

WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



2025 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TALKS / WORKSHOPS / QUIZ / STALLS

15th & 16th March 2025





Advancing Herpetological Husbandry is an internet-based group with over 38,500 members worldwide. Established in 2015 in the UK, the group is dedicated to promoting the very best standards of husbandry for reptiles and amphibians. Their goals are:

1. To promote "best care" rather than "basic care."
2. Tackling the all-pervasive myths of reptile husbandry using research and science, not anecdote and assumption.
3. Promoting the use of new technologies where applicable, and the use of existing technologies where it has been proven to be beneficial to animals.

[AHH Facebook](#)
[AHH Events](#)

Reptile Lighting
How Not to Slay the Dragon - Bearded Dragon Owners
Not just a Pet Rock - Royal Python Owners



Thank you to **Drayton Manor Resort** for their continued support in hosting and providing this fantastic venue, which has enabled our conference to grow bigger and better every year since it was held here in 2017!

JOIN THE BHS 

Why not join the Society today?

You'll find more details about membership by scanning this QR code or visiting our website:

www.thebhs.org



WELCOME TO OUR CONFERENCE!

The British Herpetological Society is one of the world's oldest and largest UK Herpetological Societies.

Founded in 1947 by Britain's leading herpetologists, the Society still enjoys its national learned status and celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 2022. As well as organising this Annual Conference in partnership with the Advancing Herpetological Husbandry group, we hold several Members' Meetings with scientific programmes each year at various locations within the UK. We publish a regular eBulletin, the Natterjack, and two major publications, the quarterly Herpetological Bulletin and Herpetological Journal.

The Bulletin includes natural history notes, book reviews, and other items with emphasis on natural history, conservation and captive care including breeding, husbandry, veterinary, and behavioural aspects.

The Society's Herpetological Journal is ranked as one of the leading peer reviewed scientific publications devoted to herpetology.

The Society actively supports conservation, research, education, and the responsible captive breeding of species.



SATURDAY 15TH MARCH

08:00 - 09:00 ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

09:00 - 10:50 MORNING SESSION 1

Welcome & Introduction

BART SPANOGHE

15 Years of Successful
Lacertidae Breeding



TOM MARRIOTT

Integrating Wild Observations
into Captive Care

10:50 - 11:15 BREAK



11:15 - 13:15 MORNING SESSION 2

KIERAN RICHARDSON

Reptile Conservation: Uncovering the
Secrets Behind Breeding challenges

BEN OWENS

The Care, Breeding, and Natural
History of *Hydrosaurus* spp with
Observations from the Wild



INTRO TO STUDENT POSTERS

STALLS

13:15 - 14:30 LUNCH BREAK



14:30 - 15:50 AFTERNOON SESSION 1

PAUL TAPLEY

Have I Got Newts For You -
Adventures with *Neurergus kaiseri*

JANE WILLIAMS

Is My Tortoise /
Turtle Happy?



15:50-16:20 BREAK

STUDENT POSTERS

STALLS



16:20 - 17:00 AFTERNOON SESSION 2

ERIN RICKMAN

New and Future Research for Assessing
the Impact of Care on the Behaviour and
Welfare of Captive Reptiles (Via Zoom)

17:15 - 18:15 ZOO VISIT



18:15 - 19:30 INTERMISSION

19:30 - 23:30 EVENING EVENT
DINNER / QUIZ / TALK

MARK O'SHEA MBE

Blood, Sweat, and Snakebites —
The Making of a Herpetologist



SUNDAY 16TH MARCH

08:00 - 09:00 ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

09:00 - 10:30 MORNING SESSION 1

LORI TORRINI

Next Level Reptile Behaviour
& Training (Via Zoom)

DR MARIE KUBIAK

Follicles!
The Silent Killer...



10:30 - 10:55 BREAK

STUDENT POSTERS

STALLS



11:00 - 11:55 WORKSHOPS - SESSION 1

**ALL FIVE WORKSHOPS
WILL RUN TWICE**

**BIO-ACTIVE
SET-UPS**

HERP LIGHTING LAB

EXOTICS VET Q&A

**SUNLIGHT
POWER DENSITY
METERING**

**CREATING A
COSH H RISK
ASSESSMENT**

12:05 - 13:00 WORKSHOPS - SESSION 2

13:00 - 14:00 LUNCH BREAK

STUDENT POSTERS

STALLS



14:00 - 15:45 AFTERNOON SESSION 1

BART SPANOGHE

Melanistic Eyed /
Ocellated Lizards
and Lizard Diseases

CHAZ THOMPSON REPTA Update

GRÁINNE HARTIGAN

The Cool Future
of Herpetological
Conservation

15:45 - 16:10 BREAK

STUDENT POSTERS

STALLS



16:10 - 16:50 AFTERNOON SESSION 2

FRANCIS COSQUIERI

Acclimating New Reptiles

16:50 - 17:00

Conference Conclusion

**THANK YOU
FOR ATTENDING**



MEET THE SPEAKERS

BART SPANOGHE



Bart Spanoghe is a professional occupational poultry veterinarian with a specialisation in veterinary food surveillance and is an Animal Welfare Officer. Within the world of reptiles and amphibians, Bart's full attention goes to observing, keeping, and breeding with the different species of European lizards. He has already published several articles and many photos about his experiences with these animals in indoor and outdoor terrariums in trade magazines and specialised websites. By sharing his knowledge with like-minded people worldwide, he continues to build a network of serious enthusiasts who together, thanks to thorough field herpetology and terrarium science, take care of lizards and breed them successfully in captivity. In this way, wild capture is prevented and endangered species are conserved.

THOMAS MARRIOTT



Thomas Marriott is the Manager of Exotics Keeper Magazine and Executive Editor of the Responsible Herpetoculture Journal. He has travelled to dozens of countries finding and photographing reptiles and amphibians and sharing the stories of conservationists working with them in the field. Thomas has authored over 200 magazine articles and worked on several other projects including a documentary on New Caledonian Geckos and the EK Survey Report, aimed at capturing data on the UK reptile-keeping hobby.

KIERAN RICHARDSON



Kieran Richardson is the Animal Technical Support Officer for the Ectotherms department at Chester Zoo. He has an MSc in Conservation Biology from the Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology (DICE) at the University of Kent. He has a lifelong interest in herpetology, having grown up in a house full of reptiles, as well as interests in other taxa such as invertebrates, fungi, birds, and general ecology, particularly in unusual ecological interactions between species. In his role at Chester, he contributes the many of the department's conservation projects, including projects with a range of threatened amphibian & reptile taxa. He also coordinates the EEP (EAZA Ex-Situ Programme) for the mountain chicken frog.

BEN OWENS



Ben Owens is a PhD student at Bangor University, Wales studying the population genomics of isolated populations across fragmented habitats, particularly adders (*Vipera berus*) and sand lizards (*Lacerta agilis*) in the UK. He is also the director and founder of Captive & Field Herpetology - a peer-reviewed journal and leading company of research driven expeditions. His main research interests include snakebite and behavioural ecology, and utilising herpetoculture within research. He is currently involved in research in Morocco, Greece, India, and Southeast Asia. Ben manages a collection of over 80 species and 200 individuals with a focus primarily on Asian Agamids and Amazon puffing snakes (*Spilotes sulphureus*).

JANE WILLIAMS



Jane Williams has a degree in Zoology and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Nottingham, and an MA in Education from the Open University. She completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Companion Animal Behaviour Counselling followed by a Research MSc at the University of Southampton on the topic of husbandry and care of captive Mediterranean tortoises in the UK. She has written a number of published articles in the field of reptile husbandry, reducing stress for reptiles during veterinary visits. Jane lives in Essex, UK, with 35 tortoises, six dogs, five tarantulas and another equally animal-mad human. Her recently published book "Tortoise Husbandry and Welfare" (published by CAB!) is now widely available.

ERIN RICKMAN



Erin Rickman's journey began in the UK, where she achieved an FdSc in Animal Science through the University of Brighton, a top-up BSc (Hons) in Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare from the Royal Agricultural University, and is currently completing her Ph.D in Animal Behaviour and Welfare at the University of Lincoln, focusing on Leopard Geckos. She is an Assistant Professor of Animal Studies focusing on Herpetology at Eckerd College in Florida, running her research lab, the Anglo-American Reptile Research Laboratory, focusing on different keeping styles (with exploration into the welfare theories of bioactive environments) in a range of different reptiles, including Crested Geckos and Madagascan Day Geckos.

PROF. MARK O'SHEA MBE



Mark O'Shea (MBE) is perhaps one of our most well-known British herpetologists – as an author, lecturer, and television personality. He is known internationally as the presenter of the Animal Planet Discovery Channel series 'O'Shea's Big Adventure'. Mark has participated in over 60 herpetological expeditions to almost 40 countries, on six continents, since the early 1980s. He was first author on the descriptions of four new Papuan and Timorese snakes, and a co-author describing seven other snakes and a gecko, from New Guinea, Timor, Java and Borneo, with more new species to come. He has worked on a number of snakebite projects, in Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, capturing and milking medically important venomous snakes, working with clinicians from the UK and Australia. He has authored and co-authored numerous herpetological books.

PAUL TAPLEY



Paul Tapley is one of the early members of the AHH team, and he has been keeping animals for so long that he really should be better at it – or at least not constantly honing techniques that involve keeping inexpensive animals in expensive ways! Paul will be fighting his imposter syndrome to take a lighthearted but informative look at some of the challenges involved in keeping and breeding the Luristan newt, *Neurergus kaiseri*.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



LORI TORRINI

Lori Torrini is a professional animal trainer and behaviourist, applying behaviour science across all species to optimize wellbeing for animals under captive management, and improve safety and ease of care for their keepers. She holds the University of Washington's Certificate in Applied Animal Behavior and is a Fear Free Certified Practitioner, holding the veterinary, trainer, equine, and shelter certifications on Pet Behaviour and Well-being. Her work is focused on cooperative care and consent behaviours, positive reinforcement training, and using the least intrusive, most effective methods to provide customized care and training to reptiles, and other species, as individuals.



CHAZ THOMPSON

Charles (Chaz) Thompson is the owner of 'Snakes 'N' Adders' reptile centre, a nationally recognised store that has been under his ownership for the last 22 years. In a career with reptiles spanning 34 years, Chaz has kept thousands of animals and helped to develop many keeper's skillsets over the decades. He is passionate about children having an access route into this hobby and advocates for their right to own companion reptiles. He is now a lobbyist for the reptile industry working closely with figure heads within the sector and developing connections with government organisations such as DEFRA, CITES, JNCC and APHA. Chaz is a trade delegate for REPTA and its representative in stakeholder groups, the Companion Animal Sector Council (CASC) and CITES Sustainable User Group (CSUG).



DR MARIE KUBIAK

Dr Marie Kubiak has worked with a number of large aquaria and holds the WAVMA certificate in Aquatic Species. In 2024 she opened Evolution Exotics Referrals, one of very few clinics across the UK providing 24/7 on-site veterinary care by a multidisciplinary exotics Specialist, accepting any complex case referrals in exotic or zoo species from primary care vets. She has authored over 50 peer-reviewed research and review papers and is the editor and primary author of 'Handbook of Exotic Pet Medicine.' Marie is currently writing a new textbook on Zoological collection veterinary care. She works closely with the police, animal welfare organisations and local authorities as an expert in exotic animal welfare and organised crime relating to exotic animals. She runs a small holding, provides dart services to the police and veterinary professionals, and lectures to vets and nurses on exotic animal care.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR EXCEPTIONAL SPEAKERS



FRANCIS COSQUIERI

Francis Cosquiere started keeping reptiles and amphibians in the 1980s and maintains a large and diverse private collection of unique and wonderful species, in particular Colubrid snakes. Coming from a scientific background, Francis has been actively involved in the online hobby arena for over two decades, focusing on countering misinformation and all-pervasive hobby myths with evidence, common sense, and scientific fact. He has also been supporting newer keepers with various aspects of reptile keeping, leading him to co-found the Advancing Herpetological Husbandry group in 2015 with the goal of promoting best care rather than basic care.



GRÁINNE HARTIGAN

Gráinne Hartigan is the Zoo Liaison and Charity Administrator at Nature's SAFE, Europe's first charitable living biobank, where she works to build collaborative relationships within the zoo and scientific community to support the charity's mission of preserving genetic diversity and Saving Animals From Extinction. With a background in Zoology and Education, she has close to 20 years of experience in the teaching of animal management and conservation, as well as practical experience with animal husbandry and wildlife monitoring. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Animal Behaviour and is passionate about inspiring others to protect the natural world. Her talk will delve into innovative cryopreservation techniques being developed at Nature's SAFE to preserve reptiles and amphibians for future generations.



DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT THE STUDENT POSTERS AND STALLS

