FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECU Center for Biodiversity to Host Symposium on Influence of Climate Change on Biodiversity

GREENVILLE, N.C. (March 3, 2014) — This March, East Carolina University will host a two-day symposium on how climate change is expected to affect biodiversity in the southeastern United States. “Biodiversity Responses to Climate Change – Perspectives from the Southeastern US,” will be held March 14-15 in the Science and Technology Building, room 307. Events on Friday, March 14, will begin at 8:30 a.m. and run through 5:30 p.m. Saturday’s events will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at noon. The symposium is sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Center for Biodiversity.

“Our planet is currently in the midst of two very dramatic global changes – the loss of its biodiversity and a rapid change in its climate,” said Dr. David R. Chalcraft, director of the Center for Biodiversity and associate professor of biology. “The goals of the symposium are to advance our collective understanding of how biodiversity is responding to climate change in the southeastern US, and more broadly, to provide a general framework that could guide researchers, managers and policy makers.”

Twelve leading scientists in the field of biodiversity and climate change will present at the symposium, including Dr. Terry Root, of Stanford University, who was a 2007 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her work on the International Panel on Climate Change. She will lead a discussion on “Changing Climate: Changing Species,” on March 14. Other lecture topics will include future climates for the southeastern US; the responses of forests, waterways, insects, avian migration and food webs to climate change; and the short-term and long-term concerns associated with climate change.

“It is imperative that we understand the consequences of climate change on biodiversity if we wish to better conserve our remaining biological resources,” said Chalcraft. “Much of the biodiversity in the US is located in the southeastern part of the country, and this part of the country is thought to be greatly susceptible to the influence of climate change.”

More than 90 participants from various institutions across the southeast, including universities, community colleges, state and federal agencies, private companies and politicians will attend the two-day event. All are welcome to attend the free, public lectures. A full schedule and registration information is located online at www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/biology/ncbiodiversity/index.cfm.

Support for the symposium is being provided by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Biology, Academic Affairs, private donors and the Southeast Climate Science Center. For additional information,
contact Chalcraft at 252-328-2797 or chalcraftd@ecu.edu. Individuals requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should call 252-737-1016 (voice/TTY) at least 48 hours prior to the events.

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