

Colin Osborn

Colin's fascination with reptiles and amphibians began when he was a young boy, from the box turtles and red-backed salamanders he and his three brothers found in the woods behind their home, to the garter and brown snakes they found at their grandparents' house. Family camping trips up and down the east coast and across the country only served to fuel his captivation with "herps." A high-school environmental science class field trip to Great Swamp introduced him to this very special place, and a few years later he applied for an internship at the refuge, which he started in the summer of 2002. After graduating from Penn State University, he acquired an internship at the school's Shaver's Creek Environmental Center. There, he became acquainted with wood turtles, by way of the wild ones he found on the property and the captive one he used for educational programs.

Colin returned to Great Swamp in the spring of 2004 as a contractor, conducting vernal pool surveys to document the breeding activity of wood frogs and the state endangered blue-spotted salamander. That summer he landed a job at Great Swamp as a Biological Technician, thus beginning his professional career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Over the next 15 years, he specialized in reptile and amphibian conservation; especially with the federally-listed threatened bog turtle, NJ-listed threatened wood turtle, and NJ-listed "special concern" spotted and box turtles. In addition to population augmentation and monitoring of these species via mark-recapture studies, radio telemetry studies, and nest protection measures, he also concentrated on habitat management and restoration, principally through measures to control invasive species. His duties were solely at Great Swamp for the first seven years, and, when he became a Fish and Wildlife Biologist in 2011, expanded to include Walkkill River and Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuges. He was the refuge lead on this wood turtle project for its first 13 years (2006–2018).

Although no longer with the USFWS, Colin still does what he loves: actively working in the field of reptile and amphibian conservation, especially with the four aforementioned turtle species. He was delighted to reestablish his involvement with this project in 2021, reuniting with Kurt, Jim, and of course the turtles.