

FOREWORD

Chelonian Conservation and Biology, 2000, 3(4):555-556
© 2000 by Chelonian Research Foundation

Blanding's Turtle Workshop Summary

JOHN J. MORIARTY¹

¹*J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota,
10 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455 USA
[Fax: 651-748-2508; E-mail: john.moriarty@co.ramsey.mn.us]*

A workshop on the conservation and ecology of Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) was held from 6–10 May 1998 at the J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Seventy turtle biologists from three Canadian provinces and ten US states attended the workshop. The workshop was organized to bring together Blanding's turtle researchers and conservationists to share their findings and ideas. The workshop was successful in doing that and also generated some additional research.

Twenty-seven papers were presented at the workshop. Ten of those presentations (cited below) were further developed into formal papers and are now included in this special focus issue of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*. The remaining 17 non-published presentations are also cited below. Another 4 papers not presented at the workshop were also contributed to this special focus issue, which contains 14 papers on Blanding's turtles. The papers at the workshop stimulated much discussion on the effects of fragmentation and predation on Blanding's turtle populations. Fragmentation and direct habitat loss are the major problems with Blanding's turtle declines. There was some difference of opinion as to the long-term effect of predation. Studies at the George Reserve show that it might not be as detrimental as thought. Minimum habitat and population size requirements were also discussed. This is a bigger concern in the east where habitat and populations are small.

Field trips to major Blanding's turtle sites were held at the beginning and end of the workshop. The first trip was to Camp Ripley Training Center in Morrison County. This was the site of a major Blanding's turtle study where the effects of military activity on turtle habitat was recently completed [Sajwaj and Lang (this issue) and Piegras and Lang (this issue)].

The second field trip was to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Weaver Dunes Preserve in Winona County. This is the largest known population of Blanding's turtles in North America and the site of a major long-term Blanding's turtle study conducted from 1974–80 and in 1998, marking nearly 2500 turtles [Pappas, Brecke, and Congdon (this issue)]. Several different habitats in this 1000 ha prairie/wetland complex were visited. The effects of habitat fragmentation were discussed on the paved road that separates the wetlands from the nesting sites. Weaver Dunes was also the site of a

recent TNC land purchase that added an important parcel to the preserve. A representative of the Bush Foundation accompanied the field trip to evaluate the site for a TNC proposal to cover the costs of the purchase. The Bush Foundation was impressed with the onsite lobbying of 50+ turtle people and subsequently granted TNC their \$200,000 request. A second large-scale study on Blanding's turtles at Weaver Dunes was started in 1999; over 1200 adult turtles have been marked during the first two years (J. Lang, *pers. comm.*). This re-emphasizes the uniqueness and importance of this site.

The workshop was sponsored by a number of agencies and organizations that provided logistical and financial support. They include: J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History, Chelonian Research Foundation, Hennepin Parks, Minnesota Herpetological Society, Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Program, The Nature Conservancy of Minnesota, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University of North Dakota, Advanced Telemetry Systems, and Serpent's Tale Natural History Book Distributors. Their generosity allowed for a very successful workshop.

Workshop Presentations

The following 10 presentations were developed into full articles and are included in this special focus issue (although exact titles and authors have been modified in some cases); please refer to the published articles in this volume for study details and contact information. Four additional non-workshop articles, not listed here, are also included in this special issue.

- GERMANO, DAVID J., BURY, R. BRUCE, AND JENNINGS, MARY. Growth and demographics of a population of *Emydoidea blandingii* from western Nebraska.
- HALL, CAROL AND CUTHBERT, FRANCESCA J. Impacts of a controlled wetland drawdown on Blanding's turtles.
- KIVIAT, ERIK, STEVENS, GRETCHEN, BRAUMAN, ROBERT, HOEGER, SVEN, PETOKAS, PETER J., AND HOLLANDS, GARRETT. Restoration of wetland and upland habitat for Blanding's turtles.
- LEVELL, JOHN P. Commercial exploitation of Blanding's turtles, *Emydoidea blandingii*, for the Live Animal Trade.
- MCMASTER, NATALIE AND HERMAN, TOM. Movements and habitat selection of juvenile Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea*

- blandingii*) in Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia.
- McNEIL, JENNIFER AND HERMAN, TOM. Movement of hatchling Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) in response to varying proximities to water.
- PAPPAS, MICHAEL AND BRECKE, BRUCE. The Blanding's turtles of Weaver Dunes, Minnesota.
- PIEPGRAS, STEVE, SAJWAJ, TODD, AND LANG, JEFFREY W. Seasonal movements, home ranges and wetland habitats of a central Minnesota population of Blanding's turtles.
- SAJWAJ, TODD, PIEPGRAS, STEVE, AND LANG, JEFFREY W. Seasonal and daily patterns of body temperature and thermal behavior in a central Minnesota population of Blanding's turtles.
- STANDING, LORRAINE, MORRISON, IAN, AND HERMAN, TOM. Reproduction and nest success in a threatened population of Blanding's turtle in Nova Scotia: an evaluation of the nest screening programme.
- The following 17 presentations were not developed for publication in this special focus issue; address information is provided for those who may wish to contact the authors for details of their studies.
- BARLOW, CHRISTINE AND KINGSBURY, BRUCE. Habitat use and home range of juvenile and adult Blanding's turtles in northeast Indiana. *Department of Biology, Indiana-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1499* [kingsbur@ipfw.edu].
- CASPER, GARY S. Movement patterns, habitat use, and conservation strategies in a small population of Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) in southern Wisconsin. *Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 W. Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53233* [gsc@mmpm.edu].
- CONGDON, JUSTIN D., DUNHAM, ARTHUR E., AND VAN LOBEN SELS, R.C. Conservation and management of long-lived organisms: lessons from Blanding's turtle demographics. *Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, Drawer E, Aiken, SC 29802* [congdon@srel.edu]; *Department of Biology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104*; *Red Mountain High School, 7301 East Brown Road, Mesa, AZ 85207*
- FOWLE, SUZANNE C. AND MELVIN, SCOTT M. Status and conservation of Blanding's turtles in Massachusetts. *Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Route 135, Westborough, MA 01581* [suzanne.fowle@state.ma.us].
- HARDING, JAMES H. Population structure and movements in a suburban Blanding's turtle population. *MSU Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824* [hardingj@pilot.msu.edu].
- HARMON, CHRISTOPHER AND BREISCH, ALVIN. Conservation of Blanding's turtles at a Nature Conservancy preserve in Dutchess County, New York. *Lower Hudson Chapter, The Nature Conservancy, 41 S. Moger Ave., Mt. Kisco, NY 10549* [crisharmon@aol.com]; *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Endangered Species Unit, 108 Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054*.
- HERMAN, TOM, MORRISON, IAN, AND McMASTER, NATALIE. Recovery of a threatened Blanding's turtle population: is headstarting a viable conservation tool? *Centre for Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B0P 1X0* [tom.herman@acadiau.ca]; *Kejimikujik National Park, P.O. Box 236, Maitland Bridge, Nova Scotia B0T 1B0*.
- JOHNSON, TOM R. Blanding's turtle in Missouri. *Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102* [Johnst@mail.conservaion.state.mo.us].
- LANG, JEFFREY W., SAJWAJ, TODD, AND PIEPGRAS, STEVE. Reproductive and other life history features of a central Minnesota population of Blanding's turtles. *Dept. of Biology, Box 9019, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND 58202* [jeff_lang@und.nodak.edu].
- LINCK, MADELEINE AND MORIARTY, JOHN J. Blanding's turtle use of a restored prairie and wetland complex in Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, Minnesota. *Natural Resources Management, Hennepin Parks, 3800 Co. Rd. 24, Maple Plain, MN 55359* [hpwltts@aol.com].
- LUDWIG, DANIEL R. Urban Blanding's turtle populations in northeastern Illinois. *Forest Preserve District of Dupage County, P.O. Box 2339, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138* [grounds@mcs.net].
- MOCKFORD, STEVE, HERMAN, TOM, SNYDER, MARLENE, AND WRIGHT, JONATHAN. A molecular approach to the study of Blanding's turtle in Nova Scotia. *Department of Biology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia* [mockford@is2.dal.ca]; *Biology Department, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B0P 1X0*.
- MORIARTY, JOHN J. AND LINCK, MADELEINE. Site fidelity and the lack thereof in Blanding's turtles: results of a five-year telemetry study. *Natural Resources Management, Hennepin Parks, 3800 Co. Rd. 24, Maple Plain, MN 55359* [frogs@tc.umn.edu].
- MORRISON, IAN, HERMAN, TOM, AND STANDING, LORRAINE. Movements and habitat selection of headstarted hatchlings in a threatened population of Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) in Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia. *Kejimikujik National Park, P.O. Box 236, Maitland Bridge, Nova Scotia B0T 1B0* [Ian_Morrison@pch.gc.ca]; *Centre for Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B0P 1X0*.
- OLDHAM, MICHAEL J. Distribution, status, and conservation of the Blanding's turtle in Ontario. *Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC), Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 7000, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8M5* [oldhammi@epo.gov.on.ca].
- RUBIN, CORY S., WARNER, RICHARD E., AND PAIGE, KEN N. Conservation genetics of Blanding's turtle populations: geographic isolation, small population size, and genetic diversity. *University of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, Urbana, IL, 61801* [c-rubin@students.uiuc.edu].
- TANCK, JASON D. AND THIEL, RICHARD P. Blanding's turtle population studies – Sandhill Wildlife Area, Wood County, Wisconsin. *Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Box 156, Babcock, WI 54413* [Thielr@dnr.state.wi.us].