

The Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas

Update

2017

February 4, 2018

For the Forest Ecosystem

As a result of Cindy Sprague's study of our isolated New Haven/Bristol/Monkton **Eastern Ratsnake** population, we have learned a great deal about the favored feeding locations for that population as well as a denning site. All of Cindy's data have been entered into our atlas.

We received many new **Wood Turtle** records as well as multiple reports from previously known sites from ongoing studies of Mark Powell. Steve Parren's reports of **Wood Turtle**, **Spotted Turtle**, and **Spiny Softshell** studies in 2017 were received in February and have not yet been entered into our database.

We received photo documentation of new town records of **Jefferson Salamander Group** salamanders from Danville and Roxbury.

We continued to fill in scores of gaps in the distribution and photo-documentation of more common reptiles and amphibians.

Targeted survey efforts

This year we visited Benson, Bristol, Cambridge, Castleton, Cornwall, Fair Haven, Ferrisburgh, Goshen, Landgrove, Lincoln, Middlebury, Monkton, More WVRI

We also are working closely with graduate students, biologists, and academic faculty in providing advice and data in locating and studying the distribution of, and effects of, a variety of different reptile and amphibian diseases in Vermont.

The searchable list of needed records was updated again and put on line on our website (VtHerpAtlas.org). This feature has generated many reports that have helped us fill in g

Reptile and Amphibian Scientific Advisory Group (RASAG) to the Vermont Endangered Species Committee work that is dependent on Atlas data

The Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas was begun by the RASAG in an effort to gather the needed data to make more informed decisions regarding conservation action and priorities for reptiles and amphibians in Vermont. Here are two 2017 activities informed by that data.

Protection of habitat for state listed species.

Steve Parren has drafted the first listing of critical habitat for a reptile or amphibian in Vermont. His proposal is to list and protect critical nesting habitat for Spiny Softshells. Conservation efforts for this species have regularly drawn on atlas data.

Mudpuppy

The RASAG is currently updating the listing documentation to recommend listing the Mudpuppy as a threatened species in Vermont. We have done this twice before. We continue to be concerned that populations of Mudpuppies in the major tributaries of Lake Champlain can't sustain the regular (every four years) mortality brought about through the use of the lampricide TFM that is used to control sea lamprey. Data strongly suggest that TFM treatments eliminated populations of Mudpuppy from Lewis Creek and have greatly reduced populations in the Lamoille River. However, since control of sea lamprey through the use of lampricides is a program that Vermont Fish and Wildlife supports, they have not supported the listing in the past, and our recommended listing has been denied. Once again,