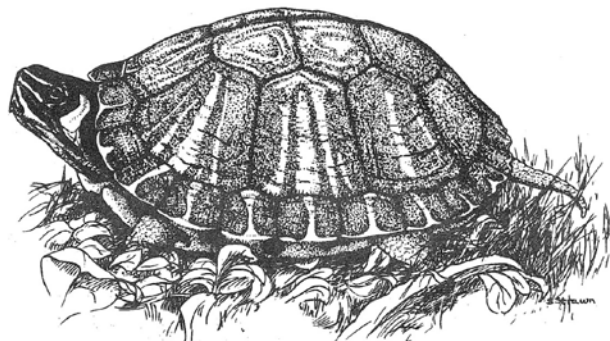


**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF J. WHITFIELD GIBBONS**



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**SMITHSONIAN HERPETOLOGICAL
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The first number of the SMITHSONIAN HERPETOLOGICAL INFORMATION SERVICE series appeared in 1968. SHIS number 1 was a list of herpetological publications arising from within or through the Smithsonian Institution and its collections entity, the United States National Museum (USNM). The latter exists now as little more than the occasional title for the registration activities of the National Museum of Natural History. No. 1 was prepared and printed by J. A. Peters, then Curator-in-Charge of the Division of Amphibians & Reptiles. The availability of a NASA translation service and assorted indices encouraged him to continue the series and distribute these items on an irregular schedule.

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Cover Image: *Trachemys scripta* drawing by Susan Strawn from
Morreale and Gibbons. 1986. Habitat Suitability Index Models: Slider Turtle.
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Biographical Sketch

I've been told that the morning I was born was a frosty one in central Alabama. I have no reason to doubt this bit of family lore. According to a receipt from the small hospital in Prattville, delivery of "James Whitfield Gibbons" on October 5, 1939, cost \$3.18. Hard to fathom these days!

I remember living in Tuscaloosa in the 1940s and distinctly remember running inside in the spring of 1945 to ask my grandmother why everyone in our Mayberry-like neighborhood was outside shouting and cheering. It was because the war was over. Cool, I remember thinking, I'll get to see my daddy. Soon after he returned from floating around in the Pacific Ocean for three years, we played tackle football, the sport of choice in Tuscaloosa. University of Alabama head coach and Rose Bowl-winner Frank Thomas had given the football to my granddaddy to give to me. The game in the front yard ended when my dad injured his leg and was on crutches for two weeks. Too late for a Purple Heart.

I loved two things as a kid: playing sports, mainly football and softball, and going to "the woods," as we referred to the floodplain forests of the Black Warrior River, a half-mile trek from my house. I soon learned that bringing home live animals did not bother my grandparents (whose house we lived in), my mother (who was accepting as long as she didn't have to feed something or clean a cage), or my dad (who was equally accepting of whatever I had in hand). When I went to the woods with my boyhood friends, we would sometimes take our rifles. I well remember the time my grandmother told me that if I ever again brought home a croker sack full of dead birds, she and granddaddy would take away the .22 caliber rifle he had bought for me a few weeks earlier. I abandoned ornithology at that point, never actually took up serious hunting, and concentrated on catching reptiles and amphibians.

In the early 1950s, my parents, sister Anne (8 years younger), and I moved to New Orleans while my dad was pursuing his Ph.D. in English literature at Tulane University. During the 1940s, he had written a *New York Times* best-selling novel. Writing was his profession. My mother, who apparently was his muse, had also graduated with a degree in English. Aunt Hattie, one of my dad's sisters, moved to New Orleans to attend Tulane. She was working on a master's degree in ichthyology and was friends with Don Tinkle, who was conducting his master's research (an inventory of reptiles and amphibians at Sarpy Wildlife Refuge outside the city). She told him I was passionate about snakes and other wild things, and he said he could use a field assistant. My compensation for helping him would be that I did not have to pay for the gas to get to the field site. At 28 cents a gallon back then, that was a relief.

Beginning at age 13, I accompanied Tinkle to his field site many times and caught hundreds of snakes. The first time I ever saw my name in a scientific journal was in *American Midland Naturalist* (1959) where Don had cited me as "Mr. Whitfield Gibbons" in a pers. comm. for some naive observations I had made about courtship behavior in watersnakes. When I was 14, Tinkle asked if I wanted to be a member of the Tulane Field Crew supported by Fred Cagle that would be capturing turtles on several southern rivers. What nature-oriented teenager wouldn't want to spend the summer that way? At the time, the rivers were unexplored with regard to what turtles inhabited them, many still being undescribed. I still have a field notebook in which I wrote in India ink in 1955 (my second trip as

a Tulane Field Crew member) about the capture of a recently described musk turtle that was considered only putatively valid as a new species by some herpetologists because of the odd appearance of the only adult that had been previously captured. My hand capture that night on the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior River was the second adult specimen of the species, validating that the first adult was not an abnormality. Don and I caught three more that night, according to my field notes, and all were clearly “flattened” musk turtles (*Sternotherus depressus*).

Several years later, Don Tinkle involved me in his classic study on the side-blotched lizard in the Chihuahuan desert, offering free lodging and cook stove meals for the summer. Each week when we went into Kermit, Texas, to get supplies, Don treated us to a meal at the only cafe in town. I liked lizards, although measuring how far they moved from one packrat pile to another was less than intriguing. The real excitement for me was the occasional road running for desert snakes. Many herpetologists have told me over the years they thought Tinkle had been my major professor because of my long association with him. Our connection was not academic. It was an extension of my interaction with him that began when he was a student at Tulane and I was in junior high school.

While we were living in New Orleans, my parents divorced. My mother, sister, and I moved back to Tuscaloosa where I finished high school in 1957, joining classmates I already knew from elementary school. The summer after high school graduation, eight of us drove (in two cars) to California and points in-between, camping out nearly every night. The diversity of plants and animals was fascinating and showed me how little I knew about species identification and ecology, including most of the herpetofauna. I spent the summer of 1958 working in the Big Bend with Dr. Bill Milstead of Texas Tech University, an arrangement Tinkle had worked out. I concluded that watching lizards do pushups on rocks all day was not the career for me. However, the summer was salvaged. One night I was walking around alone amid the boulders of a canyon to check out a small spring I had discovered. I found several individuals (we caught 11) of what then was the westernmost known population of broad-banded copperheads. Milstead published the finding in *Southwestern Naturalist* (1960) and I saw another version of my name (“J. W. Gibbons”) mentioned in a scientific journal.

I completed my B.S. at the University of Alabama in 1961. I had gone to the university but decided not to play for Bear Bryant, who arrived the year after I got there, in part because I was captivated by one of my mentors, Dr. Ralph Chermock, who supported my interests in herpetology from high school through my graduate degree (M.S. 1963; on clinal variation in ring-neck snakes). The years 1962 and 1963 were memorable in many ways. In 1962, Chermock arranged for me to spend a summer on a banana plantation (all I could eat, every day) in Costa Rica for the sole purpose of making a collection of reptiles and amphibians. In the fall semester I took herpetology from Dr. Ron Brandon and met my soon-to-be wife, Carolyn, who also took the course. She needed help with a watersnake study. Being a considerate colleague, I helped her catch the snakes. We were married in January 1963, timing the wedding so that we would receive the spouse compensation on my National Defense Education Act fellowship for the whole year. Our 3-month prenuptial association has now extended to 55 years, four children (Laura, Jennifer Anne, Susan Lane, and Michael), and four grandchildren (Allison, Parker, Sam, and Nicholas).

In the summer of 1963, I was selected to register incoming UA undergraduates, who were not allowed on campus due to a standoff between the Alabama National Guard and Alabama state troopers. The university was being integrated. Inside Foster Auditorium I watched, through a crack in the door, only 10 feet away from Governor George Wallace when he made his stand in the schoolhouse door. Knowing that new adventures, cultural as well as biological, lay outside Alabama, I applied only to Big Ten, Ivy League, and California schools for graduate work. I got several acceptances, as would almost anyone in those days who could fill out a form. I chose Michigan State University, not for a recognized herpetology program but for a guaranteed teaching assistantship that was a few dollars more than a couple of others. Most of the other universities had no objection to my attending the school but weren't interested in paying me to do so.

Carolyn and I moved to East Lansing in 1963 where Dr. Max Hensley was the only herpetologist in the zoology department. That fall, I took a course from Dr. Philip Clark, a biostatistician, who arranged to become my major professor. Fate intervened. Dr. Clark was killed on Christmas Eve by a hit-and-run driver. Hensley became my Ph.D. advisor by default. I wanted to work with snakes, but field opportunities were not forthcoming, so I decided to study turtles. I was fortunate. We moved to the W. K. Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) near Hickory Corners, Michigan, where I was teaching assistant in the summer herpetology course taught by Dr. Hensley. Even more fortunate, we stayed there for the rest of graduate school. Not only was a sizeable population of painted turtles nearby, but I met Dr. George H. Lauff, the director—and my next mentor. George was not on my committee but was one of the most supportive people I met while I was a graduate student and remained so for many years after. He brought me back to teach herpetology in the summer of 1990, the course in which I had assisted in two decades earlier. Carolyn and I spent 2½ wonderful years at KBS in the 1960s, if you accept the adage that if are doing what you love, you only need enough money to get by. Lauff provided an office, a john boat, support as a research assistant, and plenty of time to do my turtle research, study, and write. I remember my elation when I was informed that my first scientific publication, a note about observing painted turtles swimming under ice, was officially accepted for publication in *Canadian Journal of Zoology*. This time my name was “J. Whitfield Gibbons.” I have had it legally changed to that.

The late 1960s was a not-to-be-repeated golden age for any young ecologist looking for a job in academia. I literally—not figuratively, metaphorically, or virtually—received numerous official university job offers without leaving my grad student office at KBS. These included offers from Cornell and Mississippi State University. Universities were desperate to fill vacancies as they underwent expansion. WWII veterans were retiring, which left vacancies. I even received an offer to join the U.S. Army with the rank of captain once I completed Officer Training School. If our pet box turtle could have talked on the phone or read a letter, he might well have gotten a job offer. Meeting two people during that time determined my course of action. One was Dr. Frank B. Golley, director of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL), a unit of the University of Georgia situated on the Atomic Energy Commission's Savannah River Plant (SRP) in South Carolina. Frank was a speaker at a meeting in Ann Arbor. He also had a degree in zoology from Michigan State. He suggested I apply for a postdoctoral position at SREL. A few weeks later Dr. Eugene P. Odum, director of the Institute of Ecology at UGA and Frank's boss, visited KBS. He also suggested I apply. I did. While Carolyn and I were visiting back home to Alabama, we drove over to SREL. After not

much of an interview, I was offered a job at the lowest salary of any of the six standing offers I had in writing. Postdoctoral appointments were not yet common, but I saw it as an opportunity to do open-ended research and write scientific papers, which seemed like a good idea.

I began my association with SREL on July 1, 1967, when I became an NIH postdoctoral associate with the University of Georgia. After 3½ years at Michigan State University I had my Ph.D. My dissertation was titled “Population Dynamics and Ecology of the Painted Turtle, *Chrysemys picta*.” My graduate research was conducted at Sherriff’s Marsh, located 2½ miles east of KBS where we were in residence (in a KBS apartment repurposed from Mr. Kellogg’s former horse stables) for the duration. Over the next couple of years, I published several papers based on my dissertation research, which had to be delayed until I graduated. Odd though it may sound today, back then, you could not use previously published papers as part of your doctoral dissertation. Graduate students often held off submitting research papers until a diploma was in hand.

I had come to SREL to work under the guidance of Frank Golley. On my second day at work (July 2, 1967) I learned that Frank had resigned from SREL. He had been appointed executive director of the Institute of Ecology on the main campus in Athens, 2½ hours away. Crisis, disappointment, and looming disaster soon metamorphosed into unforeseen opportunities. I had no supervisor. I took advantage of a year of a guaranteed (albeit paltry) stipend. Frank and I overlapped at SREL for 30 minutes. His one admonition during his half-hour mentorship period was that I “do some research, publish some papers, and get a teaching job next year.” Teaching opportunities did arise, but the laissez faire, nonbureaucratic attitude embraced by SREL suited me fine. I stuck it out for 45 more years.

I conducted research and published more than a dozen scientific papers on fish from 1972 to 1978. My paper in *Nature* is unknown to herpetologists, and apparently to most ichthyologists, but my experience with fish would later prove invaluable when I needed a source of bait for turtle traps. During the fish studies, I caught more than 10,000 largemouth bass, so I am seldom impressed with fish stories. The only fishing I enjoy is vicarious. My grandsons fish the stream at our cabin and watching them untangle lines from bushes and trees is a reminder of why I have done enough fishing. The obligatory fish studies allowed me to maintain a research ecologist position. However, my primary interests continued to be the natural history of reptiles and amphibians. My research focused on population dynamics and ecology of herpetofauna and on determining functional relationships between population parameters (e.g., survivorship, reproductive output, dispersal) and environmental conditions. Documenting and explaining herpetofaunal distribution and abundance patterns has been a central theme, with ultimate goals of interpreting findings at ecological and evolutionary levels and applying basic research to environmental impact and conservation issues. I often used such language for grant applications, publications, seminars, and other presentations. Simply put, I like finding, observing, and catching herps, as I have been doing for 70-odd years.

Educating the general public, particularly K-12 schoolchildren, about reptiles and amphibians is key to generating public awareness and support for herpetological conservation. In the 1970s, I began publishing newspaper columns and popular magazine articles. Some academicians used “popular writing” as a weapon against their fellow faculty members, claiming it does not represent scientific

achievement. Fortunately, I was able to head off a few of my SREL colleagues with plans for attempted academic belittlement about my own popular science articles with a passive aggressive approach. When I had cover articles in *Bioscience*, *Science*, *American Scientist*, and others journal publications over a several month period I would walk to a would-be detractor's office and ask if they needed reprints. I also enjoyed asking if they thought the topic would be a good one for a popular article. As I had not had a name change for several years, I began to use "Whit Gibbons" for popular writing.

Most universities have a mantra for faculty. Research, teaching, and service are the three pillars on which academia stands, although anyone who has been on a university faculty knows that research publications and funded grants will suffice for an individual, regardless whether they teach or serve. I had been at SREL a decade before I taught a full course alone. I had co-taught a couple of courses in ecology with colleagues in the late 1960s, but our purpose was less for academic fulfillment and more for debt relief through a federal program. For each semester someone taught, 6 months of student loans were exempted. Two years later, I had no more student loans to pay off. Such encouragement for teachers no longer seems to be a priority.

My real teaching efforts occurred when I volunteered to teach a 5-credit-hour herpetology course on the main campus at UGA, which I taught intermittently from 1977 until 2006. Through 2018, I have continued to give the venomous snake lecture for herpetology classes on campus. I did not have to teach, but I enjoyed working with students. Teaching a herpetology class was like having a farm team from which to pick recruits for the big leagues. From the 1970s to 2010, I was major professor to 46 students who earned graduate degrees (18 doctoral; 28 master's), most of whom completed their field research at SREL. I retired in 2008 but a couple of students were apparently vying for "Whit's last student" status, and the last ones left in 2010. I also served as Project Director and Principal Investigator for National Science Foundation (NSF) grants awarded to SREL from 1970 to 1974, 1992, and 1993 for the Undergraduate Research Program (now called REUs) at SREL.

I spent two sabbatical years away from SREL. One (1975-76) was as Visiting Research Scientist at the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, with Don Tinkle. The other (1984-85) was as Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow in the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History with George Zug. UGA did not have a standard sabbatical program at that time in which a university would pay 6-months of a faculty member's salary to spend up to a year at another university or other facility. I was pleased to be able to be the first, made possible because of the hybrid funding situation at SREL. We were paid by Department of Energy (DOE) funds, which were funneled through UGA. So, I was part of the UGA faculty but at no direct monetary cost to them. DOE agreed to pay the funds for me to go on sabbatical but said UGA would first have to approve it. UGA would not agree to sign off until DOE did. The week before I left for Michigan, the two head-butting bureaucracies were both saying they would sign the paperwork, but not before the other one did, a true "Catch-22." One must wonder if someone at SREL told each entity independently that the other had already signed, because the day I left, it was approved, signed by both organizations. Both sabbatical years proved to be productive ones, the first leading to a monograph on the evolution of viviparity in reptiles (Tinkle and Gibbons 1977) and the other to a book, "Life History and Ecology of the Slider Turtle" (Gibbons 1990, Smithsonian Press). I continue to have great appreciation for both

Don and George in making those years ones of professional advancement as well as highly enjoyable.

My service to the academic and scientific community involved interactions with professional societies and administrative positions with the University of Georgia. I served as SREL Acting Director (1979-80) and head of SREL's Environmental Outreach and Education Program from 1990 to 2014, double-dipping for 6 years after official retirement. I was involved with many of the herpetological and ecological societies and editorial boards. My most gratifying accomplishment was cofounding Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), serving as National Chair from 1999 to 2004.

While involved in these activities, I maintained a strong research program with help in great part from technical staff and students who were instrumental in focusing on specific projects and long-term research efforts. I consider my most significant research accomplishments to be the ones whose implementation and completion involved collaborative efforts among my students and other colleagues. I was involved with the following major long-term research projects carried out through SREL: freshwater turtle ecology, Kiawah Island terrapin research (the longest continuous study on terrapins in the world), Sherriff's Marsh (Michigan) turtles, Ellenton Bay herpetofauna, Rainbow Bay wetland and herpetofaunal research (recognized by Guinness World Records as the longest continuous field study on amphibians in the world), and general distribution and abundance of herpetofauna on the 300-square-mile Savannah River Site.

I concentrated much of my professional efforts on increasing public awareness of and appreciation for natural history by writing science-based books, newspaper columns, and magazine articles, most with a herpetological focus. I published dozens of environmental articles in popular magazines and got the most acclaim as a contributing editor for Delta Airline's Sky Magazine. Delta was the main carrier for the closest airport (Augusta, GA). I was always pleased when a colleague from out of town brought me the most recent copy of the monthly magazine. I began writing a newspaper column called "Ecology Beat" in 1972 that was later syndicated and distributed by the New York Times Regional Newspaper Group until 2013 and then by the Halifax Media Group. Approximately one-fourth of the more than 2,000 newspaper columns I have written weekly during 40-plus years have been on reptiles and amphibians. Of the 30 books I have authored, coauthored, or edited, the majority have been on herpetological subjects. Some have been technical in nature, but several were directed toward public audiences. My first single-authored book, *Their Blood Runs Cold: Adventures with Reptiles and Amphibians*, was published in 1983 by the University of Alabama Press, which also published the 30th Anniversary Edition in 2013.

I retired from the University of Georgia in June 2008 as Professor Emeritus of Ecology, and Senior Research Ecologist, Savannah River Ecology Lab. I was appointed Research Professor, University of South Carolina–Aiken, in 2008. From 2008 until 2014, I continued at SREL on a part-time basis as director of the SREL Outreach and Education program, while supervising my last five doctoral students, and completing a variety of research and writing projects. I have cleared off most other writing obligations and am in the process of writing an autobiography titled "Salleyland: What Does a Retired Herpetologist Do?"

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- Gibbons, J. W. 2018. Book Review. *Ecology and Management of Terrestrial Vertebrate Invasive Species in the United States*. Edited by William C. Pitt, James C. Beasley, and Gary W. Witmer. CRC Press (Taylor & Francis Group). *Quarterly Review of Biology* 93: 265–266.
- Gibbons, J. W. 2018. Book Review. *American Snakes*. By Sean P. Graham; Johns Hopkins University Press. *Quarterly Review of Biology* 93: 366–367.
- Gibbons, J. W. 2018. Book Review. *Lifting the Veil of the Mysterious Congo*. By Eli Greenbaum. University Press of New England. *BioScience* 68(1): 44–46.
- Janzen, F. J., L. A. Hoekstra, R. J. Brooks, D. M. Carroll, J. W. Gibbons, J. L. Greene, J. B. Iverson, J. D. Litzgus, E. D. Michael, S. G. Parren, W. M. Roosenburg, G. F. Strain, J. K. Tucker, and G. R. Ultsch. 2018. Altered spring phenology of North American freshwater turtles and the importance of representative populations. *Ecology and Evolution* 8(11): 5815–5827.
- Lovich, J. E., J. R. Ennen, M. Agha, and J. W. Gibbons. 2018. Where Have All the Turtles Gone, and Why Does It Matter? *BioScience* 68(10): 771–781. (Cover Article)
- Bangma, J. T., J. M. Ragland, T. R. Rainwater, J. A. Bowden, J. W. Gibbons and J. L. Reiner. 2019. Perfluoroalkyl substances in diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*) in coastal South Carolina. *Chemosphere* 215(2019): 305–312.
- Gibbons, J. W., and Jeffrey E. Lovich. 2019. Where has turtle ecology been, and where is it going? *Herpetologica* 75(1): 4–20.
- Gibbons, J. W. 2019. Chapter 1. Introduction and history of the diamond-backed terrapin. Pp. 1-4. In W. M. Roosenburg and V. S. Kennedy, eds., *Ecology and Conservation of the Diamond-Backed Terrapin*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lovich, J. E., J. W. Gibbons, and Kathryn M. Greene. 2019. Chapter 6. Life history of the Diamond-backed Terrapin with emphasis on geographic variation. Pp. 63-80. In W. M. Roosenburg and V. S. Kennedy, eds., *Ecology and Conservation of the Diamond-Backed Terrapin*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Popular Articles (selected examples)

ECOVIEWS – More than 2,000 newspaper columns, most published weekly in several newspapers for more than 45 years, beginning in 1972 (1972–2018) – Originally called "*Ecology Beat*", published by Du Pont Company's "Savannah River Plant News." Later called "*Ecology Today*" and eventually "*Ecoviews*" published by *Aiken Standard* (South Carolina), *Athens Banner Herald* (Georgia), *Daily Corinthian* (Mississippi), *Tuscaloosa News* (Alabama), and others, Distribution by New York Times Regional Newspaper Group, Halifax Media Group, and Gateway Media.

Published 2-4 magazine articles per year (1978–2018) and was a contributing writer for *The Weekend Gardener*, 1984–1986; *Spectator* (quarterly literary magazine), 1982–1986; *EnviroSouth* (quarterly environmental magazine); *Nature South* (Alabama Museum of Natural History). Contributing editor for Delta Airline's *Sky Magazine* (monthly publication), 1981–1985.

Selected Examples of popular articles. Does not include majority published.

Gibbons, Whit. 2018. Can Turtles Bite Off Fingers? *Outdoor Guide*.

Gibbons, Whit. 2018. What Reptiles and Amphibians are Hiding in Kiawah Island's Maritime Forest? *Naturally Kiawah* magazine.

Gibbons, Whit. 2018. Snakebite on Trails an Overrated Hazard. *Outdoor Guide*.

Gibbons, Whit, and Tony Mills. 2017. Kiawah's Fastest Reptile. *Naturally Kiawah*.

Gibbons, Whit. 2016. Kiawah Island's Voices of the Night. *Naturally Kiawah*.

Gibbons, Whit. 2014. Who's Hot and Who's Not? The Roll Call of South Carolina's Snakes. *South Carolina Living*.

Gibbons, Whit. 2013. SREL's Role in the World of Herpetology. *Indigo Shorts*. Published by the Orianne Society.

Gibbons, Whit. 2006. We need a national reptile and national amphibian. *Iguana* 13: 66–67. Invited Commentary

Gibbons, Whit. 2006. Crocodiles and alligators are very different. *Iguana* 13: 230–231. Invited Commentary

Gibbons, Whit, and Kimberly Andrews. 2005. Life (and death) in a nest box. *South Carolina Wildlife*. March–April 2005.

Gibbons, Whit. 2001. Wildlife Profile – Eastern Coral Snake. *Women in the Outdoors*. Spring 2001 2(2): 70–71.

Gibbons, J.W. 2000. What is PARC and why should you care? *Froglog*. International Newsletter of the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force. February 2000(37). ISSN 1026–0269. 4–5.

Gibbons, Whit. 2000. Snakes are Good News for Whitetails and Hunters. *Quality Whitetails*. Journal of the Quality Deer Management Association. 2000 Volume 7, issue 1.

Gibbons, J.W. 2000. What is PARC and why should you care? IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Specialist Group. *Turtle and Tortoise Newsletter*. January 2000 (1): 21–22.

- Gibbons, J.W. 2000. PARC Update. IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Specialist Group. *Turtle and Tortoise Newsletter*. June 2000 (2): 14.
- Gibbons, J.W. 2000. What is PARC and why should you care? *Newsletter of the Herpetologists' League* 7(1): 4–5.
- Gibbons, J.W. 2000. Who's afraid of the deadly diamondback? *The World & I*. August 2000: 138–143.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1999. Rat Snakes and Wood Ducks. *Waterfowl*.
- Gibbons, W. 1999. The probability of snakebite. *SEOPA News*. Southeastern Outdoor Press publication. July 1999: 4–5.
- Gibbons, J. W. 1999. Turn rejection slips into assignments. *Outdoors Unlimited*. August 1999: 13.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1999. Whither Our Air and Water? Natural Science Essay. *The World & I*, June 1999, p. 184–191.
- Gibbons, J. W., and Michael E. Dorcas. 1998. Cowards, Bluffers, and Warriors. What does it take to make a cottonmouth strike? *Natural History*. November 1998 pp. 56–57.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1997. Natural History of the Okefenokee Swamp. *Georgia Wildlife*. June 1997 6(1): 4–16. (Article was winner of 1996–97 Excellence in Craft Award of Southeastern Outdoor Press Association).
- Gibbons, Whit. 1997. Snakes in Danger: Endangered Herpetofauna of Alabama. *Nature South* 6(4): 9–11. Plus other articles as contributing writer for magazine.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1997. The Diamondback Terrapins of Kiawah Island. *Kiawah Town Notes* 3: 1–3.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1996. The Spirit of Southeast Georgia. Invited essay for *The New Georgia Guide*. University of Georgia Press for Georgia Humanities Council for 1996 Olympics. p. 565–593.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1996. Poisonous Wild Plants of Alabama. *Nature South* 6(2): 3–4.
- Gibbons, Whit, and P. J. West. 1995. The diversity of fishes in Alabama. *Alabama Wildlife* 1995: 37–38.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1995. Finding the Red Hills salamander. *Nature South* 5(2): 10–12. Plus other articles as contributing writer for magazine.
- Gibbons, J. W. 1994. How to catch a gator. *Natural History* 3/94: 4–6.
- Gibbons, Whit, and P. J. West. 1994. Fishes of Alabama. *Nature South* 4: 3–4. Plus other articles as contributing writer for magazine.
- Gibbons, Whit, and P. J. West. 1993. Rivers of Alabama. *Nature South* 3: 3–6. Plus other articles as contributing writer for magazine.
- West, P. J. and Whit Gibbons. 1993. Aquatic plants of the CSRA. *Aiken County Magazine*.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1992 (February issue). Life in the Slow Lane. *Natural History*.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1981. Of turtles, tortoises, and terrapins. Delta Airline's *Sky Magazine*. Plus other articles as contributing editor for magazine.
- Gibbons, Whit, and R. R. Sharitz. 1989. Environmental paradise and paradox. *South Carolina Wildlife* 36(2): 44–59.
- Gibbons, Whit, and Justin Congdon. Why Did the Turtle Cross the Road? *Science* 86.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1985. Reptilian Repast. *Science* 85.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1985. Wasps in your garden. *The Weekend Gardener* July/August 30–31. Plus other articles as contributing writer for magazine.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1980. Alligators: A different kind of southern tradition. Delta Airline's *Sky*. Plus other articles as contributing editor for magazine.

- Gibbons, Whit. 1979. SREL. The Savannah River *Ecology* Laboratory. *Georgia Alumni Record*, May-June issue.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1979. Who's Watching the Snakes. *South Carolina Wildlife*, March–April issue.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1979. Snakes of South Carolina. *Living in South Carolina*, April–May issue.
- Gibbons, Whit. 1978. Where Do All the Creatures Go?. And Why? *UGA Research Reporter* Vol. 11.

Encyclopedia Articles (selected examples of more than 100)

- Yearbook of Science and Technology*. (McGraw–Hill). Reptilia. 1979.
- Academic American Encyclopedia* (Arete Publishing Co., Princeton). “Turtles.” 1981.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica* – Every year 1981–2013
- Contributed Zoology section in Life Sciences to *Encyclopaedia Britannica Year Book*. each year for 30 years. 1982–2013.
- Wrote 75 Vertebrate Species Accounts (fish, reptiles and amphibians). 1981
- Wrote “Public Aquariums of The World” (accounts of major facilities).
- Compton's Encyclopedia*.
- Wrote several entries, including “Apes and Monkeys”; “Biology”; “Biogeography”; “Botany.”
- Contributed “Zoology” section annually to *Compton's Yearbook*. 1982–88.
- World Book Encyclopedia*. “Amphibians.” 1984.
- Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia*. “Reptiles (modern)” under *Extinction* section. 2012

Video, Television, and Radio Productions

- Tel–A–Cast, Inc., 1987. "Snakes: Common Sense and Safety," Script written by Whit Gibbons.
- National Geographic Discovery Series. 1996. "The Last Frog," narration by Whit Gibbons.
- Exhibit at Natural History Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1984–1985. "Snakes of the Southeast" – Directed and narrated by Whit Gibbons.
- National Public Radio. 1997. "Living on Earth" Broadcast on frog calls. Received Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Best Presentation Award for Radio Program (First Place).
- National Public Radio – WUGA in Athens, Georgia – Vignettes on Environmental Awareness, 1994–1997.
- National Geographic series for Discovery Channel. 2002. “Research with Venomous Snakes,” with Brady Barr.
- National Public Radio. 2002. “Science Friday.” Question and answer session on venomous snake research.
- National Geographic series for Discovery Channel. 2003 "Snake Wranglers," with Jesus Rivas on research with venomous snakes.
- Discovery Channel. 2007. “Diamondback Terrapin Research,” with Jeff Corwin.
- Georgia Public TV. 2014. “Cottonmouths Are Not as Aggressive as You Think .”
- Coastal Kingdom Television Show with Tony Mills. 2015. “Cottonmouths Are Defensive, Not Aggressive.”

Websites

Whit Gibbons Professional Website – <https://whitgibbons.com/>

Citizen Science for Outdoor Adventures (developed by Whit Gibbons. Designed by Blue Salamander Solutions. REALTREE 2018 Website Award presented at Southeastern Outdoor Press Association annual meeting – <https://fieldtechniques.com/>

Fiction Writing – Whit Gibbons

1977. How To Catch an Alligator in One Uneasy Lesson. First place award in national competition of the Birmingham Arts Festival.

1977. The Legend of Caballo Grade. *Windhaven Magazine*. p. 15–20.

1982. Once Upon A Bushmaster. *Spectator Magazine*, Spring Issue, p. 32–34.

1986. The Best of Intentions. *Rose Hill Literary Magazine*, Spring Issue, p. 24–27

2013. First Alligator Snapper: A Short Story. *Marine Turtle Newsletter* 136: 10–13.

2017. The Plutonium Puzzle. Kindle Editon.

Curriculum vitae – J. W. Gibbons

Birthplace: Prattville, Alabama. October 5, 1939

Marital Status: Married, 4 children

Education:

B.S. 1961, University of Alabama (Biology)

M.S. 1963, University of Alabama (Biology)

Ph.D. 1967, Michigan State University (Zoology)

Positions Held:

University of Alabama.

1961–1963 National Defense Education Act Fellowship.

Michigan State University.

1963–1964 Graduate teaching assistant.

Michigan State University. Kellogg Biological Station

1965–1967 Graduate research assistant.

University of Michigan. Museum of Zoology.

1975–76 Visiting Research Scientist (sabbatical).

University of Georgia, Institute of Ecology.

1977–1982 Assistant Research Ecologist

University of Georgia.

1983–1990 Associate Professor

1991–2007 Professor of Ecology

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Division of Amphibians and Reptiles

1984–85 Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow (sabbatical)

1986–2008 Research Associate, Department of Vertebrate Zoology.

Michigan State University. Kellogg Biological Station

1990 Visiting professor

Savannah River Ecology Lab

1994–2007 Curator of Herpetology [Emeritus for last 13 years]

1990–2014 Head, SREL Environmental Outreach and Education Program,
University of Alabama, Alabama Museum of Natural History.

University of Georgia and Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL)

1967–68 NIH Postdoctoral fellowship.

2008–present Retired as Professor Emeritus of Ecology & Senior Research Scientist

University of South Carolina–Aiken

2008–present Research Professor

Awards and Special Recognition:

- 1993 Augusta Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists. Best Commentary. *Ecoviews* – weekly environmental newspaper column – 1993 – First Place Award.
- 1993 Augusta Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists. Excellence in Journalism Award. "The Grapevine" (SREL internal newsletter; with Jane Sanders and Marie Fulmer).
- 1994 Augusta Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists. Excellence in Journalism Award. "The Grapevine" (SREL internal newsletter; with Jane Sanders and Marie Fulmer).
- 1995 South Carolina Governor's Award for Environmental Education, presented by Governor David Beasley.
- 1995 Association of Southeastern Biologists. Meritorious Teaching Award.
- 1995 Augusta Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists. Excellence in Journalism Award. Best Public Relations Magazine — Whit Gibbons et al.
- 1995 Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Best Presentation Award for Radio Program
- 1996 South Carolina Heritage Trust Advisory Board Chairman. 1991–1996.
- 1996 Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Best Presentation Award in Radio Program in 1995–1996 category.
- 1997 Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Best Presentation Award for Radio Program (First Place).
- 1997 Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Excellence in Craft Award in Best Magazine Article category.
- 1998 1998–99 Baker & Taylor School Selection Guide for Grades 7–12. *Their Blood Runs Cold: Adventures with Reptiles and Amphibians*.
- 1999 Choice Outstanding Academic Book Award for 1999. *Ecoviews: Snakes, Snails and Environmental Tales*.
- 1999 Distinguished John Tanner Lectureship Award, Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum, Brigham Young University.
- 2000 First Place. Color Photography. Excellence in Craft Awards– SC Outdoor Writers Association
- 2000 Environmental Merit Award 2000 to PARC — in appreciation and recognition of outstanding environmental stewardship – awarded by EPA Southeast, Region 4.
- 2001 UGA Institute of *Ecology* – Outstanding *Ecology* Instructor Award 2001.
- 2001 Distinguished Scientist Award 2001. Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness (CNTA)
- 2004 Senior Research Award – Association of Southeastern Biologists.

- 2004 Certificate of Appreciation in recognition as National Chair (1999–2004) of PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) for contributions to conservation of amphibians and reptiles.
- 2005 National Outdoor Book Award for "Snakes of the Southeast." (with Mike Dorcas) —Winner in the Nature Guidebook Category .
- 2005 Distinguished Visiting Professor Award, University of Miami (selected by graduate students in biology).
- 2006 Excellence in Herpetology Award (Fitch Award) presented at the national Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists for long-term research in the study of amphibian and reptile biology.
- 2007 IUCN Behler Turtle Conservation Award of Turtle Survival Alliance in recognition of long-term turtle research and conservation nationally and internationally.
- 2007 Annual Diamondback Terrapin Working Group Award for Long-term Research
- 2008 Outstanding Teacher Award in the Odum School of Ecology, University of Georgia
- 2008 Southeastern Outdoor Press Excellence in Craft Award. Color Photography. First Place.
- 2009 Elected Fellow of AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science).
- 2009 C.W. Watson Award of the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society, the Southeastern Section of the Wildlife Society, and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
- 2010 Meritorious Teaching Award in Herpetology, sponsored by the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, The Herpetologists' League, and the Society for the Study of Amphibians & Reptiles.
- 2011 Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) Visionary Leader Award.
- 2012 Inducted into North Carolina Herpetological Society Hall of Fame.
- 2014 Distinguished Herpetologist Award presented by Herpetologists' League.
- 2014 Southeastern Outdoor Press Award for best Daily Newspaper column (First Place).
- 2017 Southeastern Outdoor Press Excellence in Craft Book Award. "Snakes of the Eastern United States."
- 2018 Southeastern Outdoor Press Award for best Weekly Newspaper column (First Place).
- 2018 Southeastern Outdoor Press Excellence in Craft Award for Website Design.

Fieldwork: United States (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia), Australia, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Netherlands, Mexico, South Africa.

Professional Organizations

American Midland Naturalist

Associate Editor-Herpetology 1982–1985

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists

Board of Directors 1993–1997

Book Review Editor-Herpetology, *Copeia* 1993–1997

ASIH Southeastern Division

Secretary–Treasurer 1972

Vice-President 1973

President 1974, 1975

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

Board of Directors 2015–2018

Association of Southeastern Biologists

Chairman of Research Award Committee, 1974–75

Chairman of Conservation Committee 1979

Executive Council 1987–89

President 1997–1998

Black Warrior Riverkeeper Advisory Council 2010–2018

Chelonian Conservation and Biology

Editorial Advisory Board 1994–1998

Ecological Society of America (Southeastern Chapter)

Vice-President 1980–1981

Herpetological Conservation

Editorial Advisory Board 1994–1998

Herpetologists' League

Executive Secretary-Treasurer 1972–75

Vice-President 1988–1989

President 1990–1991

Nature/South (published by Alabama Museum of Natural History)

Editorial Advisory Board 1993–1997

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC)

Co-founder and National Chair 1999–2004

Society of European Herpetologists 1976–2008

Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles 1981–2008.

South Carolina Herpetological Society

President 1989–1990

South Carolina Outdoor Press Association

Board of Directors 1996, 1999

Southeastern Naturalist

Editorial Board 2001–2004

Endnote – Contributions to the history of the Division of Amphibians & Reptiles – USNM

As one grows older, there comes a desire to record one's past experiences and also the history of one's workplace. None of us in the USNM Division of Amphibians and Reptiles has expressed a desire to write a divisional history for the past half-century. As an alternative, I am encouraging colleagues who have been associated with the division to create autobiographical sketches. Although such sketches will not provide a detailed history of divisional activities, each offers a unique perspective of past divisional activities and insights into each author's contribution to the division and, of course, a window into the author's personality.

The SHIS series is an obvious outlet. SHIS has been a facet of the division's contribution of research information to the herpetological community since its establishment in 1968 by James A. Peters.

2016 GRZ

Previously published contributions to divisional history

- SHIS 1. A list of the herpetological publications of the United States National Museum, 1853-1965. James A. Peters 1965 [revised 1968].
- SHIS 42. A revised list of the herpetological publications of the National Museum of Natural History (USNM) 1853-1978. Ronald I. Crombie 1979.
- SHIS 51. Biography and bibliography of James A. Peters. Frances J. Irish & George R. Zug 1982.
- SHIS 101. Herpetological publications of the National Museum of Natural History (USNM), 1853-1994. Ronald I. Crombie 1994.
- SHIS 147. Biographical sketch and bibliography of W. Ronald Heyer. W. Ronald Heyer & Miriam H. Heyer 2016.
- SHIS 148. Biographical sketch and bibliography of James B. Murphy. James B. Murphy 2016.
- SHIS 149. Biographical sketch and bibliography of C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr. C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr. 2016.
- SHIS 150. Biographical sketch and bibliography of Carl H. Ernst. Carl H. Ernst 2016.
- SHIS 151. Biographical sketch and bibliography of Richard Highton. Richard Highton 2017.
- SHIS 152. Biographical sketch and bibliography of Robert P. Reynolds. Robert P. Reynolds 2017.
- SHIS 153. Biographical sketch and bibliography of Jeffrey E. Lovich. Jeffrey E. Lovich 2018.
- SHIS 154. Biographical sketch and bibliography of Stephen D. Busack. Stephen D. Busack 2018.
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