

A Note on Predation of the Greater Siren (*Siren lacertina*)

Christopher M. Schalk^{1,2}, Brian A. Crawford¹ and Thomas M. Luhring^{1,3}

The predators of the greater siren (*Siren lacertina*) have been poorly documented (Petranka, 1998). On 19 June 2008, a greater siren (approximately 200 mm in total length) was captured at Peat Bay, a 14.3-ha semi-permanent wetland located on the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in Barnwell County, South Carolina, USA. The siren was placed in a 45.7 l cooler with two two-toed amphiumas (*Amphiuma means*) from the same wetland to be transported from the field to the laboratory. Upon opening the cooler in the laboratory, the siren had been consumed by one of the *A. means*. One of the amphiuma had a total length of 738 mm and weighed 460 g. The other amphiuma had a total length of 836 mm and weighed 788 g. *Siren lacertina* and *A. means* are frequently found together in wetlands throughout their overlapping ranges. However, interactions between these giant salamanders are not well known.

While other investigators (Snodgrass et al., 1999; Luhring and Jennison, 2008) have suggested possible negative interactions (e.g. competition or predation) between the two species, no publishable accounts are available to confirm or refute these suggestions. This observation elucidates the fact that large *A. means* are able to consume smaller *S. lacertina*, and may be important predators of large aquatic salamanders such as sirens.

Salamanders were captured under scientific research permit number 56-2003 from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Funding for this research was provided by the National Science Foundation (Awards DEB-0242874 and DBI-0139572) and the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory under Financial Assistance Award DE-FC09-96SR18-546 between the University of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Literature Cited

- Luhring, T. M., and C. A. Jennison. 2008. A new stratified aquatic sampling technique for aquatic vertebrates. *Journal of Freshwater Ecology* 23:445-450.
- Petranka, J. W. 1998. *Salamanders of the United States and Canada*. Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Snodgrass, J. W., J. W. Ackerman, A. L. Bryan, Jr., and J. Burger. 1999. Influence of hydroperiod, isolation, and heterospecifics on the distribution of aquatic salamanders (*Siren* and *Amphiuma*) among depression wetlands. *Copeia* 1999:107-113.

1. Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, Drawer E, Aiken, South Carolina 29808.

2. Present Address: Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2258 (email: cschalk@tamu.edu).

3. Present Address: Department of Biology, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211-7400.