

BRIAN RINGHISER & ZACHARY LOUGHMAN, Department of Biological Sciences, West Liberty University, West Liberty, WV, 29074. Preliminary Analysis of Morphometric Data for an Ongoing Autecological Study of the Northern Watersnake, *Nerodia sipedon sipedon*, in a West Virginia stream.

The northern watersnake, *Nerodia sipedon*, is a natricid ubiquitous across aquatic habitats of the eastern United States and is often found in high abundance. The prevalence of *N. sipedon* has garnered extensive research, much of which concerns its reproduction. However, thorough, long-term studies on the biology and ecology of *N. sipedon* in stream ecosystems, especially within Appalachia, are lacking. The purpose of this study is to analyze autecological data from ongoing research on a *N. sipedon sipedon* population within Short Creek, a rural stream in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Morphometric, dietary, thermal, habitat and movement data were recorded for each capture. This analysis primarily focuses on morphometric data in an attempt identify any potential variation from data collected in past studies concerning different habitats. Future research will use neonate morphometrics as baseline data for growth estimations, employ mark-recapture data to estimate a population size, and build upon the established data set.