

The Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas

Update

2021

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**For the Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative
(FEMC)**

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Contributed records

Between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021 over 800 contributors provided 2,942 new records that were entered into the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas Database. This brings the total number of reports entered to 116,125.

The 2021 reports included 43 verified reports of S1 species, 150 verified reports of S2 species, 304 verified reports of S3 species, and 178 verified reports of S4 species. Reports also include unverified and negative records, amphibian and reptile road crossing locations, vernal pools, turtle egg-laying sites, snake dens and other significant herptile habitats. Sightings came from 240 towns, cities, grants, and gores and all Vermont counties. They included verified reports of all of Vermont's native species with the **exception of Boreal Chorus Frog (probably extirpated) and North American Racer**. Only a single report of **Fowler's Toad** was received. It was heard in Vernon and the report

Field trips, presentations, and media outreach

In 2021, some in-person field trips and presentations began again. I provided in-person presentations or field trips for Camp Betsy Cox on May 16, the Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society on July 17th, the Burr and Burton Mountain Campus on September 9, the Dead Creek Wildlife Festival on October 2, and the Hannaford Career Center on October 7th. Zoom presentations were provided on March 18 for the Green Mountain Audubon Society, April 12 for the Richford Area Conservation Commissions and on April 14, for the College of the Atlantic.

Data sharing

In 2021, location data were again provided to the Natural Resource Conservation Service for their conservation easements. Our data also played a key role in testing models being developed by VTrans for predicting amphibian crossing areas and developing supporting data for adding Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) to the list of aquatic invasive nuisance species in Vermont.

I continue to be more aggressive about providing data to contributors from target towns where we need more data. What I provide to these people is a list of common reptiles and amphibians that are expected to be in their towns but have not yet been photo-documented. For towns that have a good chance of providing habitat for rarer species, I include our list of herptiles that should always be documented. I provided this sort of data to residents of over thirty towns. Many of these exchanges resulted in new town records.

Archiving Records

One of our shorter term goals was scanning old photos and slides that were used as documentation for reports. Once scanned these photos and slides are added directly into our database in a containment field. This allows future users of our data access to the original photo-documentation that was supplied with reports. During 2021 we finished scanning all prints (state-wide) and the scans have been labeled and added to our database. In addition we reviewed and thinned out all our 35 mm slides and have scanned the first 275. These scanned slides are now being labeled and added to the appropriate containment fields within our database. The remaining slides (second half) are currently at a photoshop being scanned. I am optimistic that we will have finished this entire scanning and labelling project by the end of April 2022.

Coordinates

A second short-term goal for 2021 was to make the location data in our database more useful by adding accurate latitude and longitude coordinates for as many records as possible. As a result, Atlas staff and others could more accurately and easily map distribution of reptiles and amphibians in Vermont, thereby better informing conservation recommendations. We had previously finished assigning lat longs to all unusual or rare species (S1-S3) as well as more common S4 species. During 2021, we finished adding lat long coordinates to all our reptile and amphibian records from Rutland County. This includes all common species (S5) as well as rare, threatened, and endangered species. In total this year, we assigned coordinates to 6,319 records from Rutland County. In addition, we have now added coordinates to

