

Learn to Identify Frog and Toad Calls at Workshop



The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is calling all folks with two good ears, one free evening, and an interest in learning more about frogs and toads to participate in a Calling Amphibian Survey Program (CASP) workshop. The workshop, which is free, will be held at Reedy Creek Nature Center and Preserve in Charlotte on March 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. Participants will begin the workshop by learning frog and toad call identification techniques and CASP protocols before heading outdoors to put their newly acquired listening skills to the test.

Jeff Hall, a biologist with the Commission, will lead the workshop. Hall is coordinator of the North Carolina chapter of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, a partnership dedicated to the conservation of reptiles and amphibians and their habitats.

"Early spring is a really good time to hear many of our frogs and toads calling," Hall said. "We'll possibly hear spring peepers and upland chorus frogs, and there's always a chance for leopard frogs, pickerel frogs and others."

The Wildlife Commission conducts CASP workshops annually to create a larger pool of potential volunteers to help with statewide frog and toad monitoring and conservation.

"We are recruiting workshop participants to become CASP volunteers," Hall said. "It's a pretty simple process that doesn't take too much time, but provides us with a wealth of information that helps us figure out how well — or how poorly — frog and toad populations are faring, both in numbers and in distribution."

CASP volunteers adopt a survey route, stop at 10 spots on the route for three nights during three separate calling windows covering a 6-month period, listen for five minutes and write down any frog and toad calls they hear. They submit their data online or by mail before Oct. 1.

For more information about the workshop and to register, contact Laura Domingo at Reedy Creek Nature Center and Preserve, laura.domingo@mecklenburgcountync.gov, or 704-432-6459.

For more information about N.C. Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, visit www.ncparc.org.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo Performance at Wingate

For more than forty years, the voices of Ladysmith Black Mambazo have married the intricate rhythms and harmonies of their native South African musical traditions to the sounds and sentiments of Christian gospel music. The result is a musical and spiritual alchemy that has touched a worldwide audience. In celebration of Black History Month, Wingate University is presents Ladysmith Black Mambazo at the Batte Center's McGee Theatre on Friday, Feb. 17 at 7:30 p.m.

A young farm boy turned factory worker, Joseph Shabalala (still currently leading the group) assembled Ladysmith Black Mambazo in the early 1960s, in Durban, South Africa. The group borrows from a traditional music called isicathamiya (is-cot-a-ME-Ya), which developed in the mines of South Africa, where workers were taken by rail to work far away from their homes and their families. Poorly housed and paid worse, the mine workers would entertain themselves after a six-day week by singing songs into the wee hours on Sunday morning. When the miners returned to the homelands, this musical tradition returned with them.

In the mid-1980s, Paul Simon visited South Africa and incorporated Black Mambazo's rich tenor/alto/bass harmonies into his Grammy Award winning Graceland album. A year later, Simon produced Black Mambazo's first U.S. release Shaka Zulu, which won the Grammy Award in 1988, for Best Traditional Folk Album. Since then, the group has received 16 Grammy Award nominations and three Grammy Award wins and has recorded with artists including Stevie Wonder, Josh Groban, Dolly Parton, Ben Harper and many others.

Tickets are \$25 and on sale via the Batte Center box office, www.battecenter.org, and the CarolinaTix phone room and website. For a complete schedule of events, ticket prices, as well as membership information call 704-233-8300.

Opened in 1999, the George A. Batte, Jr. Fine Arts Center presents events in the McGee Theatre, Plyler-Griffin Recital Hall and Austin Auditorium. Located just a short, 5 minute drive from Monroe, The Batte is just two blocks off of Highway 74 and 30 miles east of Charlotte. Free parking is plentiful and all three performance spaces offer full wheelchair accessibility.

Audience members are invited to come early to enjoy two free pre-concert events at the Batte Center:

- Opening reception featuring the Patrick and Judy Diamond collection: Wingate's art department presents the private art collection of Patrick and Judy Diamond in celebration of Black History Month. Artists included in this exhibit are Benny Andrews, Romare Bearden and Elizabeth Catlett. The reception in Helms Gallery begins at 6 p.m.
- Wingate choral department's South African sampler: Student singers will perform traditional South African songs learned on their recent cultural exchange with the Wits Choir from Witswaterland University in Johannesburg, South Africa. Event starts at 7 p.m. in the Rotunda lobby of the Batte Center.



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