

Second International Symposium and Workshop
on the Conservation of the Eastern
Massasauga Rattlesnake, *Sistrurus catenatus catenatus* :
population and habitat management issues
in urban, bog, prairie and forested ecosystems



Editors
Bob Johnson
Mark Wright



Second International Symposium and Workshop on the Conservation of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, *Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*: population and habitat management issues in urban, bog, prairie and forested ecosystems.

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Top: Gravid female massasauga photographed at rookery site, Ardberg, Ontario

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FORWARD

The First International Symposium on the Conservation of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, held at the Toronto Zoo in 1992, examined status and range of the massasauga. Data presented at that meeting demonstrated population and range declines throughout 10 US states and the Province of Ontario in Canada.

Workshop discussions at the first symposium often centred on management issues. Bob Hay summarized the management concerns that were extensive enough to warrant a separate symposium. In the intervening years it has become apparent that lack of habitat management, or in some cases management that was detrimental to the rattlesnake populations and their critical habitats, might be an important factor in their decline or isolation. Although there were common factors in the decline of populations, some management issues were unique to the ecosystems that supported rattlesnakes - hence the focus of this second symposium on urban, prairie, bog, and forested ecosystems. Moderated sessions included genetics, disease transmission, outreach and education, and survey techniques that might impact management at the ecosystem level.

Toronto Zoo hosted the Second International Symposium on the Conservation of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake to bring together those with expertise on snake biology and conservation. The recovery of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake requires ongoing collaboration and partnerships that extend across international borders. Our goal was to provide a forum to share successful management techniques that ultimately accomplish sustainable management at the landscape or ecosystem level.

Although this is the last symposium to be hosted by Toronto Zoo, it is clear that participants support a third conservation symposium. This forum would include information that will not only lead to the recovery of the massasauga, but could include the timber rattlesnake, another rattlesnake that may share similar causes of decline and which might benefit from joint conservation programmes.

Bob Johnson

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Any international meeting of this size that includes an overnight field trip requires the energy and dedication of many people. We would like to thank the following people for their contribution for the conservation of the massasauga rattlesnake:

Erin Shapero, Elaine Christens, Dianne Devison, John Stoner, Heather Passmore, Andrew Lentini, Patrick McCarthy, Debbie Forrest, Chris Bauer, Cathy Cunningham, Chris Parent, Pat Walsh, Candy Jones.

and Moderators:

Jennifer Syzmanski, Kent Prior, Karen Cedar, Ron Black, Shelly Dunn.