

Herpetofaunal surveys conducted in 2001 and 2010-2012

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CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Owner: The Nature Conservancy (part), U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (part), George Woodside (part)

Site Location: I surveyed two blocks due to persistent flooding of one of the sites: **1) Blackfork Bayou**, approximately 40 acre block on the NE side of Blackfork Bayou and SE of the refuge road, near the center of irregular Section 75, T3S, R3W, centered at 0.3 mi N, 4.2 mi W of St. Francisville (jct of LA 3057 X LA 10), West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, approximately 30°47.0' N, 91°26.5' W. **2) Woodside Property**, approximately 80 acres in NW end of triangular Section 76, T3S, R3W, centered at 1.1 mi N, 4.2 mi W of St. Francisville, at approximately 30°47.4 N, 91°26.5' W.

Setting: Both sites are on non-leveed Mississippi River floodplain. The Blackfork site is at 33 feet elevation with a shallow, meandering slough (Blackfork Bayou) passing along one side. The Woodside property is just to the north, at 37-40 feet elevation, increasing northward.

Habitat: The Blackfork site consists of Bottomland Hardwood Forest (Overcup Oak-Water Hickory series): (sugarberry, overcup oak, bitter pecan, honey locust, cypress, black willow, river birch, etc.). The canopy is closed, with trees fairly old and widely spaced, producing a parklike setting with very little ground cover, and in most places, no midstory. The entire site is inundated at times, at least each year, primarily in late winter and mid spring, with water levels of 1-6 feet. There is a lot of downed woody debris, including very large cypress logs. Much of the smaller slabs are shifted during flooding. The Woodside Property is 4-7 ft higher in elevation than Blackfork Bayou, so floods less, and has more river birch and ground cover.

Comments: Due to late winter-mid spring inundations, I surveyed the Woodside tract four times during the first survey period, but only once during the second period. In the fall to early winter of each year Blackfork Bayou was reduced to scattered pools. In April and May 2011 the Mississippi River reached near record levels, leaving the entirety of Cat Island inundated such that the Refuge could not be approached. On 13 March water level was already onto the

Woodside Property.

In 2011-2012, Blackfork was under water from late December to late January, and on 30 January water encircled onto the margins of the site, though it was receding. High water was back on the site in late March to mid April, but in contrast to the previous year, the water was visibly flowing away from the site on 26 April and remained away from the site at least until October.

Because the Woodside property was inconsistently surveyed, I restrict my comments on the herpetofauna to observations made at the Blackfork site.

Survey summary:

2001: 12 September (Black)	2010: 5 November (Black)	2011: 30 September (Black)
26 October (Black)	18 December (Black)	10 November (Black)
4 December (Black)	2011: 26 January (Black)	2012: ---
2002: 17 January (Black)	17 February (Black)	30 January (Black)
19 February (Woodside)	13 March (Woodside)	5 March (Black)
18 March (Woodside)	---	---
10 May (Woodside)	---	26 April (Black)
9 July (Woodside)	---	24 May (Black)
16 July (Black)		
Blackfork 12.12 hours	10.23 hours	14.37 hours
Woodside 12.08 hours	1.97 hours	---

Herpetofauna: 47 species of amphibians and reptiles are expected to occur on the site, of which 18 (38%) were observed. The only LNHP species of interest likely to occur on the site is the Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*). I was surprised by the absence of several ubiquitous bottomland species: Northern Cricket Frogs (*Acris crepitans*), Common Five-lined Skink (*Plestiodon fasciatus*), Ground Skink (*Scincella lateralis*; although seen along road near entrance gate). The only observed terrestrial reptile (semi-arboreal) was the Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*). Five additional species were observed at the Woodside property: Common Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), Common Five-lined Skink, Broad-headed Skink (*Plestiodon laticeps*), Ground Skink, Gray Rat Snake (*Pantherophis spiloides*)

Only 123 total animals were seen (3.35 per hour). During 2001-2002, 30 (55%) were ranid frogs, and during 2011-2012, 31 (58%) were aquatic snakes. There is no particular herpetofaunal interest to the site, and all of the species encountered are generally abundant or common over most of southern Louisiana. However, the site provides a very large block of bottomland hardwood habitat. Although there has been cutting in certain portions, it will probably not effect the dispersal of species between more pristine blocks. The continuity of areas with differential flooding provides an opportunity to determine the effects the flooding regime has on species composition at sites.

	2001- 2002	2010- 2011	2011- 2012
Bufo fowleri	9		2
Hyla chrysoscelis	call		call
Hyla cinerea	4		call
Hyla squirella	1		call
Pseudacris crucifer	call		
Pseudacris fouquettei	1	call	
Rana catesbeiana		2	
Rana clamitans	13	4	
Rana utricularia	17		
Gastrophryne carolinensis	1		
Chrysemys dorsalis			2
Trachemys scripta	2	5	17
Anolis carolinensis	1	3	1
Nerodia erythrogaster	2		
Nerodia fasciata	4		6
Nerodia rhombifer			15
Regina grahamii		1	2
Agkistrodon piscivorus			8
amphibians	46	6	2
reptiles	9	9	51
species	13	6	11

The very different counts and assemblages during the several survey periods is partially due to the variability of hydrology between periods. I believe it is also partially due to temperature during the fall winter surveys (October to January). The mean air temperatures were 68°F vs. 52 and 59°F, respectively, during the three survey periods. During those months, counts of animals correlated with air temperature, with means of 14, 2, and 0 animals seen each period per day, respectively.

The animals seen during 2001-2002 vs. 2011-2012 were very similar by species (13 vs. 11) and by counts (55 vs. 53). However, the composition differed markedly, with amphibians comprising 84% of the animals seen in 2001-2002, and reptiles comprised 96% of animals seen in 2011-2012. It was especially odd that ranid frogs appeared to have left the site during the latter survey. The increase in number of turtles and snakes seen during 2011-2012 may be based on the additional survey hours in April and May, and was likely enhanced by the perfect timing with a hydrologic episode that was drawing water into areas where prey (crawfish, fish) were concentrated.

2001: 12 September: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge
with P. Faulkner, V. Rettig

7 *Bufo fowleri*

1 *Rana clamitans clamitans*

1 *Gastrophryne carolinensis*

2 *Nerodia erythrogaster flavigaster*

4 *Rana utricularia utricularia*

1 *Nerodia fasciata confluens*

Virginia guided us to the east entrance to the refuge and we stopped on the dirt road just E of the crossing of Blackfork Bayou. The area is mostly closed canopy hardwood forest (sugarberry, overcup oak, bitter pecan, honey locust, cypress, black willow, etc.), with remnant pools scattered about. The bayou has willow and cypress growing in it, and today was about 30 ft across. Virginia pointed out that the inundation line on the trees was over 5 feet high, and that the area floods for some time, often twice each year when the Mississippi River comes up.

0935-1108; start T=79F, ending T=81F; clear at start and end but overcast during most of survey time. I spent a lot of time looking under logs on the clean forest floor, the rest of the time swatting mosquitos. All I saw out was a newly metamorphosed Fowler's toad about 0.5" long. Under logs I found some larger Fowler's toads (0.7-1.2"), a narrowmouth toad, an adult bronze frog, and adult and three subadult leopard frogs, and neonate yellow-bellied and banded water snakes, all a month to three months old probably. Both yellowbellies flattened out and bit when picked up.

2001: 26 October: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

1 *Bufo fowleri*

3 *Rana utricularia utricularia*

1 *Hyla cinerea*

1 *Trachemys scripta elegans*

6 *Rana clamitans clamitans*

2 *Nerodia fasciata confluens*

It had been often overcast and very humid, up to about 80°F through the night of the 24th, but a cool front from the north had come in, dropping last night's lows to the upper 40s. I drove onto the refuge and saw a redear basking on a log in the roadside ditch. I hunted the same tract as on 12 Sept.

I started at 1100; clear, breezy, 64°F. During the next half hour I saw a juv bronze frog under a log, and an adult leopard frog and green treefrog under another. The slough that bisects the tract was very low, rarely over a foot deep. Along it I found three more small bronze frogs under logs at the margin of the damp zone.

I walked onto the flat woods at 1212 (67°F) and saw under logs 2 juv bronze frogs and 2 juv banded water snakes. One of the snakes had the tip of its snout sticking out from under the log in a sunned spot. I also found a juv Fowler's toad out on the ground back towards the slough.

I crossed the slough again around 1300 (69°F), and saw an adult bronze frog under a log near shore. I looked through the woods again until 1401 (70°F) but saw only an adult leopard frog under a log.

2001: 4 December: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

1 *Bufo fowleri*

5 *Rana clamitans clamitans*

2 *Hyla cinerea*

9 *Rana utricularia utricularia*

1 *Hyla squirella*

2 *Trachemys scripta elegans*

Pseudacris crucifer crucifer heard

1 *Anolis carolinensis carolinensis*

1 *Pseudacris feriarum*

There had been some moderate rains on 29 Nov, after which it turned cool, clear, breezy, and

low humidity (lows in upper 30s, highs 60s). The past several days have had increasing temperatures, but relatively low humidity. Last night the low was in the upper 50s, and today the high was in the mid 70s, clear with low humidity.

As I drove toward the site (0938) I found a big female redear crossing the dirt road between two open grass sloughs about a half mile E of the survey site (Blackfork Bayou). I started the survey at 0945 (air T 60°) at the trailhead, and cut straight S through the forest. It was breezy, with low humidity. By 1012 it was 64°F. Until 1045 all I found was a juv leopard frog under a log. By 1046 it was 69°F. I found 2 adult leopards, and adult bronze frog, and adult green treefrog under logs.

At 1111 (air T 70°F) I found 2 more adult leopards under logs, and an adult female chorus frog under a log. In this region there were a number of low spots with water. At 1131 it was still 70°F. I heard a spring peeper call, found 2 adult bronze frogs under logs at a pool, found a juv bronze frog under a log, and 3 adult leopards under logs. At 1210 (still 70°F) I cut west toward the slough, where I saw an adult redear at the surface. I worked my way back toward the trailhead near the slough, and found under logs an adult green treefrog, an adult bronze frog, a juv squirrel treefrog, 2 adult leopard frogs, one of which was gravid, and a juv Fowler's toad. I also saw a juv anole jump onto a small tree trunk. I ended back at the trailhead at 1251 (air T 74°F).

2002: 17 January: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

1 *Hyla cinerea*

5 *Trachemys scripta elegans*

Pseudacris feriarum (heard)

1 *Nerodia fasciata confluens*

1 *Rana utricularia utricularia*

Virginia Rettig told me she had just opened the gate last night as the water level had dropped. She said that the water had been up since mid-December at levels reaching 8 feet in the forest, and I could see the water mark on the trees on my survey site at about 4-6 feet. A light, cold rain had fallen on the 12th, and temperatures had tended to be cool to cold since, with lows in the 30s and highs near 60°F. Yesterday morning there was frost, but last night's low was 43°F. The wind had begun to shift from the south, and it was overcast and slightly humid.

I started at 1020 (air T 61°F), and headed SE through the stand of hardwoods. At 1101 it was 63°, at 1122 it was 66°, and at 1130 there was partial breaking of the cloud cover. The ground was covered with wet leaves, acorns, pecans and twigs. Most of the logs had clearly been raised, then lowered during the high water, but some had remained intact as there was bare ground and crawfish burrows beneath. The water was receded to the back of the stand, leaving small pools in the low spots, and Black Fork slough was within its embankments.

At 1146 it was partly cloudy and 66°F. I saw nothing until nearly noon, when I found an adult leopard frog under a log just above the slough. The ground here was slightly higher, as the water mark was around 2.5-3 ft on the trees. At 1215 it was 68°F and I found a juv banded water snake, sluggish, coiled under a log that hadn't moved on the higher ground. The T under the log was 59°F.

By 1249 it was still partly cloudy and 71°F. Shortly thereafter I found an adult green treefrog under bark on a snag 1.5 feet above the water mark. The cloud cover had begun to increase by the time I finished at 1321 (air T 71°F).

I drove out on the dirt road, and in the slough I saw five adult redears on a log. In the

shallower tip of the slough near the entrance gate I heard 4 chorus frogs calling.

2002: 19 February: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

1 <i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>	3 <i>Rana utricularia utricularia</i>
5 <i>Hyla cinerea</i>	4 <i>Gastrophryne carolinensis</i>
11 <i>Hyla squirella</i>	11 <i>Anolis carolinensis carolinensis</i>
1 <i>Pseudacris crucifer crucifer</i>	1 <i>Scincella lateralis</i>
1 <i>Pseudacris feriarum</i> (and heard)	1 <i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>
3 <i>Rana clamitans clamitans</i>	1 <i>Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma</i>

The refuge gate was closed, so I surveyed George Woodside's property SW of the refuge road about 200 yards from the gate. The past few days had been warm (lows upper 40s, low 50s, highs low to mid 70s). Today was overcast, with a wind from the south, moderate humidity, and expected high of 75°F. This property, near the road, is somewhat higher than the rest of the swamp, and appears not to have flooded. There was a tendency for more river birch in here, and fewer bitter pecans. Within about 100 yards of the road there was evidence of minor flooding, and there was a lot of water in low spots, with a small, shallow slough running through. This latter area had a lot of flotsom (leaves, twigs) all over, whereas the "upper" portion had a dense carpet of dry leaves.

I started at the S corner of the woodlot at 1022 (air T 69°F). As I went off the road I saw a scincella in the leaves and branches heaped there. There are a lot of logs on the ground, and no ground cover vegetation nor midstory. Under logs I saw 2 adult anoles, an adult green treefrog, a juv narrowmouth toad, 5 juv and 2 adult squirrel treefrogs. Inside a small log was a juv fiveline skink, somewhat lethargic, but still managed to escape. At 1053 it was still 69°F. Under more logs I found another juv narrowmouth toad, a subadult green treefrog, a juv squirrel treefrog, and an adult anole. In a snag I found two more adult anoles. At 1109, weather unchanged, I found 2 adult green treefrogs, a leopard frog, and two bronze frogs, under logs.

I was into the lower zone by 1120, and found an adult male spring peeper jumping in the leaves. At 1131 it was 70°F. I found an adult and juv anole in a snag, and saw an adult basking on a tire. Under a log in a wet depression I got an adult male chorus frog and a leopard frog. Under other logs I found an adult green treefrog, a bronze frog (near the slough), and a juv cottonmouth. At 1202 it was still 70°F. I found a dead leopard frog, unmarked and about a day old, lying next to a log near the slough.

At 1228 I got back toward the higher ground, and heard a chorus frog give a brief call. At 1250 the temperature had risen to 75°F. Under logs I found two juv narrowmouth toads, a juv gray treefrog, and an adult anole. I heard a couple of chorus frogs call briefly, and saw two adult anoles on logs. I found a juv squirrel treefrog inside a damp log, and found an adult inside a pulpy snag.

I got out of the woods at 1324 (air T 75°F). Back at the truck I heard a couple of chorus frogs call from the slough along the road. It was notable that squirrel treefrogs were limited to the drier part of the forest.

2002: 18 March: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

1 <i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i> (+heard)	1 <i>Terrapene carolina major</i>
1 <i>Hyla cinerea</i>	1 <i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>

5 <i>Hyla squirella</i>	6 <i>Anolis carolinensis carolinensis</i>
1 <i>Rana clamitans clamitans</i>	1 <i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>
26 <i>Rana utricularia utricularia</i>	1 <i>Eumeces laticeps</i>
5 <i>Gastrophryne carolinensis</i>	1 <i>Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma</i>

The water level was down, but the Nature Conservancy gate was locked, so I searched the Woodside property off the SE boundary of the refuge. As I drove on the dirt road back from the TNC gate I saw a redear on a log in the slough and an adult cottonmouth lying in the sharp hook in the road between low, wet spots. The last rain in the area was the night of the 12th-13th, with a short cloudburst on the morning of the 16th. The past few days have been very humid, often overcast, with lows in the 60s and highs in the 70s. Last night the low was around 70°F. There was about 60% cloudcover, very humid, with a south breeze.

I started into the Woodside property from about ½ mi from the Cat Island gate at 1025 (air T 80°F). I saw an adult anole on a tree trunk, an adult fiveline skink in a snag, and a leopard frog at a small pool on the forest floor. From 1103 (air T 80°F) -1138 I saw 2 leopard frogs under a log at a short, shallow slough, 2 anoles on tree trunks, and a big box turtle sitting out.

From 1139 (81°F) -1203 I found a subadult broadhead skink, still fully striped, in a snag, a juv narrowmouth toad under a log, 2 adult leopard frogs under logs near water, an adult squirrel tree frog (almost white with pale brown spots) on the side of a snag, and heard a gray treefrog call briefly. From 1204 (air T 82°F) -1234 I saw 5 adult leopard frogs jump into a small, isolated slough, found one under a log nearby, and found a juvenile inside a wet, pulpy log. I found another juv narrowmouth toad under a log, and heard another gray tree frog call.

From 1235 (air T 85°F) -1251 I heard another gray tree frog, found an adult narrowmouth toad under a log, a juv gray tree frog in a snag, 2 juv squirrel tree frogs on the ground in leaves, and an adult anole on a stump. From 1252-1306 I saw 12 adult leopard frogs jump into a slough section about 10 ft across and perhaps 1.5 ft deep. Starting at 1307 I saw under logs 2 adult narrowmouth toads and a green tree frog. I saw an anole on a tree trunk and another on a log. I found 2 juv squirrel tree frogs in a snag, and heard individual gray tree frogs call twice. At a low, shallow marshy spot I saw one bronze frog and two leopard frogs. I ended at 1329 (air T 87°F).

2002: 10 May: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i> (heard)	12 <i>Rana utricularia utricularia</i>
<i>Hyla cinerea</i> (heard)	2 <i>Anolis carolinensis carolinensis</i>
<i>Hyla squirella</i> (heard)	<i>Terrapene carolina major</i> (shell)
2 <i>Pseudacris feriarum</i>	3 <i>Nerodia erythrogaster flavigaster</i>
2 <i>Pseudacris crucifer crucifer</i>	2 <i>Nerodia fasciata confluens</i>
3 <i>Rana clamitans clamitans</i>	1 <i>Elaphe spiloides</i>

It has remained dry, with no rain for a couple of weeks, although humidity is moderate to high, and cumulus clouds blow over from the south. Nighttime lows are in the low 70s, with highs nearly 90°F. Today was the same, with small clouds drifting over on occasion. The river was up and rising, so the access road was closed. I parked at the gate, where I heard 2 green and 2 squirrel tree frogs call from the borrow ditch along the road. On a wooden sign I saw a pair of anoles, the male crested and green.

I started into the SE corner of George Woodside's forest portion at 0837 (air T 76°F). There were very few puddles, just some low damp spots. Near a puddle I found 2 metamorph chorus frogs. I heard 3 squirrel and 2 green treefrogs call. At 0908 it was 79°F. I heard one each of green and squirrel tree frogs, and found a shell of an adult box turtle. I reached the waterline as it encroached into the forest, and walked around in the shallows. The water was dark, but I saw a yellowbelly water snake pass through a sunned spot in about 14" of water. Along the waterline I saw 2 adult leopard frogs and a bronze frog. Under a log was another adult leopard frog.

At 0943 it was still 79°F. Continuing along the water line I saw 3 metamorph leopard frogs. I saw another metamorph leopard and a juv bronze frog away from water. I heard perhaps 5-8 green tree frogs calling from low vegetation at the edge of a flooded food plot. In the forest I heard a gray tree frog call, found an adult bronze frog under a log, and found a metamorph spring peeper on the ground. At 1006 (air T 80°F) I heard a green and gray tree frog call, and found a metamorph leopard frog under a log. Along a flooded food plot I caught a big female yellowbelly water snake, and I caught a male swimming off shore. The latter went under but I was able to corner it in a tiny inlet.

At 1031 (air T 82°F) I saw another metamorph peeper on the ground, an adult leopard frog under a log, and a metamorph leopard at a big puddle. I found an adult banded water snake lying out on the forest floor, and saw a very large one go in off a shrub overhanging a deep puddle. At 1055 I headed toward the sharp turn in the access road at the NE part of the property, which is slightly higher land. I saw 2 metamorph leopard frogs in a pool, heard a squirrel tree frog, and saw a rat snake about 32" long lying out. I walked over it and it headed towards a stump and down a hole in the base. At 1118 (clear, 82°) I continued paralleling the entrance road inside the forest in dry terrain. I heard 3 squirrel and 1 gray tree frog call. I came out of the woods at 1134.

2002: 9 July: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

2 *Bufo fowleri*

Hyla chrysoscelis (heard)

Hyla cinerea (heard)

1 *Hyla squirella* (+ heard)

2 *Rana clamitans clamitans*

10 *Rana utricularia utricularia*

1 *Trachemys scripta elegans*

1 *Anolis carolinensis carolinensis*

Lately the highs have been near 90°F, and the lows in the 70s. It has been very humid, with afternoon thundershowers most days. Today was the same, with few clouds by late morning. The river had been dropping, but the NWR gate was closed, so I walked into the Woodside property. On the way, in the channel along the road, I heard a few green tree frogs and 1 squirrel tree frog call.

I started at the NE corner at 0852 (air T 81°F), and headed SW. There were only a few puddles or tiny pools on the site. I saw 2 juvenile leopard frogs in low ground cover in low spots, and one metamorph Fowler's toad on the ground. I heard 3 squirrel tree frogs call, and up to 2-3 gray and green tree frogs calling simultaneously, but sporadically. From 0921 (air T 81°F) to 0953 I found an adult squirrel tree frog under bark on a snag, and heard up to 2-3 squirrel, gray and green tree frogs call at times. From 0954 (air T 82°F) to 1034 I saw two metamorph bronze frogs at a small puddle, an anole on a log, and heard a green and squirrel tree frog call. I also heard up to 2-3 gray tree frogs calling.

From 1035 (air T 82°F) to 1102 I heard a squirrel tree frog call, 2-3 gray tree frogs calling, an adult leopard frog under a log, and a reared turtle on a log in the slough along the entrance road. At 1103 (air T 83°F) I saw a leopard frog on a log, and saw 6 juv leopards in low areas near a pool. I saw a metamorph Fowler's toad on the ground, and heard 1 call each of gray, green and squirrel tree frogs. I ended back at the NE corner at 1155 (air T 86°F). On the walk back to the truck I saw a reared go off a log in the slough, and heard a squirrel tree frog call.

2002: 16 July: LA: West Feliciana Par: Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

Hyla cinerea (heard)

1 *Rana clamitans clamitans*

Hyla chrysoscelis (heard)

7 *Trachemys scripta elegans*

Hyla squirella (heard)

The NWR gate was open, so I went to the section along Blackfork Bayou I had surveyed last fall. Lately the highs have been near 90°F, and the lows in the 70s. It has been very humid, with afternoon thundershowers most days. Today was the same, with few clouds by late morning. The Bayou was within its channel, and there was little other than some puddles over the rest of the area.

I started at the trailhead at 0843 (air T 77°F). I heard a green and a squirrel tree frog call. From 0908 I heard a 5 gray tree frogs call briefly at different times, and found a metamorph bronze frog under a log near the Bayou. From 0933 I counted 6 different gray tree frogs call. I ended back at the trailhead at 1009 (air T 83°F).

As I was driving out on the entrance road I saw 7 reareds on logs in the slough.

2010: 5 Nov LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

1 *Regina grahamii*

The front that had come through yesterday continued to drag colder temperatures southward. The low last night was 45°F, and today was clear and windy. I surveyed the Blackfork Bayou trail area as in the past survey period. The area is flatwoods, closed canopy, with a lot of overcup oak. There is very little groundcover due to seasonal flooding, and numerous logs.

Start 1017, air T 53°F. I started in checking under logs. By 1055 it was only 54°F. There was very little water in the bayou, and much of it seemed to be from the recent rain. At 1125 the air T was 55°F, at 1150 was 56°F. By now I was wandering about, just casually looking under logs, when suddenly I uncovered a snake under a small log chunk. It was a juv Graham's crayfish snake, perhaps 15" long. It was torpid, and I left it as found. At 1221 the air T was 57.5°F, and I finished at 1243, air T 56°F.

2010: 18 Dec LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island N.W.R.

3 *Rana clamitans*

1 *Trachemys scripta*

Overcast with a breeze from the north; last nights low ~40°F. A small front passed through last

night, bringing a small, dampening rain.

I started at the trailhead at 1111, air T 49°F. I wandered about to the south in the forest looking under the numerous logs and cypress slabs. There was more water in Black Fork Bayou now, almost continuous. At 1146 I found a torpid bronze frog in a burrow under a slap, air T 50.5°F. I then saw two more bronze frogs, equally torpid, under logs. These were approaching the cutover on the SE side in a very slight low area. At 1218 the air T was 52.5°F. At 1240 a little sun began to show at times, and at 1245 the air T was 53.5°F. By 1313 the sun was out, air T 57.5°F. I returned to the trailhead at 1355 and saw a redeer go into the bayou from a concrete block at the road culvert, air T 56.5°F.

2011: 26 Jan LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island N.W.R.

1 *Rana catesbeiana*

1 *Trachemys scripta*

Heavy rains passed through yesterday, and the low last night was 36°F. This morning was clear with a light breeze. The water in Black Fork was up more, forming a continuous stream, and there was a lot of standing water on the site.

I started at the trailhead at 1000, air T 44°F. I ventured south, looking along the bayou and under logs. I found a torpid juv bullfrog under one log. At 1036 the air T was 47.5°F. I continued looking under logs. At 1102 the air T was 48°F, at 1147 was 51°F, and the same when I stopped at 1234. As I walked onto the road I saw a redeer slider go off a concrete block into the bayou at the culvert.

2011: 17 Feb LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

1 *Rana catesbeiana*

3 (+18) *Trachemys scripta*

1 *Rana clamitans*

3 *Anolis carolinensis*

Pseudacris feriarum heard

The low last night was 54°F and early this morning there was dense fog. By the time I arrived to the site the fog layer had lifted to become low overcast. Humidity was moderately high.

I started at the trailhead at 0957, air T 66.5°F. I saw a redeer on the surface of the pool going into the culvert. The bayou is now fairly deep and continuous, and there is a bit of standing water in pockets on the site. I looked under logs and found a juv bullfrog under one. At 1038 the air T was still 66.5°F. At 1051 there were some breaks in the overcast. I found a small adult bronze frog under a log. At 1109 the air T was 70°F, and a little thereafter I heard one chorus frog give a couple of calls. At 1137 it was partly cloudy and 71.5°F. As sunlight increased I saw 2 anoles on big logs and another on a tree trunk. At 1216 it was still partly cloudy and 76.5°F. I quit at the trailhead at 1227 and saw two redears in the pool at the culvert.

As I drove out I counted eighteen redears basking on logs in the sloughs along the road.

2011: 13 Mar LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

2 *Bufo fowleri*

Pseudacris feriarum heard

Hyla chrysoscelis heard

The low last night was ~55°F. Today was clear, slightly humid, with a breeze.

I started down the road toward Black Fork, but it was flooded past the westward turn. I

parked about a half mile inside the gate and went west into the old forest stand. There was a lot of standing water, and beyond about a hundred yards was almost continuous water from the Mississippi level. I started at 1027, air T 70°F. I heard a gray tree frog, and heard a chorus frog call, and found a subadult Fowler's toad under a log. The ground cover here had vegetation scattered about, but was still primarily clear like the Black Fork site. At 1121 the air T was 73.5°F. Now it was partly cloudy. I heard another gray tree frog call. At 1148 the air T was 78°F. I found another subadult toad under a log, and heard a gray tree frog again. At 1225 the air T was still 78°F.

2011: 30 Sept LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

2 *Bufo fowleri*

2 *Agkistrodon piscivorus*

(4) *Trachemys scripta*

There was significant rain here two days ago, and the low last night was ~70°F. This morning was clear and windy with low humidity. The wind was minimal within the stand. The site looked no different than prior to the record flooding in late spring. However, I found that there were fewer logs. Blackfork Bayou had large pools and some exposed mud.

I started at the trailhead at 0905, air T 71°F. At 0954 the air T was 73°F. I saw a metamorph Fowler's toad on the ground. At 1029 the air T was 73.5°F. I found a cottonmouth coiled just under a slab that was held off the ground a few inches, another metamorph toad, and another adult cottonmouth in a resting coil in a patch of vegetation. At 1103 the air T was 75°F and it was partly cloudy. I stopped at 1139, air T 75.5°F, partly cloudy.

2011: 10 Nov LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island, Black Fork trail

A front passed through about 40 hours ago, and the low last night was about 50°F. Some rain had fallen. This morning was clear with a chill north wind, though sheltered in the forest. Few leaves have dropped, so sunlight broke through only in patches.

I started at the trailhead at 1000, air T 55.5°F. At 1040 the air T had reached 59.5°F, and at 1109 was 60.5°F. I wandered about the tract looking under logs. Black Fork Bayou had large pools of water in spots. I finished at 1210, having seen nothing, air T 60°F.

2012: 30 Jan LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

It has been very warm lately, though the low last night was 37°F. This morning the air was still, and there was a hazy film of clouds that dulled shadows somewhat. The water was up to the fringes of the site, and I had to walk through some water to reach the trail.

I started at 0946, air T 56°F. There had been at least three feet of water on the site last month, and a lot of the smaller woody debris had been shifted about or floated away. At 1030 the air T was 59°F, at 1112 was 62°F, and was 64.5°F when I stopped at 1154. I saw no amphibians or reptiles.

2012: 5 Mar LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR – with S. Javed

Hyla chrysoscelis heard

1 *Anolis carolinensis*

(14) *Trachemys scripta*

The low last night was 46°F. There was standing water about the site, Black Fork Bayou was full, and the water level was a couple of feet lower than my previous visit. Today was clear with a breeze from the north.

I started at the trailhead at 1005, air T 68°F. The mudline was around 4.5 to 5 feet, and there wasn't much to look under – the small stuff was moved around and the larger logs tended to be partially buried. At 1056 the air T was 72°F. I heard one gray tree frog call, and at 1146 saw an anole on a large log. I stopped at 1212, air T 73°F.

Driving out on the gravel road I saw an old roadkill redeer, and we saw 13 mostly young ones basking on logs in the slough.

2012: 26 Apr LA: West Feliciana Parish: Blackfork Trail, Cat Island NWR

<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i> heard	11 <i>Nerodia rhombifer</i>
3 <i>Trachemys scripta</i>	2 <i>Regina grahamii</i>
6 <i>Nerodia fasciata</i>	3 <i>Agkistrodon piscivorus</i>

The low last night was 65°F, and this morning was calm, partly cloudy, with moderately low humidity. The river level was down, and the bayou was fairly full with a slight outward flow.

I started at the trailhead at 0852, air T 71.5°F. I heard a gray tree frog call from the trees, and found a banded water snake headed to the bayou. It flattened and then elevated the forepart of its body in a menacing fashion. I saw an adult, then subadult cottonmouths cruising along the shoreline, then saw a monster diamondback water snake swim across away from me as I approached. It had something huge in its posterior body that made for difficult movement. Though likely a little under 5 feet long, it was probably at least 4" diameter.

At 0932 the air T was 73.5°F. I heard a couple more gray tree frogs, saw a very big cottonmouth lying out headed away from the bayou, and saw a banded water snake on a log in the bayou. At 1016 the air T was 77°F. I heard another gray tree frog, and saw an adult banded water snake corralling fish in a small puddle on the forest floor. I found a juv diamondback water snake on the forest floor, then saw a banded water snake take off away from me into the bayou from shore, and another in a pool behind a big blowdown. I saw three redeer sliders on logs in the bayou, then another banded water snake cruising downstream in the channel.

At the woods edge and side of the dirt road runs an ephemeral ditch, which right now had several inches of muddy water and had a slight outflow. At a small culvert at the trailhead I counted 7 small adult diamondback water snakes within sight at once. On the other side, at the larger road culvert, I saw a diamondback water snake basking on a branch, and two Graham's crayfish snakes foraging at the shallow shoreline. I stopped at 1137, air T 81°F.

2012: 24 May LA: West Feliciana Parish: Cat Island NWR

<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i> heard	14 <i>Trachemys scripta</i>
<i>Hyla cinerea</i> heard	4 <i>Nerodia rhombifer</i>
<i>Hyla squirella</i> heard	3 <i>Agkistrodon piscivorus</i>
2 <i>Chrysemys dorsalis</i>	

The low last night was ~70°F. This morning was partly cloudy (mostly sun), moderately dry with a breeze from the north. The Mississippi River had remained down, so the site had not

been inundated for at least two months.

I started at the Black Fork trailhead at 0856, air T 78°F. I followed the Bayou, now narrowed to about 3-12 feet. I saw a small adult and large adult cottonmouths lazily cruising about the first shaded wide spot. I then saw 7 redeer sliders go off a sunned embankment at another wide area. I heard a squirrel tree frog, then found a big painted turtle lying out in a shallow neck of the stream only an inch deep. After 20 years, this was the first time I could have caught one of these turtles alive. Continuing on I periodically heard green tree frogs and one gray tree frog.

At 0941 the air T was 80°F. I had turned away from the bayou into the woods a bit, and paralleled the bayou back toward the trail head. I found nothing on, around or under logs. I went back to the bayou and saw another small adult cottonmouth cruising in the water, and a painted turtle on a log. I followed the bayou for a few hundred yards. At 1019 the air T was 82°F. Now it was moderately humid and the breeze had shifted from the south. It occurred to me that the bayou was much larger than I it seemed an hour ago, and that I was heading east, not NNW. Yet, how could I have crossed a different bayou? On rare occasions I have gotten turned around somehow, and was clueless about where I was. I headed back the way I had come, every now and then seeing a familiar log or tree. At one point I cut across a point in which the bayou took a big curve, returned to it, and thank the Lord, found my footprint in a drying tributary on familiar ground. Next to it was a redeer slider sitting in the mud. I headed back along the true Black Fork Bayou. During the next half hour I heard a green tree frog, but found nothing in the forest.

I checked at the large, deep pool just below the road culvert. Here I saw two subadult diamondback water snakes swimming, then pausing with snout out at the surface. I saw an adult materialize, then swim toward shore with a fish in its mouth, then saw a 4th small adult swimming along the shoreline. I also saw three redeer sliders at the surface. I stopped at 1134, air T 83.5°F.

On the drive out I saw two redears on logs in the side slough. On my arrival I had seen another redeer on the track near the trailhead (about 0845).