

LANDMARKS

PUBLICATION OF THE WORMSLOE INSTITUTE



VOLUME II | NUMBER I

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Publisher

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COVER IMAGE: Wormsloe's Jones Narrows.

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The Wormsloe Institute has resumed springtime activities along with the return of warmer weather and sunnier days.

On page 1, read campus and research updates from the Director of the University of Georgia Center for Research and Education at Wormsloe (CREW), Mary Socci.

Marisa Mizzoni, one of two recipients of the competitive Wormsloe Fellowship for academic calender 2026-2027, is a first year PhD Ecology student at UGA. By investigating the relationship between contamination and hibernation in overwintering bats species at Wormsloe, Mizzoni aims to determine how pollutants affect overall bat health. Read about her research on page 2.

Our ecologist, Lydia Moore, shares the latest on Wormsloe Institute initiatives on page 6, including a collaboration with The University of Georgia (UGA) and Savannah State University to study the removal of turfgrass to establish native plant gardens. Rylee Olson, a biology major at Savannah State University, writes of her experience with this new project on page 8.

This issue's *Wormsloe Fellows Spotlight* features Dr. Nancy O'Hare (Wormsloe Fellow 2010-2014), who initiated a study of amphibian communities at Wormsloe using pitfall traps. Dr. O'Hare's research, which looked at these groups through the lens of historic land use, is revisited on page 12. On page 16, read about the Wormsloe Institute's new animal trapping project, which revisits some of the locations that Dr. O'Hare investigated during her fellowship. We look forward to sharing updates from the Institute's trap project, and reflect on any correlations with Dr. O'Hare's original research.

I am thrilled to introduce a four-part series - *Liberated Lineage* - authored by Tiara Luten, talented creative writer and filmmaker native to Savannah. Tiara is a descendant of Thomas and Mathilda Luten who were formerly enslaved at Wormsloe. Her *Liberated Lineage* series follows her personal journey to a renewed relationship with her ancestors in her homecoming to Savannah. By exploring her family's heritage at Wormsloe, Tiara takes us along her pilgrimage towards an uncovering of self rooted in family. Read the first installment of Tiara's series on page 22.

We are gearing up for another exciting summer at Wormsloe. Please be on the lookout for a very special summertime edition of *Landmarks* coming to your mailbox soon.

I hope that you are delighted with this issue.

Sincerely,

Keeli M. W. Knight

President, The Wormsloe Institute



A piece of Wormsloe china.



Wormsloe oyster shell midden.

DEAR FRIENDS,

The spring semester is the peak season for classes, conferences, and researchers at CREW — and this year brought a record number of requests. We welcomed University of Georgia courses on natural infrastructure, environment and design, and vector-borne diseases, and for the first time hosted a class from the Lamar Dodd School of Art. (Watch for a special edition of *Landmarks* this summer showcasing the art students' work.)

We also hosted groups from Georgia State University, Georgia Gwinnett College, and Morehead State University, along with graduate students and faculty researchers from UGA. In March, two new students — Piper Cole and Marisa Mizzoni — were awarded the prestigious Wormsloe Fellowship. Piper will investigate the pollination of southern magnolias, and Marisa will study the health and behavior of bats. They join Daniel Gilley, Diane Klement, and Taylor Pearson as Fellows for the 2026–2027 academic year. Marisa introduces her research in this issue of *Landmarks* and the others will share updates in future editions.

Last year, after the UGA Archaeology Field School wrapped up four weeks of fieldwork in June, the summer at CREW was relatively quiet. This year, the new Wormsloe Arts Residency changes that. Just days after the archaeology students return to Athens, four students and one faculty member from the Lamar Dodd School of Art will arrive to spend the month of July onsite, drawing inspiration from Wormsloe's ecology and history. They'll also have the opportunity to connect with our Wormsloe Fellows, who will be dropping by to collect data and work on their own projects.

Your generous support of the Wormsloe Institute helps CREW welcome students and researchers in fields like history, ecology, and the arts, and makes programs like the Wormsloe Fellowship and the Wormsloe Arts Residency possible. Thank you!

Warm regards,

Mary Socci

Director, Center for Research and Education at Wormsloe



ABOVE: A Seminole bat awaits extraction from a mist net. *Photograph by Marisa Mizzoni.*

Meet Marisa Mizzoni, *Wormsloe Fellow*

BY MARISA MIZZONI
Wormsloe Fellow

I first visited Wormsloe in November 2025 for the joint South Carolina-Georgia Bat Blitz. The Blitz is an annual three-day coordinated effort to survey bat communities across a region. Biologists, managers, researchers, and students come together with one common goal: catch as many bats as you can! A substantial amount of data is collected at these events and is used for long-term monitoring of bat communities that helps inform management decisions. Having moved to Athens from Maine a few months prior, the Blitz was my first time getting to work with bat species of the Southeast. The diversity of species captured during our three nights of netting across the coastal plains amazed me. On the second night, our group was lucky enough to capture multiple northern yellow bats (*Dasypterus intermedius*), a species of concern in Georgia. The bats, landscape, and conversations with fellow bat ecologists were especially informative in the development of ideas for my doctoral dissertation. I returned from the Blitz with newfound clarity and excitement to begin formalizing my research questions.

I am a first-year PhD student at the University of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology in Dr. Tamika Lunn's lab. My research will explore how hibernation and winter activity interact with contamination in bat species of the Southeast. Heavy metals and pesticides are pollutants that are widespread throughout habitats used by bats and are readily found in their tissues. There are a limited number of studies that look at the effects of toxicity in wild bat populations, and these studies primarily occurred during summer months. We lack an understanding of how contaminants affect bats during winter months, which are periods of extreme resource scarcity that necessitate hibernation. During hibernation when bats are unable to forage for energy, they depend on stored fat reserves. Some contaminants, such as organochlorine pesticides accumulate in fat stores. As bats burn through stored fat, compounds can be re-released into the body, increasing the risk of harmful effects of pollutants. By integrating contaminant exposure with seasonal physiology and an ecological context, we can better understand when and where contaminants pose the greatest risk to bats.

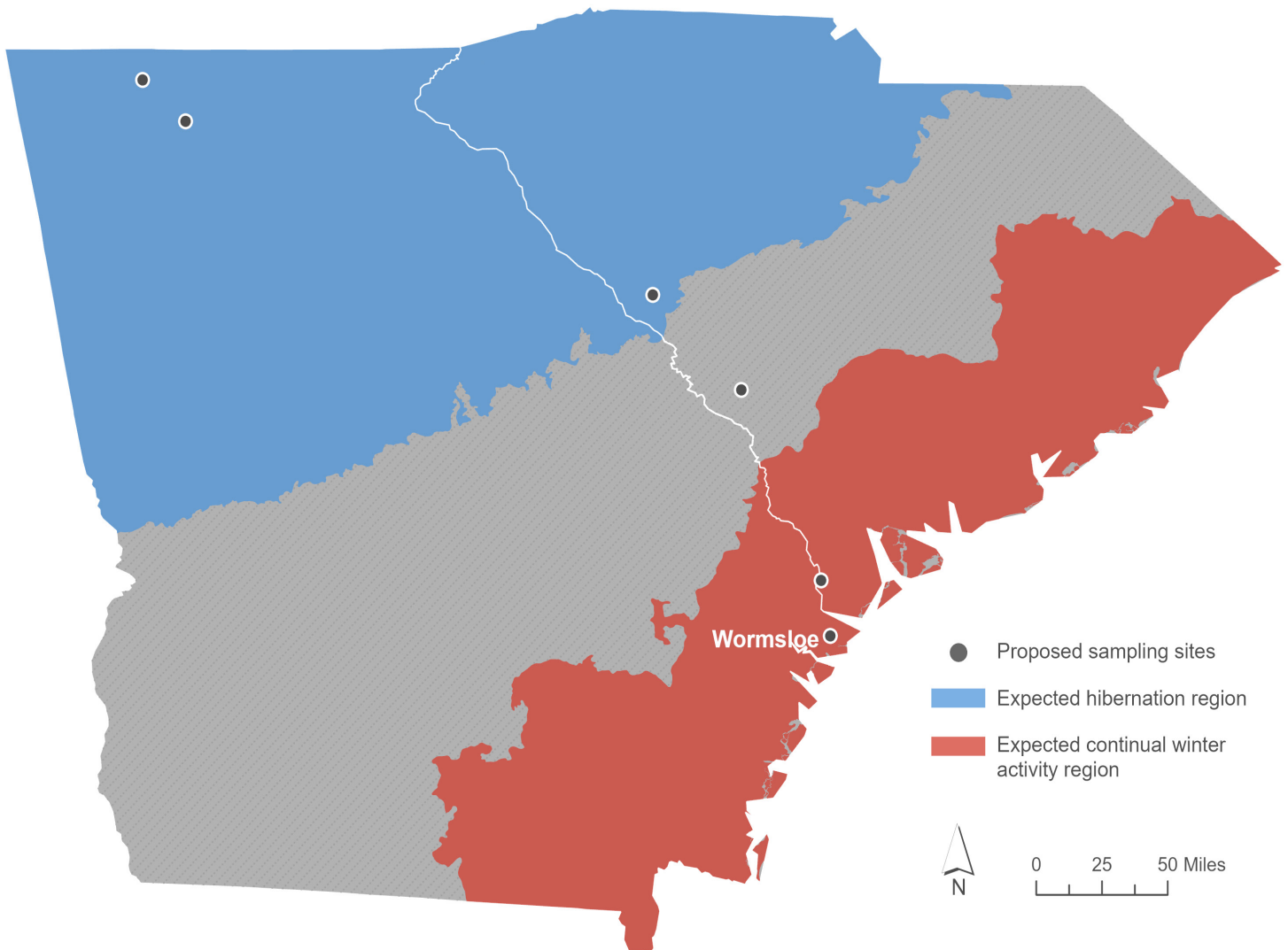
To understand the relationship between hibernation and contamination, I plan to seasonally sample bats in a thermal gradient across Georgia and South Carolina, at sites determined to have high or low pollution levels. While hibernation occurs in colder areas, warmer temperatures on the coast allow for year-round insect abundance and eliminate the need to hibernate. By taking advantage of differential winter activity observed across our study region, we can sample populations of the same species who undergo hibernation in northern regions, as well as populations that remain active through winter months in temperate coastal regions. My field work will be conducted in weeks pre- and post- hibernation, as well as in the summer.

To assess bats for pollution, we plan to take small fur clippings to analyze contaminant concentrations. Blood samples will also be taken from individuals to characterize immune function, stress, and DNA damage to conceptualize health.

Wormsloe will serve as one of my primary sampling locations for my research, representative of a low pollution level environment composed of individuals who remain active throughout the winter.

I was lucky enough to return to Wormsloe on a warm weekend in February—which marked the first netting night of the year! I joined Lydia Moore and two volunteers from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. We hoisted two mist nets over a pond near the south end of Wormsloe, creating an 'L' shape to catch bats as they foraged over the water. As the sun set, bats filled the orange sky, and our field work began. We were kept company by a raccoon that watched atop a tree, eyeshine glowing in the beam of our headlamps. Throughout the night, we captured and processed one Seminole bat (*Lasiurus seminolus*) and multiple evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*). For each bat, we determined the species, sex, as well as recorded weight, measurements, and banded individuals before release. These data help monitor coastal bat populations and are crucial to inform conservation management.

Each night spent on the coast working with local bat species informs my research and helps provide deeper insights into bat ecology and health. I look forward to returning to the Isle of Hope this summer as a Wormsloe Fellow to begin sampling individuals for contaminants for my PhD dissertation, as well as continue to assist with ongoing research with the Wormsloe Institute Bat Ecology Initiative.



ABOVE: Proposed sampling sites across Georgia and South Carolina. Blue and red zones are representations of hypothesized winter activity boundaries to demonstrate our intent to sample over a thermal gradient where bats use differential life-history strategies and are conceptual to provide a visual aid. *Courtesy of Marisa Mizzoni.*



Marisa Mizzoni

What a whirlwind these past six months have been!

In October, the Wormsloe Institute was represented at the annual meeting of the North American Symposium on Bat Research, where we were a collaborator on a poster presentation. We rounded out 2025 with a joint South Carolina-Georgia Bat Blitz in November, hosted by CREW and the Wormsloe Institute. Bat Blitzes are events where researchers from all over the Southeast converge at a single location, enabling three nights of extensive surveys. We had about 75 participants and caught 181 bats at 27 sites between Sapelo Island, Georgia and Brays Island, South Carolina. Information gathered at this Blitz helps wildlife biologists in both states gain more clarity about the ecology of coastal bats.

After a brief respite from field work in December, we initiated a new project in January 2026. In collaboration with Dr. Andrea Moore at Savannah State University, we established three camera traps to help us document elusive species not easily observed on the landscape. Camera traps are a type of passive trap that allow animals to move through them without physically entrapping them. These systems are inexpensive and efficient ways to survey small mammal and reptile communities, for which traditional trapping methods can be prohibitively time consuming. We are using these systems to expand on the work of Nancy O'Hare, past Wormsloe Fellow (2010-2014).

The establishment of the native plant gardens - a collaborative effort between UGA, Savannah State University, and the Wormsloe Institute - was a major endeavor in 2025. Rylee Olsen, Savannah State undergraduate student mentored by Dr. Xiaorong Zhang, was instrumental in documenting and quantifying our progress.

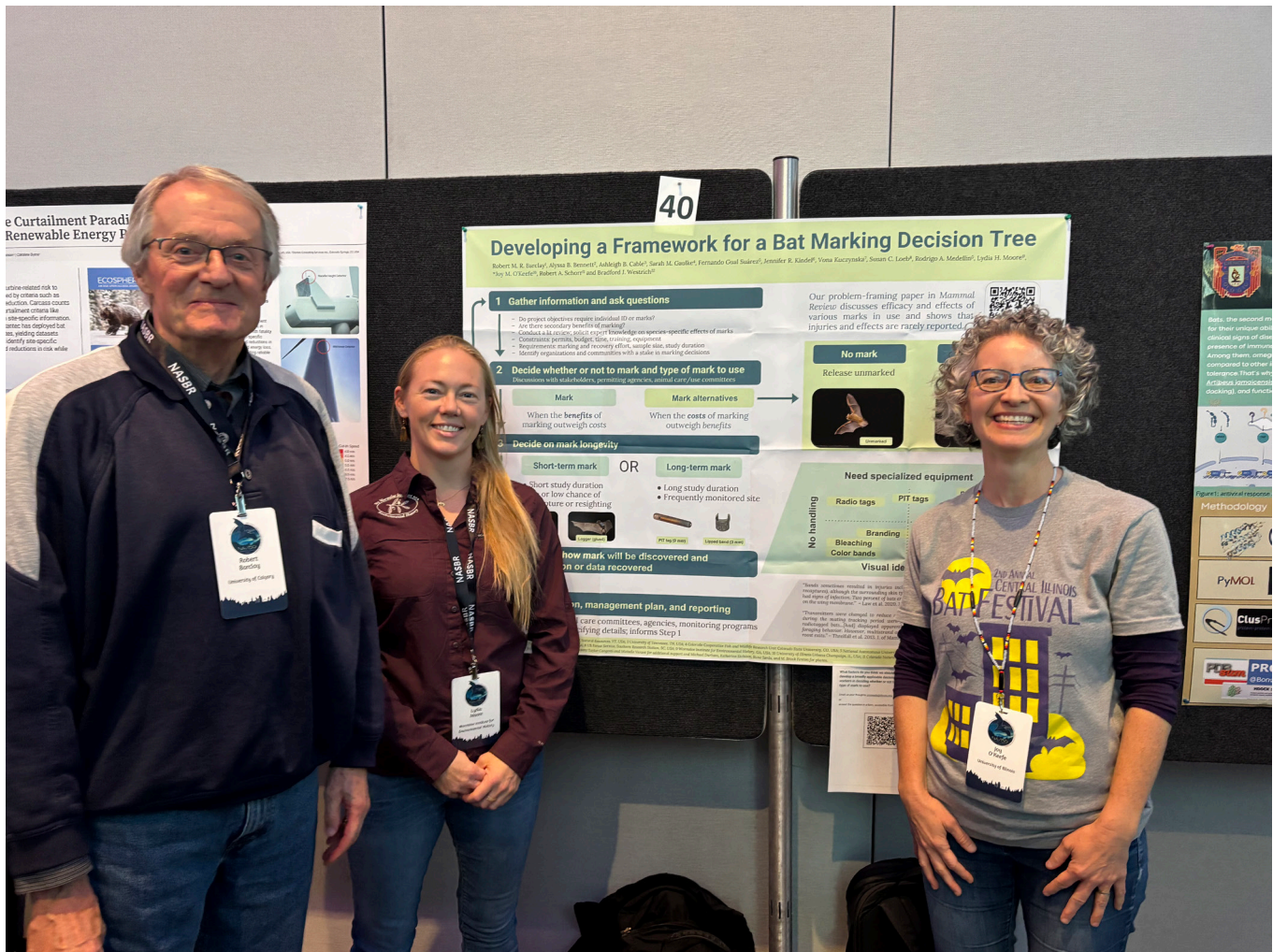
The first night of bat surveys in 2026 coincided with a visit from Wormsloe Fellow Marisa Mizzoni. We are excited for her to begin her project. This is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration between the Wormsloe Institute and the Wormsloe Fellowship program.

This year is off to a great start! We are excited to see these projects continue to progress throughout 2026.

Cheers!

Lydia Moore

Ecologist, The Wormsloe Institute



ABOVE: The Wormsloe Institute collaborated on a poster presentation for the 2025 North American Symposium on Bat Research. From left to right: Robert Barclay (University of Calgary), Lydia Moore (Wormsloe Institute), and Joy O'Keefe (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign).



ABOVE: Rylee Olsen, Savannah State University undergraduate student, completes a groundcover survey with Savannah State biology professor Dr. Xiaorong Zhang.

A CHANGE IN SCENERY: *Restoring Native Flora from Turf Grassland*

BY RYLEE OLSON

*Savannah State University
Student*

Turf lawns have been an American status symbol since the mid-19th century, giving rise to the 50-million acres of ecological “dead zones” across the United States that we see today. Traditional lawns, created from mats of turf grass, create environmental burdens through increased water usage and pesticide runoff while also disrupting the ecology of native plant communities by reducing biodiversity. This project follows the collaborative efforts of the Wormsloe Institute, Savannah State University, and the University of Georgia to transform plots of turfgrass into diverse fields of native grasses and forbs, a botanical term for wildflowers.

RIGHT: A sample location on the Barrows' plot from February 25, 2026 showing minimal grass with an abundance of forbs. *Photograph by Rylee Olson.*



LEFT: The ELC plot on November 18, 2025 prior to burning treatment in January 2026. Depicts the overgrowth of turfgrass on the plot. *Photograph by Rylee Olson.*

My introduction to the research at Wormsloe occurred during the fall of 2024, the second year of my undergraduate program at Savannah State University. At the time, I was investigating the soil health of sections of grass that would become our study plots, unknowingly aiding in the pre-planting research for the project we are working on today. The initial research involved analyzing the soil's chemical composition (including acidity and the amounts of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus) before and after the removal of turfgrasses, which occurred via applications of herbicide followed by burning. We hope to revisit this soil analysis and conduct another comparative survey once the native flora is fully established in the study plots.

While my involvement in this project began in 2024, the beginning of my current contribution was in the spring of 2025 when native grasses and forbs were planted in our study plots. There are three study plots: the lawn in front of UGA's Experiential Learning Center (ELC plot), a plot in a field on Craig and Diana Barrows' property (Barrows' plot), and a control plot that has been maintained as turfgrass. After native plants became established, groundcover surveys were conducted monthly, with an analysis focused on the coverage of nonnative and native grasses, forbs, bare ground, and litter. This allows us to quantify how well our removal methods worked to eradicate turfgrass and promote the establishment of native species. Additionally, these groundcover surveys inform us of changes in plant community composition both within and between study sites.

Our restoration efforts are a work in progress, but so far they appear to be successful! We have seen a consistent trend in decreasing turfgrass coverage and blossoming native flora, especially in the Barrows' plot. There have been inconsistencies in the ELC plot, with some native species thriving and others not doing quite as well, but we are hoping to see change in the coming months. Unfortunately, we will have to address deer predation moving forward. This has been less of an issue in the Barrows' plot, but the ELC plot is being ravaged by grazers, both large and small. Our groundcover surveys allow us to see exactly what is happening at ground level, with traces of deer feces, insect larval casings, and evidence of both eating away at forbs. These are signs of increased biodiversity, but are working against our goal of establishing native plants.

We have a few more years before the transition from turfgrass to native plants is complete. I hope to continue our research next year, and I would love to see our gardens come closer to fruition.

AMPHIBIAN AUDIT

BY DR. NANCY O'HARE
University of Georgia

RIGHT: Southern toad (*Anaxyrus terrestris*).

I had the honor and pleasure of being a Wormsloe Fellow from fall 2010 to spring 2014. My work focused on the impact of historic land use on modern amphibian communities, primarily those of frogs and toads. At heart I am a geographer, and I am currently the lab manager for the Small Satellite Research Laboratory at UGA. Although my career has moved away from field work, the patience, persistence, and attention to detail I learned during my time in the field as a Wormsloe Fellow has helped me manage a lab of nearly 100 students.

The main objective of my dissertation was to compare the amphibian diversity at Wormsloe on the Isle of Hope to historic records on other islands along the coast of Georgia. These islands have similar (but not identical!) land use histories, including forest clearing for agriculture and development, forest regrowth following cessation of farming, ditch and pond construction to manipulate freshwater resources, and rainfall diversion into canals instead of allowing it to replenish groundwater. Furthermore, the islands have varying levels of protection, with some islands entirely within conservation areas and not at threat of development while others are only partially protected. I wanted to determine if aspects of each island, such as size, habitat, and historic land use, correlate with the species of amphibians we see today.



I accomplished this goal by using multiple kinds of survey methods at Wormsloe and comparing my captures to recent trapping data and literature records in conservation areas on twelve other Georgian islands. Limited freshwater resources on islands likely influence the reproductive success of amphibians, which rely on freshwater to breed. Because of this, I chose five sites at Wormsloe that were close to seasonal freshwater depressions where frogs and toads should congregate in large numbers for the purpose of breeding. At these five sites I constructed pitfall trap arrays, which consist of 5-gallon buckets buried flush with the ground separated by silt fences. Animals traveling to and from the freshwater depressions encounter the silt fence and walk along it until they fall into the 5-gallon buckets. I also placed 1–2-inch diameter sections of PVC pipes vertically on trees in a random fashion around the freshwater depressions. Because these pipes attract tree frogs, they are a great way to sample this group. In addition to these two trapping methods, I also surveyed opportunistically, visually looking for frog egg masses as well as using the assistance of Craig and Diana Barrow's hunting dog named Merlot, who had an affinity for scenting box turtles. Although my project specifically focused on amphibians, I also documented any reptiles encountered during these surveys.

The literature review found that, collectively, the twelve islands included in the study host 23 species of amphibian, just shy of the 26 species found on the mainland. Individual islands had between 5 to 19 species, with larger islands having more species. Because these larger islands also had a greater diversity in type of habitat, we could not isolate whether it was the size of the island or the abundance of types of habitat that drove this trend. Not surprisingly, the species found on the greatest number of islands were those with specific life history characteristics that gave them an advantage in habitats with limited freshwater, including having the longest life span, laying the greatest number of eggs, and having a short tadpole stage (<60 days). These species, which include tree frogs (*Hyla* spp), southern toads (*Anaxyrus terrestris*), and spadefoot toads (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*), can persist on islands because these traits allow them to take advantage of ephemeral and inconsistent freshwater sources. Their relatively long lifespan allows them to live through years when there is little to no freshwater and then produce great quantities of eggs during rainy years. The short tadpole stage allows these species to take advantage of even small amounts of rainfall, allowing tadpoles to develop into baby frogs before ponds dry up.



ABOVE: Mix of southern and eastern spadefoot toads caught on a single, rainy spring night. While mating pairs were observed in the water, no egg masses were laid. This led to the discovery of a salinity issue. *Courtesy of Nancy O'Hare.*



ABOVE: Eastern spadefoot toad (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*).

The combination of survey methods at Wormsloe documented 21 total species (12 reptiles and 9 amphibians) over the course of three years, which is less than a third of the total species found on the adjacent mainland. The pitfall traps at Wormsloe captured 1,135 individuals of 19 species, although almost 86% of these individuals were either southern toads or eastern spadefoot toads. Nearly half of the captures of these two species occurred on one very rainy night, during which I also observed mating pairs in the water. No subsequent egg masses were laid, prompting me to test the salinity of these ponds - I then discovered these depressions had a salinity issue.

Drainage ditches are a land-use legacy common across many Georgian islands. All five sites at Wormsloe currently have drainage ditches connecting the freshwater depressions to tidal saltwater marsh. At least three of the five sites have had these drainage ditches since 1897, according to a map showing the northern portion of Isle of Hope in that year. Historically, sluice gates would have been used to control tidal influx but these were removed at some point. Without sluice gates, tidal influx along the ditches reaches inland to seasonal freshwater depressions, creating brackish water. Consequently, the ability of some amphibian species to persist at Wormsloe is uncertain if inland freshwater resources continue to be degraded by this saltwater influx, especially with the threat of increased sea level rise.

As a geographer, having the opportunity to relate amphibian communities to shifting patterns in the landscape was a pleasure. It is important that we continue to monitor changes in amphibian populations, as amphibians are especially sensitive to environmental degradation and changes in relative species abundance can indicate major environmental shifts. Monitoring is particularly critical at places like Wormsloe, which carry the weight of both historical and ecological significance.



ABOVE: Merlot found 19 of the 21 eastern box turtles at Wormsloe. Left is Merlot with a box turtle. Top right is Merlot who loved rides in the golf cart. Bottom right are turtles Merlot found in a few hours in a single day. Note variety of colors. *Courtesy of Nancy O'Hare.*



Dr. Nancy O'Hare

Photograph Citations:

Southern toad: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory. (2026). [Southern Toad]. [<https://srelherp.uga.edu/frogs-and-toads/southern-toad/>].

Eastern spadefoot toad: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory. (2026). [Eastern Spadefoot Toad]. [<https://srelherp.uga.edu/frogs-and-toads/eastern-spadefoot-toad/>].

Smile For The Camera!

BY LYDIA MOORE

Wormsloe Institute Ecologist



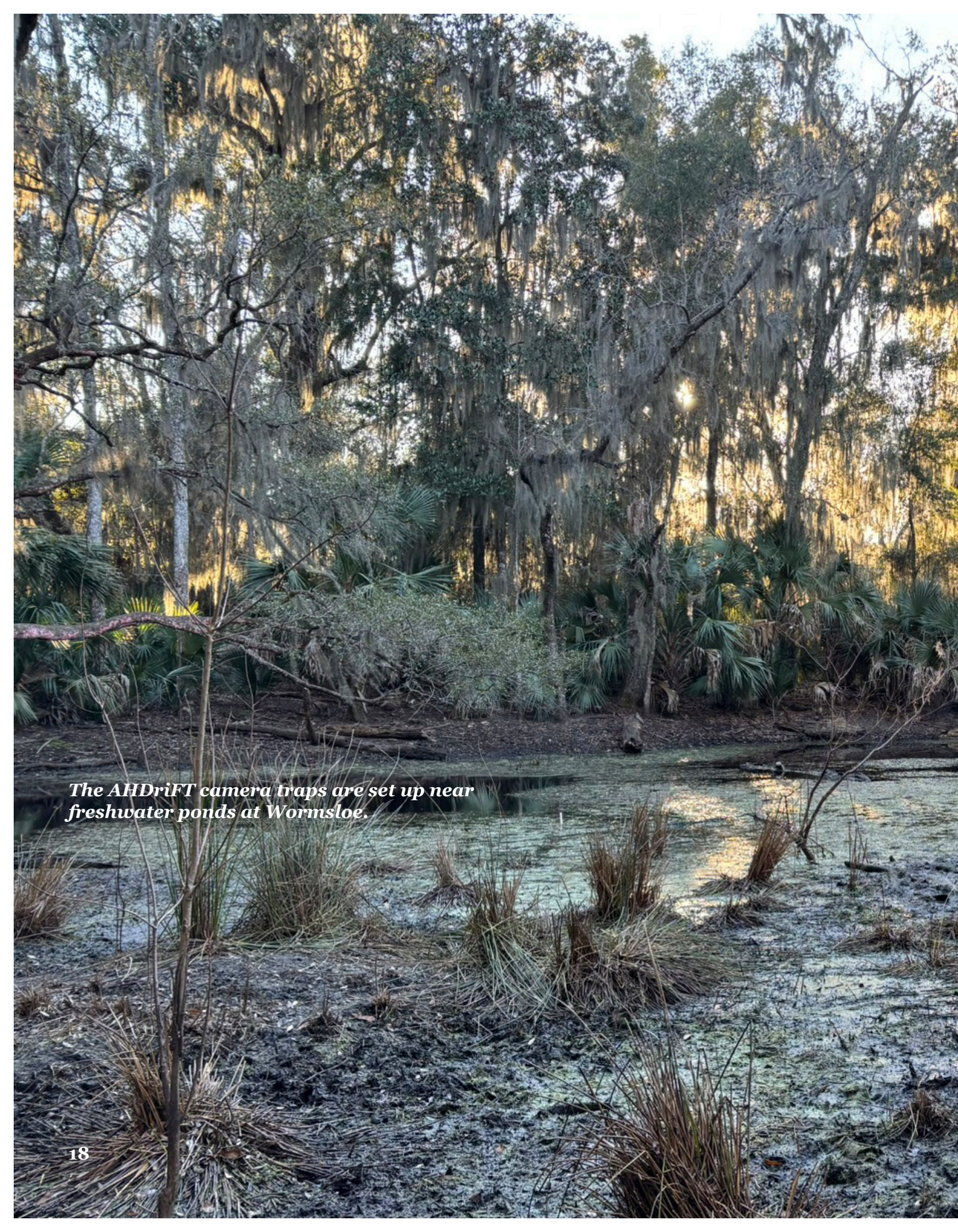
North American raccoon

The Wormsloe Institute, in collaboration with Savannah State University, initiated a study using game cameras to document wildlife at Wormsloe. Camera traps are a great way to find elusive species that are difficult to detect in traditional traps, including small mammals like rodents and shrews, as well as reptiles and amphibians. Understanding the species composition of these groups can tell us more about the ecological story of Wormsloe.

We are revisiting three sites originally sampled by Wormsloe Fellow Nancy O'Hare from 2011-2013. While our studies are not directly comparable due to differing survey methods, revisiting these sites can tell us if there have been shifts in ecological communities, potentially as a result of a changing landscape. For example, if we find fewer species associated with freshwater compared to the original study, this could indicate saltwater encroachment – a concern Nancy expressed in her dissertation – and would warrant closer monitoring of freshwater ponds.

We are using Adapted-Hunt Drift Fence Technique (AHDriFT) camera traps, which consist of a 10 meter silt fence with an inverted 5-gallon bucket at either end (*bottom photo*). At the top of the buckets are motion-activated trail cameras. Passageways cut on both sides of the buckets allow animals to walk through them unencumbered, triggering the camera to snap a photo (*right photo*). The system is placed near freshwater ponds, a feature that should be a congregating point for many of the species we are interested in documenting. When animals move away from the pond, they run into the silt fence and walk alongside it until they are funneled through the bucket and get their photo taken.

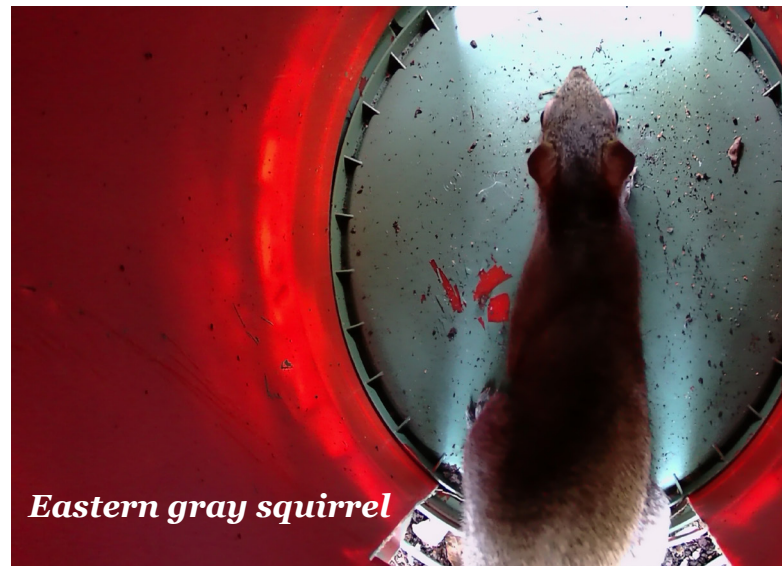




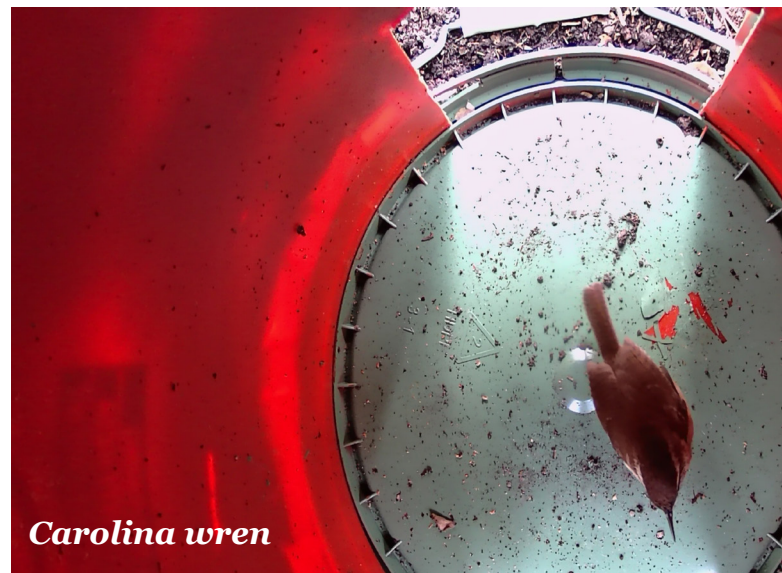
The AHDriFT camera traps are set up near freshwater ponds at Wormsloe.



We launched three camera traps in January 2026, and they have been active for about 4 months. So far, we have documented 10 species, including **North American raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)**, **eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)**, **Carolina wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)**, **yellow rat snake (*Pantherophis quadrivittatus*)**, **copperhead snake (*Agkistrodon contortrix*)**, **green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)**, **squareback marsh crab (*Armases cinereum*)**, **red paper wasp (*Polistes carolina*)**, **an unidentified spider**, and **an unidentified frog**. The most abundant photos have been of raccoons and paper wasps, but this is largely due to the curious nature of raccoons and one industrious wasp that built a nest behind a camera. The traps will continue to be monitored for a minimum of two calendar years to get a comprehensive account of what species are present at Wormsloe – information that will help guide future research endeavors.



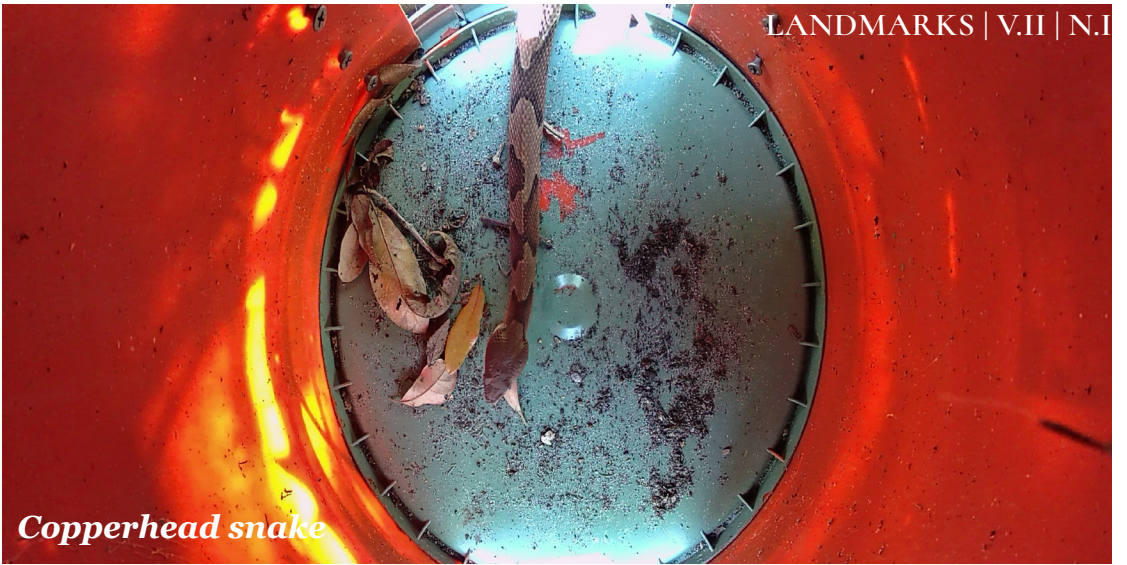
Eastern gray squirrel



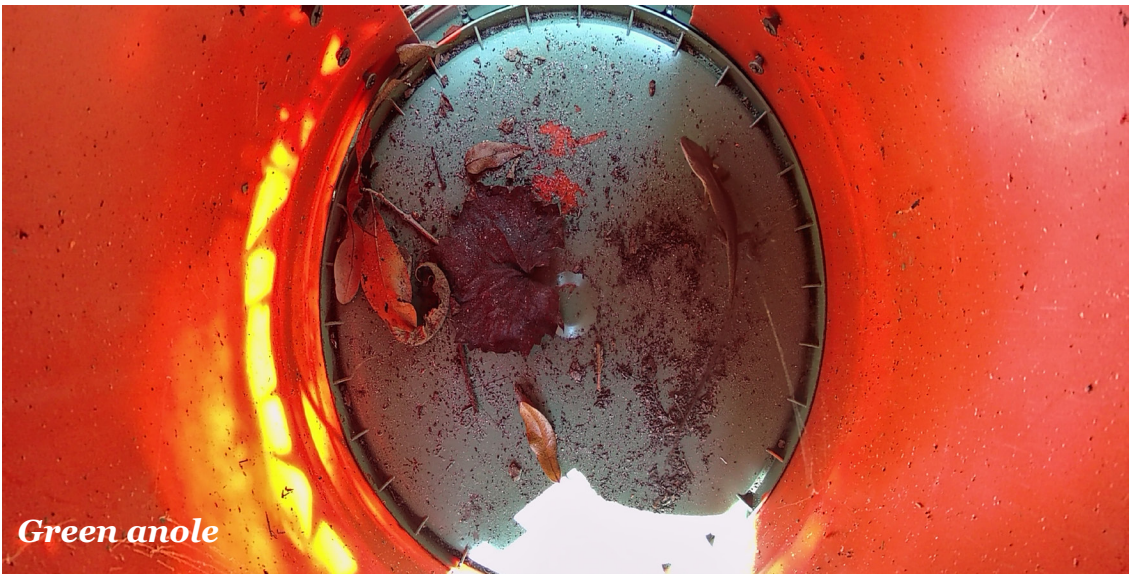
Carolina wren



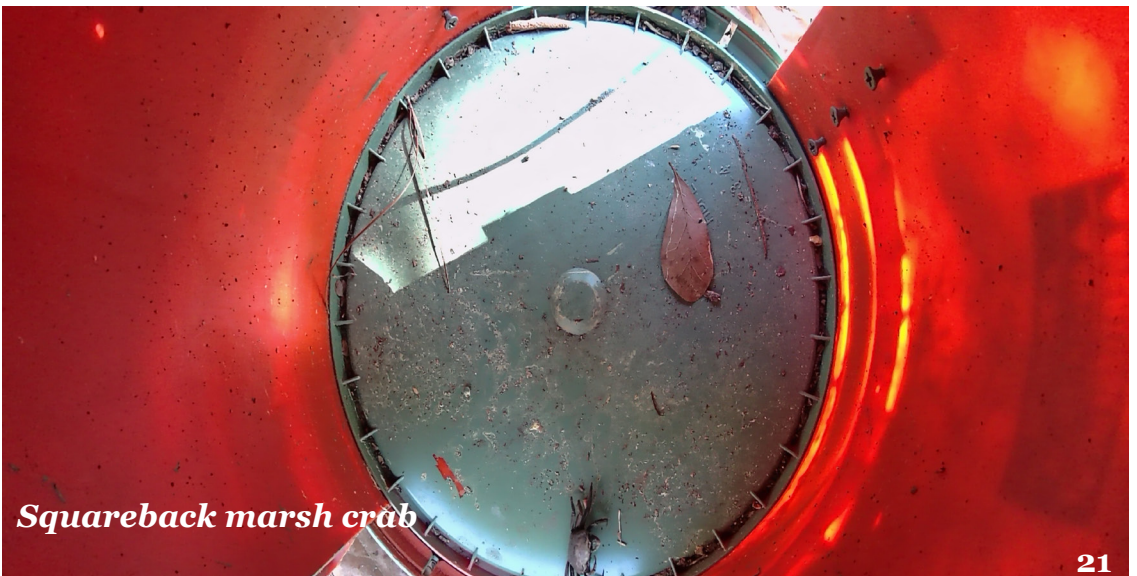
Yellow rat snake



Copperhead snake



Green anole



Squareback marsh crab

LIBERATED LINEAGE: *Homeward Bound*

BY TIARA LUTEN

“Come home.”

Those were the words of my father in August 2023 after I had struggled to maintain steady film production employment in Atlanta during the strike in Hollywood. Filmmakers, writers, actors and yes, even crew members were affected and many production workers lost their homes, their cars and their lifestyle. After leaving corporate the year prior to pursue my passion in film, I questioned whether I had made the biggest mistake of my life. I was on the verge of losing everything I had known — a posh apartment in Buckhead, a circle of industry insiders, red carpets and nightlife and everything I had acquired over 13 years.



ABOVE: Sunday's best; Tiara Luten, pictured as a baby with her father, Walter Luten, Jr., her mother, Gloria Jean Luten, and her brother, Abdullah Thompson at the historic Speedwell United Methodist Church in Sandfly, Georgia. *Courtesy of Tiara Luten.*

When I think of the Lowcountry, my mind immediately conjures images of Spanish moss and the rolling waves of Tybee. I can feel the itch of gnats and the smell of the salt in the marshes. I have fond memories of visiting my grandmother, the esteemed educator Martha B. Luten, in the summer. The savory taste of okra soup, sweet potato souffle, and fresh seafood boil spread out on tables with newspaper.

I had spent my life as a child of a single mother, dreaming of the presence of my father. Using every creative skill I had to overachieve as a coping method for the dark void of grief from his absence. Savannah was part of my origin story, but also a painful reminder of my parent's divorce and the lore of their demise that haunted me as an adult. Up until that point, my life in the fast lane of Atlanta was built on dreams of flashing lights and superstardom. I needed to fill that endless void. In Atlanta, I could distract myself with success and overachievement. In Savannah, I was forced by the Universe to face myself. Coming home to my father was an ego

death that led to shedding layers of pain, facing my fears, and healing my inner child who never felt like she was enough. I heeded the call of my heritage during a fateful meeting eight months after my arrival. I was approached by my brilliant Elder cousin, Isaac "Ike" Luten III, a retired Hospital Administrator and Infection Control Director, to call Dr. Mary Socci, Executive Director of UGA's Center for Research and Education at Wormsloe. My cousin and his sister, Yvonne Luten-Oglesby, an innovative and well-respected educator who served Chatham County for 41 years, had done a tremendous amount of work to preserve our family history and I felt honored to help continue their traditions of preservation. Ike encouraged me to call Dr. Socci. During our initial call, I learned that Dr. Socci had conducted historical and archaeological research on our family predecessors, Thomas and Mathilda Luten, formerly enslaved people whose descendants went on to help build Sandfly and become distinguished educators, professionals and builders in the greater Savannah area. I accepted her invitation to Wormsloe to learn more.



24 ABOVE: A classic Black Southern wedding; Tiara's Aunt Izetta Luten being wed to her former husband, Bill Bolden (godfather); pictured with her grandfather and grandmother, the esteemed educator, Martha B. Luten, her parents and her older brother, Abdullah Thompson. *Courtesy of Tiara Luten.*



In April 2024, my family gathered at the Wormsloe Historic Site Visitor's Center where we shook hands with the Barrow family and initiated a new era of healing. I listened as Elders told stories of their upbringings in Sandfly and what they knew about our family lineage. We walked the same footsteps as my great-great-great grandmother Mathilda. I realized during my time touring the slave cabin that I had come home not just to Savannah – but to myself and my Ancestors.

This was the beginning of a new chapter and a journey into the past.

ABOVE: A traditional Savannah seafood boil; Baby Tiara with her grandfather, Walter “TeLa” Luten, Sr., his second wife, and her mother and father. *Courtesy of Tiara Luten.*



Tiara Luten



Old grass stems from spartina grass abundant at Wormsloe.





*A lovely mushroom growing on a
Wormsloe palmetto.*

Two little blue herons and one great egret enjoying the Wormsloe marsh.

*The Laura Barrow McIntosh
Memorial Garden.*



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