cumulative final → 260 points

Total: 500 points

+ Bonus points in lab assignments and quizzes

A	At least 465 points (93% of 500)
A-	At least 450 points (90% of 500)
B+	At least 435 points (87% of 500)
B	At least 415 points (83% of 500)
B-	At least 400 points (80% of 500)
C+	At least 385 points (77% of 500)
C	At least 365 points (73% of 500)
C-	At least 350 points (70% of 500)
D+	At least 335 points (67% of 500)
D	At least 315 points (63% of 500)
D-	At least 300 points (60% of 500)
E/F	Below 300 points

Slides:

Slides will be posted on Canvas right after class. Lectures will not be on Zoom but will be recorded and posted on Canvas.

Required Text & Equipment:

To succeed in this course, you will need three key items:

1. *Textbook*: We will be using the Handbook of Bird Biology (3rd edition) by Lovette and Fitzpatrick. This is a fantastic resource, and you can access it for free as an e-book through the UF library. Just login with your UF credentials to the UF library website and use the search tool to look for the book.
2. *Binoculars*: A pair of binoculars is essential for you to get the most out of our field trips. The ideal specifications are 8x42, 8x32, or 10x42. If you are looking to purchase a pair, the Vortex Diamondback 8x42 is an excellent and highly recommended model. I want to ensure that every student can fully participate in our fieldwork. If the cost of binoculars is a concern, please do not hesitate to contact me. I have four pairs available to be loaned out for the semester. Just send me an email (g.delrio@ufl.edu) as soon as possible, as they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
3. *App*: Cornell Lab Merlin Bird ID, with US: Southeast package (free)

Recommended Resources: I highly recommend the Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America (7th edition).

Class attendance and make-up exams:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See [UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies](#). Make-up exams will be arranged on a case-by-case system after discussion with TAs and instructor.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “[Get Started With the DRC](#)” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Grading policies:

Please refer to [UF Grades and Grading policies](#).

Course schedule and critical dates:

Month	weekday	Day	Lecture (211 Bartram Hall)	Book chapter	Lab (Tuesdays or Thursdays depending on section - 120 Carr Hall)	Lab section
January	Tu	13	Why we study birds? Bird origins and Evolution 1	Chapter 1	Anatomy and external morphology – Bird ID skins (ducks and waders)	A
	Th	15	Origins and Evolution 2	Chapter 2	Anatomy and external morphology – Bird ID skins (ducks and waders)	B
	Tu	20	Functional Anatomy 1 – Skeletal, Respiratory, Circulatory	Chapter 6	How to bird? – Field trip Sweetwater	A
	Th	22	Phylogenetics and diversity 1	Chapter 2	How to bird? – Field trip Sweetwater	B
	Saturday	24			All day field trip - Merritt Island Refuge	A and B
	Tu	27	Functional Anatomy 2 – Digestive, Urogenital, Sensory	Chapter 6	Using eBird and Merlin – Field trip La Chua trail	A
February	Th	29	Flight	Chapter 5	Using eBird and Merlin – Field trip La Chua trail	B
	Tu	3	Quiz 1 (ducks and waders) * – Feathers	Chapter 4	Bird ID skins (shore birds)	A
	Th	5	Functional Anatomy 3 – Sensory and physiology	Chapters 6 and 7	Bird ID skins (shore birds)	B
	Tu	10	Speciation and Hybridization	Chapter 3	Bird ID skins (raptors, woodpeckers) – Specimen preparation 1	A
	Th	12	Taxonomy		Bird ID skins (raptors, woodpeckers) – Specimen preparation 1	B
	Tu	17	Quiz 2 (shore birds) * – Biogeography	Chapter 2	Banding birds (NATL)	A
	Th	19	Ornithology in museum collections		Banding birds (NATL)	B
March	Tu	24	Phylogenetics and diversity 2	Phylogenetics and diversity 2	Bird ID skins (Passeriformes 1) – Specimen preparation 2	A
	Th	26	Quiz 3 (raptors, woodpeckers) *		Bird ID skins (Passeriformes 1) – Specimen preparation 2	B
	Tu	3	EXAM 1		Reading time – NO CLASS	
	Th	5	Food and foraging	Chapter 8	Reading time – NO CLASS	
	Saturday	7			Field trip - Ocala National Forest	A and B
	Tu	10	Mating and social behavior	Chapter 9	Banding birds (NATL)	A
	Th	12	Vocal behavior	Chapter 10	Banding birds (NATL)	B
	Tu	17	Spring break		No lab	
	Th	19	Spring Break		No lab	
April	Tu	24	Quiz 4 (Passeriformes 1) * – Breeding Biology	Chapter 11	Field trip – acoustic ID	A
	Th	26	Bioacoustics		Field trip – acoustic ID	B
	Tu	31	Migration and dispersal	Chapter 12	Bird ID skins (Passeriformes 2)	A
	Th	2	A deeper look into molt		Bird ID skins (Passeriformes 2)	B
	Tu	7	Ecology of bird populations	Chapter 13	Field trip - migration	A
	Th	9	Quiz 5 (Passeriformes 2) * – Ecology of bird communities	Chapter 14	Field trip - migration	B
	Tu	14	Conservation and disease ecology	Chapter 15	Field trip – Quiz 6 Bird ID in the field	A
April	Th	16	Reading time – NO CLASS		Field trip – Quiz 6 Bird ID in the field	B
	Saturday	19			Field trip - TBD	A and B
	Tu	21	EXAM 2			

Green: week field trips – students should meet TAs in the Biology parking lot or at field trip location as defined with TAs.

Pink: labs with variable locations to be defined with instructor and TAs.

Yellow: all day field trips, not mandatory but fun and great for seeing species not observable in Gainesville area

Orange: exams and quizzes.

*Quizzes will be taken in the Ornithology collection, at Dickinson Hall 320, and then we will walk to Biology for lectures. Please let Glaucia Del-Rio know if you need any accommodations.

Course evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [“Providing Constructive Feedback”](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and **can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals**, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.a.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Policies:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the [UF Conduct Code](#) website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

In-Class Recording policies:

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 education 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. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness:

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- *University Police Department:* Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services:* For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources:

- *E-learning technical support:* Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Career Connections Center:* Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Library Support:* Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- *Teaching Center:* 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio:* Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Academic Complaints:* Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- *Enrollment Management Complaints* (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.