



Jacksonville Herpetological Society

INVESTING IN EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND CONSERVATION OF HERPETOFAUNA

February 2026

2026 got off to a great start with a fantastic presentation by Lucas Meers of Jacksonville University, Director of the Jacksonville University Sea Turtle Program at the Marine Science Research Institute.



Members visited the Reptile Discovery Center in DeLand, one of only a few venom labs here in Florida.



Our speaker for February will be Brian Ferko, volunteer at the St. Augustine Wild Reserve. An educator in St. Augustine, Brian helps take care of the big cats, bears, and wolves at the reserve. He will be telling us about their current residents.



Meetings are open to the public and are from 2-4PM. For map, directions and room location of our meetings at UNF, click on this link:

<https://www.jaxherpsociety.org/membership-302096.html>

PLEASE NOTE: THE FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL ON THE FIRST FLOOR, DIRECTLY BELOW OUR CLASSROOM LOCATION. WATCH FOR SIGNS.

Upcoming Events

Feb 8th Monthly JHS Meeting: Speaker Brian Ferko, St. Augustine Wild Reserve

Feb 14th Member Field Trip to St. Augustine Wild Reserve

Mar 1st JHS participation in Raptor Run at St. Augustine Alligator Farm

Mar 7th JHS participation in 7 Creeks Fest Jacksonville

Mar 8th Monthly JHS Meeting; speaker TBA

JHS Monthly Meetings are always open to the public. Of course, we would love to have you as a member! Reply to this email for more information. Members enjoy field trips throughout the year, often with exclusive behind-the-scenes tours and special activities. Members also participate in educational programs to promote conservation of our native herpetofauna while displaying their own captive reptiles.

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Treasurer's report available to members upon request



JHS is a proud member of USARKFL
Stay updated with issues concerning our captive species
<https://usarkfl.wildapricot.org/news/13477512>

Member Spotlight: Jennifer Cook



Jennifer Cook moved to Florida in 2021. A professional artist and passionate conservationist, her fine art focuses on wildlife sculpture, with a particular emphasis on reptiles and other misunderstood creatures. Her work blends **scientific accuracy with artistic expression**, highlighting the unique beauty of each species while promoting education and conservation. In 2018, she was commissioned to create a rattlesnake sculpture for the **Poison Exhibition at the Palais de la Couverte in Paris, France**, which later became part of the permanent collection at the **Natuurmuseum Fryslân** in the Netherlands. She has also sculpted for private collectors, museums, and zoos, including the Chiricahua Desert Museum (Rodeo, NM) and Iguanaland (Punta Gorda, FL). In recognition of her artistic excellence, she was elected as a **Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists in 2020** and juried into the **National Sculpture Society in 2024**.

Working from her Yulee studio, Jennifer continues to create art that transforms perceptions of underappreciated species through beauty and excellence. Beyond her studio practice, she is an **active member of the Jacksonville Herpetological Society**, frequently participating in reptile education events at the Jacksonville Museum of Science and History, the Rattlesnake Conservancy, and the St. Augustine Alligator Farm. She also engages with scientists and conservation groups nationwide, often attending biological conferences and contributing her artistic skills to conservation-focused outreach.

Her community involvement includes years of participation in the **Bronx Zoo's "Boo at the Zoo"** events, where she carved intricate pumpkins for public exhibitions, and most recently, a **10-ton sand sculpture** at Main Beach Park in Fernandina Beach as part of the **"Last Castle on the Beach"** initiative to raise awareness for sea turtle nesting and conservation.