



# **NGRREC Welcomes Wildlife Ecologist John Crawford**

February 4 2015 2:34 PM



ALTON – The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) is proud to welcome Terrestrial Wildlife Ecologist John Crawford to its research team. Crawford was hired as a senior researcher in NGRREC’s terrestrial ecology program in fall 2014.

Crawford conducts wildlife-related research focused on non-game animals – mainly amphibians and reptiles.

“Working at NGRREC allows me to continue to ask the questions I find interesting and contribute to a collective effort to conserve and restore big river systems and the watersheds that feed them,” Crawford said.

Currently, he has several ongoing research projects including the assessment of wetland quality on Illinois public lands; evaluation of ecological health and function of created wetlands; effects of invasive plants on wetland community structure and function; elevational distributions of salamanders in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and population ecology of the state threatened Jefferson salamander and state endangered silvery salamander in Illinois.

“Along with two of my colleagues at the Illinois Natural History Survey, we are completing a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded project focused on evaluating the ecological health and function of more than 250 seasonal wetlands across 45 Illinois Department of Natural Resources properties,” Crawford said. “To date, this is the most comprehensive assessment of seasonal wetlands in the state of Illinois and will aid in developing future management and restoration strategies in the state.”

Crawford grew up in a rural area of Illinois and has always been interested in outdoor activities. As a junior in college, he worked with a herpetologist at the University of Illinois on undergraduate research involving amphibians. From that point forward, Crawford has had a passion for amphibians, reptiles and conservation-related issues.

“The best part of my job is getting to spend a lot of time outside working with animals that I find truly fascinating,” Crawford said. “It also allows me to work with like-minded individuals who share the same passion that I do for conservation and restoration issues.”

Previously, Crawford served as an assistant professor of biology at Lindenwood University, where he was named the University Scholar of the Year in 2012 for his research productivity and success. Besides his role at NGRREC, Crawford holds an affiliate research scientist position at the University of Illinois through the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Crawford earned his bachelor's degree in biological sciences from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, his master's degree in biological sciences from Illinois State University, and his doctorate in biological sciences from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Crawford is a member of the Ecological Society of America, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. Additionally, he serves on the editorial board for the scientific journal *Copeia* and is an associate editor for the journal *American Midland Naturalist*.

"I hope to continue to contribute to the conservation, management and protection of natural resources, including wildlife, and help NGRREC become a leading research center for issues pertaining to freshwater ecology and management," Crawford said.

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center is a partnership of Lewis and Clark Community College, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the Prairie Research Institute's Illinois Natural History Survey. NGRREC aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education and outreach related to the interconnectedness of big rivers, their floodplains and watersheds, and the people who use them.

For more information, visit [www.ngrrrec.org](http://www.ngrrrec.org).