Amphipod Taxonomy Workshop

October 10-13, 2005
Southeastern Regional Taxonomic Center
SCDNR, Marine Resources Research Institute
Charleston, South Carolina

This four-day workshop in Charleston will focus on practical techniques and procedures used in amphipod taxonomy and identification. Through a series of presentations, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises, each participant will also gain knowledge and expertise on the biology, ecology, and behavior of this diverse and abundant peracarid crustacean group. The instruction methods of Dr. James D. Thomas will emphasize a blend of traditional taxonomic methodology and the tools of modern technology.

Each workshop participant will receive a packet of taxonomic materials that includes pertinent literature, a taxonomic glossary, and identification guides and keys. Digital images accumulated during the workshop will be downloaded and provided on a CD-ROM. Upon completing the workshop, participants will be able to readily identify and diagnose amphipod crustaceans, as well as prepare identification guides and keys. Specimens for dissection will be provided, but workshop attendees are encouraged to bring their own amphipod material for identification.

The suggested sequence for the four-day workshop is:

Day 1:

- Introduction to the taxonomic history of amphipods
- Amphipod biology, ecology, and behavior [video]
- Optimal approaches to amphipod dissection and microscopy techniques

Day 2:

- Specimen preparation and dissection
- Class dissections
- Methods of collecting and sorting amphipods (use of specialized techniques and equipment will be discussed)
- Illustration and imaging techniques
- Night light collection trip (weather permitting)

Day 3:

- Specialized dissections and identifications
- Field trip to marsh and beach locations for collection demonstrations
- Assembling a taxonomic library
- Videos and discussion of amphipod behavior
- Night light collection trip (if not taken the evening before)

Day 4:

- Diagnosing amphipods to family, genus, and species
- Constructing and using taxonomic keys
- How to prepare electronic identification guides
- Preparing species diagnoses and descriptions