

New Breeding Ponds for Imperiled Amphibians Discovered in Georgia *Boost to Declining Gopher Frog and Striped Newt Populations*

For immediate release

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ATLANTA, GA Friday, July 17, 2020 - The Amphibian Foundation issued the following statement from Mark Mandica, Executive Director:

Students in the Amphibian Foundation's Conservation Research Bridge Program discovered three new amphibian breeding sites while surveying protected state wetlands in Georgia, including sites occupied by Georgia's rarest frog, the Gopher Frog. Striped Newt and Gopher Frog populations are declining throughout their range in the southeast Coastal Plain. The new breeding ponds are great news for these rare endemic amphibians threatened by habitat loss, climate change, and fire suppression.

The research team led by Amphibian Foundation's Director of Research, Tobias Landberg, PhD, is collaborating with state and regional conservation groups to headstart these two endemic species that require a habitat with temporary ponds in dry sandhills.

The Striped Newt Repatriation Program brings together organizations including the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, Coastal Plains Institute, and multiple zoos to breed striped newts in captive populations and release them at historic breeding sites.

Gopher Frogs are being raised in artificial ponds at sites around the state and released just after metamorphosis to get the animals through the periods of highest natural mortality and help their populations recover.

The discovery of these populations moving into new pond sites indicates that these native frogs and salamanders are a couple of steps further away from extinction. However, more work is needed to prevent these populations from further declines.

The Amphibian Foundation is a nonprofit organization devoted to conservation, education and outreach. The Conservation Research Bridge Program offers educational experiences for adults exploring conservation careers while working to preserve imperiled amphibians with other passionate biologists.

If you'd like more information, visit our website: <http://bridge.amphibianfoundation.org/>
Call Mark Mandica at 562-774-2248 or email Mark@amphibianfoundation.org

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[High resolution photos can be accessed and downloaded here.](#)

Photo Captions:

Photo 1: A recently metamorphosed Gopher Frog (*Lithobates (Rana) capito*), moments after being experimentally released into protected habitat in southern Georgia. This frog was part of a large group raised from eggs at the Amphibian Foundation, Atlanta GA.



Photo 2: Sarah Poletti and Jack Martin, two Conservation Research Assistants in the Amphibian Foundation's Conservation Research Bridge Program are surveying for imperiled amphibian species in a South Georgia wetland.

