

***2025 Virtual Meeting of the
Canadian Herpetological Society***

February 21, 2025

***2025 Congrès Virtuel de la
Société d'Herpétologie du Canada***



Canadian Herpetological Society 2025

Welcome

On behalf of the CHS Meetings and Workshops Committee, welcome to the Virtual Meeting of the Canadian Herpetological Society/Société d'Herpétologie du Canada. This year's meeting continues a long-standing tradition of annual meetings to promote research and conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Canada. This conference will be conducted in English.

CHS Meetings and Workshops Committee

- Hannah McCurdy-Adams (Co-chair)
- Megan Winand (Co-chair)
- Jessica Harvey (Co-chair, logo creator)
- Christie Crews
- Claudia Lacroix
- Joe Crowley
- Justine Keating
- Cayla Darling
- Emily Tusnadi
- Rachel Fallas
- Roger Magoon

Canadian Herpetological Society

The Canadian Herpetological Society (canadianherpetology.ca) is a registered Canadian charity that advances reptile and amphibian research and conservation in Canada by:

- promoting scientific research on reptiles and amphibians and disseminating the results;
- facilitating collaboration among amateur and professional herpetologists;
- advancing public understanding of our native reptile and amphibian species, the threats they face and the conservation solutions that exist; and
- promoting, supporting and leading conservation and stewardship projects.

CHS is made up of researchers, conservation practitioners, naturalists, educators, and other individuals with an interest in Canada's reptiles and amphibians.

President: Amanda Bennet

Vice President: Joe Crowley

Past President: Jolene Laverty

Treasurer: Donnell Gasbarrini

Secretary: James Paterson

Directors at Large: Claudia LaCroix, Hannah McCurdy-Adams, Jackie Litzgus, Jessica Harvey, Rachel Dillon

Student Directors: Derek Duplessis

Webmaster: Devin Martin

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PRESENTATION REMINDERS

This annual CHS conference is a virtual-only event, with all the talks recorded and streamed via Zoom.

Participants are encouraged to ask questions in the Zoom chat. There will be someone monitoring the chat and sharing questions with the speakers.

Sensitive Data

Many reptiles and amphibians in Canada are at risk of poaching, so keep location information at a broader level that someone would be able to find publicly available online.

TIMING NOTES

15-minute talks

Target 10-12 minutes for your presentation to leave a few minutes for questions.

5-minute lightning talks

Please use your full allotted time. There are no questions at the end of 5-minute talks, but there may be time at the end of sessions for all presenters to answer questions.

Please Note: We will be recording the virtual conference including all talks.

If you do not want your talk to be posted on the CHS Youtube channel (The Canadian Herpetologist), please contact the CHS Meetings and Workshop Committee as soon as possible at conference@canadianherpetology.ca.

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SCHEDULE: Friday, February 21st

Time (CT)	Presentation	Presenter
10:30-10:45	Welcome Message	Hannah McCurdy-Adams
10:45-12:15	EDI Workshop	Aidan Gowland and CHS EDI Committee
12:15-12:45	Break	
Session 1		<i>Chair: Cayla Darling</i>
12:45-13:00	Nesting Dynamics in Space and Time in a Population Complex of Blanding's Turtle in Nova Scotia	Carter Feltham
13:00-13:05	How I won the Wildlife Photographer of the Year	Shane Gross
13:05-13:10	Engaging Community and Conservation Practitioners in Long-Term Monitoring of Ontario Snakes	Teagan Netten
13:10-13:15	"Non-scientific" data is still good data: the value of anecdotal information in science	Jessica Harvey
13:15-13:20	When is a Starling a baby Raccoon: Mistakes and mimicry in Treefrog calling	Fred Schueler
13:20-13:30	Question Period and Closing	Hannah McCurdy-Adams

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EDI WORKSHOP

What are the demographics of the CHS membership and how do we become more equitable, diverse, and inclusive? A discussion of the 2021 EDI survey results hosted by CHS' Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

In 2021, the Canadian Herpetological Society's (CHS) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee implemented a survey to better understand the diversity of the CHS membership. The goal of this survey was to aid the development and implementation of future programs and initiatives aimed at improving the inclusion and support offered to all members of the society. After compiling the results of this survey over the last few years, the CHS EDI Committee is ready to host a workshop to disseminate the results, highlight the actions the CHS does and has implemented to improve EDI, and generate a discussion session among the CHS membership for future actions. This workshop will take place virtually before the talks.

ABSTRACTS

Underlined name indicates speaker

FELTHAM

Nesting Dynamics in Space and Time in a Population Complex of Blanding's Turtle in Nova Scotia

Jeffie McNeil¹, Tom Herman^{1,2}, Carter Feltham¹, Trevor Avery², Norm Green¹, Matthew Smith⁴

¹Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, Kempt, Nova Scotia. ²Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. ³Friends of Keji Cooperating Association, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia. ⁴Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site, Maitland Bridge, Nova Scotia

This study examines the influence of environmental variation on the reproduction and survival of Blanding's Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) in Nova Scotia, where four distinct subpopulations exist. These subpopulations differ in morphology, reproduction, and behavior, potentially due to their unique environments and evolutionary histories. Over 20 years of nest monitoring, we compared clutch size, nesting frequency, emergence dates, incubation periods, hatching success, and recruitment across three subpopulations. While nesting frequency was similar, we found significant variation in nesting dates, emergence times, incubation periods, and hatching success. Clutch size was influenced by both body size and subpopulation. Notably, we observed an apparent climate change signal: nesting and emergence occurred, on average, 6–18 days earlier over the two decades. These findings highlight the importance of understanding local ecological variation for effective conservation and management of this endangered species.

Oral Presentation – 15 minutes

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GROSS

How I won the Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Shane Gross

SGP, Nanaimo, British Columbia

How do we get people to care? One way is by showing them something that elicits an emotional response. My 2024 Wildlife Photographer of the Year winning image "Swarm of Life" has done just that for folks all over the world. How did I win and what can I do going forward to make sure the image has the desired effect: getting people to fall in love with nature?

Oral Presentation – 5 minutes

HARVEY

“Non-scientific” data is still good data: the value of anecdotal information in science

Jessica Harvey

Corvidae Environmental Consulting / Asio Consulting, Kimberley, British Columbia

We've all been there - our herpetology research led to really cool observational data, but the stats just don't follow suit. Our reviewers and supervisors insist on the downplay of non-significant findings and journals tend to have bias for publishing only statistically significant results. In some cases, researchers find themselves in jobs and roles that simply don't allow for the scientific rigour necessary to obtain statistically powerful results, never mind significant. But wait, how can we possibly say that there isn't value in the observational data that we collect as herpetologists every day. Like the few rattlesnakes that had body temperatures that dropped to minus 4 during a movement study or a single treefrog showed me the way to a new breeding pond and enabled us to protect the habitat. This data has many uses including, but not limited to, efficient planning, targeted research questions, improved species management, avoidance of making other people's mistakes, and generally cool insights into herptile behaviour and ecology.

Oral Presentation – 5 minutes

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NETTEN

Engaging Community and Conservation Practitioners in Long-Term Monitoring of Ontario Snakes

Teagan Netten, Jenna Quinn

Ontario Nature, Toronto, Ontario

Population trend data does not exist for many snake species, making it difficult to assess their conservation status, particularly for cryptic and lesser-studied species. Thus, there is a need for widespread, standardized, long-term monitoring to gather baseline information about snake populations. Ontario Nature has developed a long-term monitoring protocol (LTMP) to gather the appropriate information to assess population trends in Ontario snakes over time. The LTMP primarily consists of artificial cover object (ACO) surveys along transects in open edge habitat. It also includes the collection of habitat data to help determine important habitat features for snake populations and assists with identifying areas of greatest stewardship needs. The LTMP additionally provides opportunity for community science and outreach around snakes, including educating the public on the important role snakes play in our ecosystems and the primary threats they face. With the cooperation of partner conservation professionals and community scientists, the LTMP has been implemented at more than 40 sites across Ontario. The collaborative, standardized data collected will address knowledge gaps and help monitor Ontario's snakes, providing conservation professionals with further insight into the factors behind population and range declines.

In this presentation, we will share lessons and successes from LTMP development and implementation and highlight the benefits for new and continued participation in the program for both snakes and protected areas.

Oral Presentation – 5 minutes

SCHUELER

When is a Starling a baby Raccoon: Mistakes and mimicry in Treefrog calling

Fred Schueler

Fragile Inheritance Natural History & New Brunswick Museum,
Oxford Station, Ontario

This is a quick glance at two phenomena: calls of other creatures mistaken for the calls of *Hyla* (=Dryophytes) *versicolor*, the Tetraploid Grey Treefrog, and a tradition of mimicry of this species by *Sturnus vulgaris* (Starling) in Bishops Mills, Ontario. When we surveyed the herpetofauna of the outer Bruce Peninsula in 1983, 1984, and 1990, we didn't encounter this species, though there was one Ontario Herp summary record of calling, which we attribute to either avian mimicry of the call, or the juvenile cries of Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*). At home in Bishops Mills, since 1991, we've been noting mimicry of Treefrogs, often in March before the real Treefrogs begin to call, in the "torrential broken glass symphony" of Starling calls. Records of this mimicry peaked from 2010-2014, suggesting that this mimicry is a feature of the repertoire of individual males.

Oral Presentation – 5 minutes