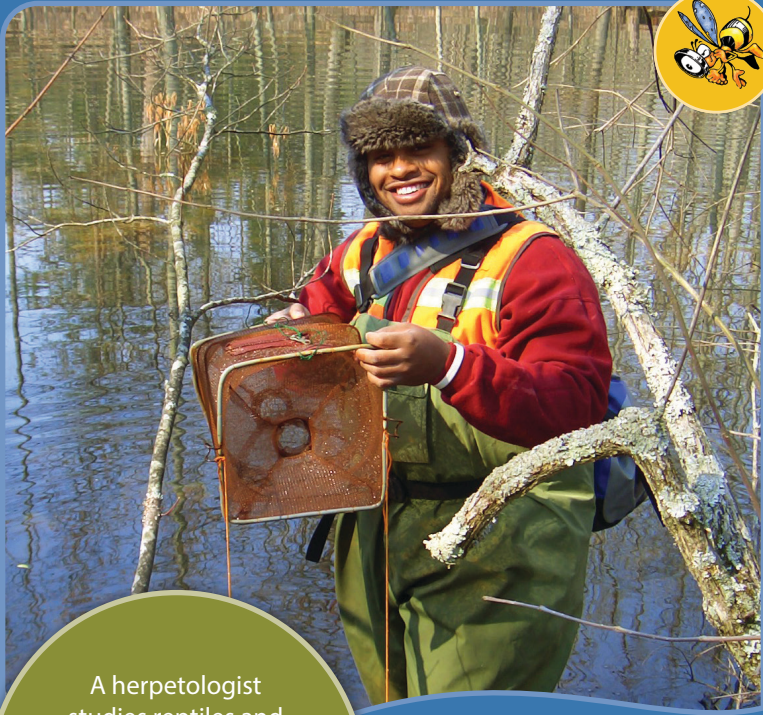

A herpetologist studies reptiles and amphibians. I assess how reptile and amphibian populations respond to forest management and land use changes.

Dr. Tim Baldwin

Herpetologist

Ph.D., Alabama A&M University

USDA Forest Service scientist

Dr. Tim Baldwin

Important Scientist Characteristics

I use careful observation, extensive record keeping, and my statistical background in my research. Amphibian and reptile communities are exciting to me. It is important that I take notes, photographs, and keep track of the information that is compiled for each captured individual.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer: How does forest management influence amphibians' abilities to reproduce in ephemeral, or temporary, pools of water?

Technology or equipment used in research: I use snake hooks. A snake hook helps me immobilize a snake so that I can measure and weigh the individual. Once the animal is processed, I return the organism to the environment. Snake hooks can also be used to lift logs or other cover objects that herpetofauna use for refuge.

Most Exciting Discovery

I found that eastern spadefoot tadpoles *(Scaphiopus holbrookii)* will often aggregate and consume other larval amphibians, including individuals that may be too large for one tadpole to eat. This collective feeding resembles a feeding frenzy.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist? I have wanted to work with animals since I was 4 years old. In college, I worked as an intern on several wildlife studies, and these experiences gave me the opportunity to decide that I wanted to pursue a career in herpetology.