

TROPILUNCH

Small But Mighty: Using aquatic insects to monitor and improve the health of Tropical rivers while embracing a collaborative approach

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BIO

Joshua Benjamin is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Biology pursuing a Ph.D in Zoology at the University of Florida. He holds a joint Master's degree in Limnology and Wetland Management from BOKU University in Austria and IHE-Delft in the Netherlands. Additionally, he is the founder and managing director of the Freshwater Guardians NGO in Kenya. During the 2023-2024 academic year, he served as president of the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) program at the University of Florida. Recently, he was awarded the prestigious WWF Russell E. Train Fellowship from the Education for Nature (EFN) Program. Joshua has also received other competitive research grants, including funding from the Rufford Foundation and the Explorers Club. Currently, Joshua is a committee member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission, contributing both globally and within Kenya. He is an avid freshwater ecologist, traveler, naturalist, and amateur wildlife photographer.

SUMMARY



Joshua will share insights from his work in the Mara River, Kenya, where he studies cryptic species of macroinvertebrates. He will discuss how these taxa have evolved over the past 15 years and explore the implications of these changes for biomonitoring. Additionally, he will demonstrate the application of biomonitoring techniques, such as the South African Scoring System (SASS5), to assess the health of tropical rivers. To enhance the effectiveness of these techniques, Joshua emphasizes the importance of collaborating with local communities, including universities, high schools, and community-based organizations.



Tuesday - September 23, 2025

12:45 - 1:45 pm



Grinter Hall 376 or

[Zoom link](#)

Tropilunch is a seminar run by graduate students from the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program. It provides a forum for a range of discussions and presentations related to TCD work and research. Special guests, visiting scholars, and practitioners also participate. It happens weekly around lunchtime.



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