

R. BRENT THOMAS, PhD
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

DEGREES

BS (Biology) University of the Ozarks; Clarksville, AR (1991)
MS (Biology) Southwest Missouri State University; Springfield, MO (1993)
PhD (Biological Sciences) Mississippi State University; Starkville, MS (1999)

CURRENT POSITION

ESU Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (9/2022 – present)
Dean, ESU College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (6/2014 – present)

OTHER POSITIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Chair, ESU Department of Biological Sciences (Interim Chair: 12/2008 – 6/2010; Chair: 7/2010 – 6/2014)
Professor, ESU Department of Biological Sciences (7/2010 – present)
Associate Professor, ESU Department of Biological Sciences (8/2006 – 6/2010)
Associate Professor: University of South Carolina Upstate, 8/05 – 7/06
Assistant Professor: University of South Carolina Upstate, 8/99 – 8/05
Graduate Teaching Fellow: - Mississippi State University / Biological Sciences, 9/95-5/99
Part-time Faculty, Mississippi University for Women, 7/96-8/96
Research Biologist, Missouri Department of Conservation, 1/95-8/95
Part-time Faculty, Ozarks Technical Community College, 1/94-12/94
Part-time Faculty, Southwest Baptist University (Springfield Campus), 1/94-12/94
Graduate Research Assistant, Southwest Missouri State University, 6/93-12/93
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Southwest Missouri State University, 9/91-5/93

PUBLICATIONS

Becker, J. T., and **R. B. Thomas**. 2020. Male response to female chemical signals in painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*). Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science 123:453-459.

Liu, D., C. Wilson, J. Hearlson, J. Singleton, **R. B. Thomas**, and S. S. Crupper. 2013. Prevalence of antibiotic resistant gram-negative bacteria associated with the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Management 44:666-671.

Singleton, J. M., J. Hearlson, and **R. Brent Thomas**. 2013. Escape rates of semi-aquatic turtles from basking and funnel traps. Herpetological Review 44:442-444.

Everly, A., L. M. Sievert, and **R. Brent Thomas**. 2011. Dear enemy recognition in captive brown anoles (*Anolis sagrei*). Journal of Kansas Herpetology 40:13-16.

House, W. J., I. M. Nall, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2011. Selected aspects of semi-aquatic turtle assemblages in east-central Kansas ponds. Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science 114(3-4):239-244.

House, W. J., I. M. Nall, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2010. Interpond movements of Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) in east-central Kansas. Southwestern Naturalist 53:403-410.

Nall, I. M., and **R. B. Thomas**. 2009. Does method of bait presentation within funnel traps influence capture rates of semi-aquatic turtles? Herpetological Conservation and Biology 4:161-163.

PUBLICATIONS CONT...

- Thomas, R. B.**, I. M. Nall, and W. J. House. 2008. Relative efficacy of three different baits for trapping pond-dwelling turtles in east-central Kansas. *Herpetological Review* 39:186-188.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and R. Altig. 2006 Characteristics of the foreclaw display behaviors of female *Trachemys scripta* (Slider Turtles). *Southeastern Naturalist*. 5:227-234
- Taylor, C. M., R. A. Fiorillo, L. R. Williams, **R. B. Thomas**, T. L. Holder, and M. L. Warren, Jr. 2006. Distribution, abundance, and diversity of upland stream fishes under variable environmental conditions. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*. 63:43-54.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2006. *Trachemys scripta* – Slider or Yellow-bellied Slider. *In*: Meylan, P. A. (Ed.). *Biology and Conservation of Florida Turtles*. Chelonian Research Monographs No. 3, pp. 296-312.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and K. P. Jansen. 2006. *Pseudemys floridana* – Florida Cooter. *In*: Meylan, P. A. (Ed.). *Biology and Conservation of Florida Turtles*. Chelonian Research Monographs No. 3, pp. 338-347.
- Taylor, C. M., L. R. Williams, R. A. Fiorillo, **R. B. Thomas**, and M. L. Warren, Jr. 2004. Fish assemblage structure under variable environmental conditions in the Ouachita Mountains (pgs. 239-245). *In*: Ouachita and Ozark Mountains Symposium: ecosystem management research, Guldin, J. M. (Ed.). Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-74. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2002. A conditional mating strategy in a long-lived vertebrate: ontogenetic shifts in the mating tactics of male slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). *Copeia*. 2002:456-461.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and W. S. Parker. 2000. Intrasexual variations in overland movements of slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). *Journal of Herpetology* 34:469-472.
- Thomas, R. B.**, N. Vogrin, and R. Altig. 1999. Sexual and seasonal differences in behavior of *Trachemys scripta* (Testudines: Emydidae). *Journal of Herpetology* 33:511-515.
- Fiorillo, R. A., **R. B. Thomas**, M. Warren, and C. M. Taylor. 1999. Structure of the helminth assemblage of an endemic madtom catfish (*Noturus lachneri*). *Southwestern Naturalist* 44:522-526.
- Thomas, R. B.**, D. Beckman, K. Thompson, K. Buhlmann, J. W. Gibbons, and D. Moll. 1997. Estimation of age for *Trachemys scripta* and *Deirochelys reticularia* by counting annual growth layers in claws. *Copeia* 1997:842-845.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and J. Bradford. 1997. Geographic Distribution. *Graptemys pulchra*. *Herpetological Review* 28:209.
- Thomas, R. B.**, D. Moll, and J. Steiert. 1994. Evidence of a symbiotic relationship between cellulolytic bacteria and a freshwater herbivorous turtle. *Southwestern Naturalist* 39:386-388.

PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- Jennifer M. Singleton, Jodie Hearlson, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2011. Winter Thermal Profiles of Northern Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) in Eastern Kansas. 38th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society, November 2011, Wichita, Kansas.
- Singleton, J., and **R. B. Thomas**. 2011. Ontogeny of melanism in male Slider Turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). 143rd Annual Meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science, April 2011, Baldwin City, KS.
- Singleton, J., J. Hearlson, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2011. Escape rates of aquatic turtles from funnel traps and basking traps. 58th Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Association of Naturalists, April 2011, Tyler, Texas.
- Hearlson, J., J. Singleton, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2010. Selected Aspects of Semi-Aquatic Turtle Assemblages in East-Central Kansas Ponds. 37th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. Topeka, Kansas.

PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS CONT...

- J. Singleton, J. Hearlson, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2010. Escape Rates of Aquatic Turtles from Funnel Traps and Basking Traps. 37th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. Topeka, Kansas.
- Liu, D., C. Wilson, J. Hearlson, J. Singleton, **R. B. Thomas**, and S. S. Crupper, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Topic: Prevalence of Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria Associated with the Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). 37th Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. Topeka, Kansas.
- Nall, I. M., W. J. House, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2008. Estimating turtle population demographics: how well do conventional techniques reflect reality? Southwestern Association of Naturalists. Memphis, Tennessee.
- House, W. J., I. M. Nall, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2008. Interpond movement patterns of western painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta bellii*) in east central Kansas. Southwestern Association of Naturalists. Memphis, Tennessee.
- Nall, I. M., W. J. House, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2008. The influence of trap bias on estimates of sex ratio for semi-aquatic turtle populations. Kansas Academy of Science. Emporia, Kansas.
- House, W. J., I. M. Nall, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2008. Interpond movement patterns of western painted turtles *Chrysemys picta bellii* in east central Kansas. Kansas Academy of Science. Emporia, Kansas.
- Nall, I. M., and **R. B. Thomas**. 2007. Linkage between foreclaw growth rate and stage of melanism in male slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*): comparisons within and among populations. Kansas Herpetological Society. Topeka, Kansas.
- House, W. J., I. M. Nall, and **R. B. Thomas**. 2007. Effectiveness of selected baits for trapping pond-dwelling turtles in east-central Kansas. Kansas Herpetological Society. Topeka, Kansas.
- Nall, I. M., and **R. B. Thomas**. 2007. Relationship between foreclaw growth rate and stage of ontogenetic melanism of male slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). Southwestern Association of Naturalists. Stephenville, Texas.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2006. Sampling methods for studies of freshwater turtles: does methodology influence our estimates of abundance, richness, and diversity. Kansas Herpetological Society. Hays, Kansas.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2006. Sampling methods for studies of freshwater turtles: does methodology influence our estimates of abundance, richness, and diversity. Association of Southeastern Biologists. Gatlinburg, Tennessee.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and Shirin Treadwell. 2002. The influence of basking duration and food availability on growth rate of hatchling slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). Association of Southeastern Biologists. Boone, North Carolina.
- Taylor, C. M., L. R. Williams, R. A. Fiorillo, **R. B. Thomas**, M. L. Warren, Jr. 2001. Fish assemblage structure and stability under variable environmental conditions in the Ouachita Mountains. American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. University Park, Pennsylvania.
- Fiorillo, R., **R. B. Thomas**, M. L. Warren, Jr., and C. M. Taylor. 2000. Helminth community structure of the Ouachita madtom (*Noturus lachneri*). Association of Southeastern Biologists. Chattanooga, Tennessee.
- Thomas, R. B.**, K. Thompson, D. Beckman, K. Buhlmann, J. W. Gibbons, and D. Moll. 1996. Estimation of age for *Trachemys scripta* and *Deirochelys reticularia* by counting annual growth layers in claws. American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Turner, L. K., **R. B. Thomas**, and D. Moll. 1995. Effects on reproduction in *Pseudemys concinna*, inhabiting a cold water reservoir. Southwestern Association of Naturalists. Shreveport, Louisiana.

PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS CONT...

- Turner, L. K., and **R. B. Thomas**. 1995. Effects on reproduction in *Pseudemys concinna*, inhabiting a cold-water reservoir. Graduate Student Council Interdisciplinary Forum at Southwest Missouri State University. Springfield, Missouri.
- Davis, S. D., **R. B. Thomas**, and D. Moll. 1995. Diet and reproduction of the stinkpot, *Sternotherus odoratus*, inhabiting a cold-water reservoir. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. Boone, North Carolina.
- Turner, L. K., **R. B. Thomas**, and D. Moll. 1994. Life history and ecology of the Missouri river cooter, *Pseudemys concinna*. Missouri Herpetological Association. Steeleville, Missouri.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and L. Robbins. 1994. Utilization of the LCTA plot summary methodology for reptile and amphibian surveys. Missouri Herpetological Association. Steeleville, Missouri.
- Thomas, R. B.**, D. Moll, and J. Steiert. 1993. Evidence of a symbiotic relationship between cellulolytic bacteria and a freshwater herbivorous turtle. Missouri Herpetological Association. Steeleville, Missouri.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and D. Moll. 1993. Depressed growth rate of *Trachemys scripta* and *Graptemys geographica* in a thermally altered environment. Missouri Herpetological Association. Steeleville, Missouri.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and D. Moll. 1993. The composition, status, and ecology of the turtle community of Lake Taneycomo, a cold water reservoir in southwest Missouri. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. Bloomington, Indiana.
- Thomas, R. B.**, and D. Moll. 1993. The composition, status, and ecology of the turtle community of Lake Taneycomo, a cold water reservoir in southwest Missouri. Southwestern Association of Naturalists. Springfield, Missouri.

INVITED SEMINARS

- Thomas, R. B.** 2012. The Light Bulb, the Lorax, and the King of Rock & Roll. Keynote Commencement Address, May 2012, University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Arkansas.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2009. Ecology, Behavior, and Natural History of Freshwater Turtles: an integrative approach to understanding a largely neglected group. Departmental Seminar, Department of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2009. Ecology, Behavior, and Natural History of Freshwater Turtles: an integrative approach to understanding a largely neglected group. Key Note Speaker: Tri-Beta Southcentral Regional Convention held at University of Oklahoma Biological Field Station, Lake Texoma, Oklahoma.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2008. Ecology, Behavior, and Natural History of Freshwater Turtles: an integrative approach to understanding a largely neglected group. Departmental Seminar, Division of Science and Mathematics, University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Arkansas.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2007. The science of turtle trapping: integrating original research into the undergraduate laboratory. Departmental Seminar, Department of Biology, Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2004. Selected biases of common methods of collecting freshwater turtles: implications for survey, monitoring, and conservation efforts. Tri-Beta Seminar Series, Department of Biology, Shorter College, Rome, Georgia.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2002. Herpetology: career pathways and projects. Departmental Seminar, Department of Biology, Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee.
- Thomas, R. B.** 2000. Ontogenetic shifts in the mating tactics of male slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*): A conditional mating strategy in a long-lived vertebrate. Departmental seminar, Department of Environmental Toxicology, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.
- Thomas, R. B.** 1999. Alternative mating tactics in the slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta*). Departmental Seminar, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi.

INVITED SEMINARS CONT...

Thomas, R. B. 1999. The potential threats to the native turtles of Florida posed by the exotic red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). Second Symposium on the Status and Conservation of Florida Turtles, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida.

GRANTS

Thomas, R. B. 2010. Sexual and seasonal variation in the thermoregulatory behaviors of painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*). ESU Faculty Creativity & Research Grant (\$9,677.00).

Thomas, R. B. 2006. Population demography of painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) inhabiting ponds within a differentially fragmented landscape. ESU Faculty Research and Creativity Grant. \$4950.00.

Thomas, R. B. 2003. Prevalence of necrotic shell disease among freshwater turtles inhabiting the South Carolina Piedmont. University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$1310.00

Thomas, R. B. 2002. Sexual and seasonal variation in the basking behavior of slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$470.00

Thomas, R. B. 2001. The influence of basking duration and food availability on growth rate of hatchling slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*). University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$736.00

Thomas, R. B. 2001. Herpetofaunal survey of the Kings Mountain National Military Park. National Parks Service \$3500.00

Thomas, R. B. 2000. Optimal thermoregulatory behavior in hatchling slider turtles. University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$1420.00

Thomas, R. B. 2000. Herpetofaunal survey of the Cowpens National Battlefield. National Parks Service. \$1750.00

Thomas, R. B. 1999. Herpetofaunal survey of the Cowpens National Battlefield. University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$1800.00

Thomas, R. B. 1999. The potential threats to the native turtles of Florida posed by the exotic red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). University of South Carolina Spartanburg - Teaching and Productive Scholarship Grant. \$371.00

Holder, T. L., R. Altig, and **R. Brent Thomas**. 1996. Estimating non-breeding densities of anuran populations in east-central Mississippi. Northern Prairie Science Center. \$500.00.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Member of ESU Enrollment Management Taskforce (2021-present)
- Ex Officio Member of ESU Performing Arts Board (2014–present)
- Ex Officio Member of ESU Visual Arts Board (2014–present)
- Chair, ESU Pre-Medical Fellowship Committee (2018-present)
- Emporia State University Naming Committee (2014- present)
- Chair, Administrative Evaluation Committee for ESU VP University Advancement (2019-2020)
- Member, Administrative Evaluation Committee for ESU VP Student Affairs (2019-2020)
- Chair, Administrative Evaluation Committee for ESU Chief Information Officer (2017-2018)
- Member of HLC Steering Committee, Emporia State University, continual service as lead of team responsible for writing the assurance argument for criterion 3 (2015-present)
- Hazardous Materials & Safety Committee, Emporia State University (2009-present)
- Faculty Champion for ESU Men's Track and Cross-country teams (2013-present)
- Member, ESU University Tuition and Fees Committee (2014-2016)
- Faculty Champion: Biological Sciences Departmental Enhancement Fund (2013 – 2014)
- Member of ESU Retention Action Team (2012–2014)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONT...

- Member of the ESU 150th Anniversary Academic Team (2012-2013)
- Departmental Assessment Coordinator for graduate programs in Department of Biological Sciences (2009–present)
- Chair Administrative Evaluation Committee for ESU Graduate Dean (2012-2013)
- Coordinator for the annual ESU Summer Biology Camp (2011-2014)
- Kansas Academy of Science Representative to Kansas Nongame Wildlife Advisory Council (2008-2011)
- Chair, Administrative Evaluation Committee for ESU Graduate Dean (2011-2012)
- Commonly served as representative at numerous university and departmental recruiting events (Jack Kilby Science Day, Black & Gold Events; Hornet Nights; etc.).
- Served as a faculty advisor in the ESU Student Advising Center during (2009-2010)
- External Consultant: reviewed Wildlife Biology program at Southeast Oklahoma State University (2009-2010).
- Associate Editor for *Herpetological Review* (January 2006-March 2009)
- Member of search committee to hire new physiologist at Emporia State University (2007-2008).
- Served as recorder for Department of Biological Sciences at Emporia State University (Fall 2006-Spring 2007).
- Co-Coordinator of the Mississippi Delta Regional Working Group of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (1997-1999). The region included Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Over last 5 yrs, served as anonymous peer-reviewer for *Southwestern Naturalist*, *Journal of Herpetology*, *American Midland Naturalist*, *Herpetologica*, *Herpetological Review*, *Canadian Journal of Zoology*, *Northeastern Naturalist*, *Southeastern Naturalist*, *Ethology*, *Copeia*, *Herpetological Conservation and Biology*, and *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*
- Guest editor for *Southeastern Naturalist*. (2006; 2009; 2010; 2012)
- Barry Goldwater Scholarship Committee; USC-Upstate; (1999 - 2000)
- Boyer Awards Committee; USC-Upstate; (1999 - 2000)
- Co-advisor of Health Professionals Club; USC-Upstate; (1999 - 2006)
- Volunteer-Delphi Student Advising Corp; USC-Upstate; (1999 - 2000)
- Adjunct Faculty (3 year appointment): Department of Environmental Toxicology at Clemson University; (Fall 1999 - Fall 2002)
- Graduate Committee Member of Lisa K. Irwin at Clemson University. Lisa was a master's student in the Department of Environmental Toxicology working on an ecotoxicology project involving freshwater turtles. (1999 - 2000)
- Public Service Curriculum Task Force Committee; USC-Upstate (2000 - 2003)
- Served as a judge for the Regional Science Fair held at the USC-Upstate (2000-2006)
- Served as a reviewer for various textbooks published by McGraw-Hill, Benjamin Cummings, Harcourt College Publishers, and Thomson Brook/Cole
- Faculty Senate Representative for Division of Natural Sciences and Engineering at USC-Upstate; (Fall 2000 - Fall 2003)
- Chair of committee charged with creating the biology minor at USC-Upstate (2001-2002).
- Departmental representative on Faculty Welfare Committee at USC-Upstate (Fall 2003 – Spring 2006).
- Member of search committee to hire assistant professor of history at USC-Upstate (Fall 2000 - Spring 2001)
- Member of search committee to hire new lab manager for Division of Natural Sciences and Engineering at USC-Upstate (Summer 2001)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONT...

- Member of search committee to hire lab manager for Division of Natural Sciences and Engineering at USC-Upstate (Summer 2002)
- Served as a member of the *ad hoc* committee at USC-Upstate known as the Internship Roundtable
- Member of *ad hoc* committee at USC-Upstate known as the Research Advisory Council.
- Served on reviewer committee responsible for evaluating proposals from across campus to obtain funding for research activities at USC-Upstate. (2003)
- Member of search committee charged with hiring a new molecular biologist in the division of Natural Sciences and Engineering at USC-Upstate (2004-2005).
- Member of Promotion & Tenure Committee at USC-Upstate (2005-2006)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Volunteer Actor in public educational videos produced by the Lyon County Emergency Communications Center (2019)
- Coordinator, Annual ESU Summer Biology Camp (2011 – 2015)
- Site Council Member at Village Elementary (Emporia, KS; 2007-2012)
- Coordinator, “Wild Outdoors” with QUEST program at Village Elementary (2008)
- Numerous presentations (> 60) on reptiles and amphibians to youth and civic groups: Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Scouts of America, pre-schools and day-care centers, Salvation Army Youth Centers, Emporia Kiwanis Club; Elementary/Middle/High school groups, and Youth Conservation Corp, and others
- Volunteer tutor for youth after-school program sponsored by Salvation Army in Spartanburg, SC (2000-2005)
- President of Forest Hills Neighborhood Association in Spartanburg, SC (2001-2002)
- Vice-President of Forest Hills Neighborhood Association in Spartanburg, SC (2000-2001)