

ELIJA HENDERSON, DAN MEYER, & ZACHARY LOUGHMAN. West Liberty University, Dept. of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, West Liberty, WV. Ecology of *Nerodia sipeodon* (Common Watersnake) in North Fork Creek, Ohio County, West Virginia.

The ecology of *Nerodia sipeodon* (Common Water Snake) was studied concurrently with ecology of *Regina septemvittata* (Queen Snake) in North Fork of Short Creek, Ohio County, West Virginia. Snakes were captured via hand collection or aquatic funnel traps. All captured animals were measured, weighed, PIT-tagged, and underwent gastric lavage when food boluses were present. Snake activity peaked in the spring, followed by a mid-summer brumation period. Activity reoccurred in mid-August through the fall. Trap captures outnumbered hand captures, though most juvenile animals were collected by hand. Frequently encountered food species included Black Nose Dace, Creek Chubs, and Long Nose Dace. Daily activity peaked in the morning hours, was reduced during the heat of the day, and began again in earnest during the late afternoon and early evening hours. Though concerted effort was undertaken to collect them, zero gravid females were collected with this study. Neonates appeared in the population beginning in late August. The most frequently encountered behavior was basking, followed by various defensive behaviors allied with capture. To date, close to 50 individual snakes have been PIT tagged and released at the study stream. Future efforts will focus on the use of radio telemetry, as well as the capture of gravid females.