

## Introduction to the Special Issue on herpetology in Canada

It is our great pleasure to introduce this special issue of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), which focusses on herpetology (the study of amphibians and reptiles) in Canada. This special issue has a wide range of articles and notes covering a large diversity of amphibians and reptiles in Canada. The last special issue of CFN was in 1999 (see Cook [1996] for a history of special issues and The Canadian Field-Naturalist [1998] for a list of the special issues 1995–1999).

This special issue is dedicated to Dr. Francis Cook. Francis has made a large mark on herpetology in Canada, so it is extremely fitting that we dedicate this special issue to him. This issue is also extremely timely: Francis was added to the Order of Canada in 2018 (Governor General of Canada 2018), and many of the reasons behind that nomination were related to his career as a herpetologist. Francis turned a life-long interest in amphibians and reptiles (Figure 1) into a remarkable career in herpetology. Francis authored 16 books, book chapters, and monographs on herpetology, and authored 47 journal articles on herpetology in a variety of different journals, including many in CFN.

Included among his publications is his classic book *An Introduction to Canadian Amphibians and Reptiles* (Cook 1984). His published herpetological contributions focussed on the diversity of amphibians and reptiles across Canada. He has published on every major group of amphibians and reptiles that live in Canada, including frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles, snakes, and lizards, and has published on a variety of topics, including taxonomy and biogeography. Francis has also demonstrated his broad knowledge of herpetology by reviewing nearly 100 different books on herpetology. Part II of this special issue will contain a bibliography of his publications.

Francis has been very involved in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles through his involvement with the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Francis was the chairperson of the COSEWIC subcommittee for amphibians and reptiles between 1981 and 1994, during which time he edited 13 COSEWIC reports on amphibians and reptiles. He has also been a reviewer for COSEWIC since 1994.



**FIGURE 1.** Francis Cook with an Eastern Foxsnake (*Pantherophis gloydi*) collected from Long Point, Ontario, by Francis and Sherman Bleakney (then Curator of Herpetology), 28 August 1956. Photo: S. Bleakney.

Finally, Francis's tenure as Curator of the Herpetology Section for the Canadian Museum of Nature from 1960 to 1991, and Curator Emeritus and Research Associate since 1994, has led to an enormous contribution to the field of herpetology. Francis helped build the herpetology collection from 14 000 to 133 000 specimens, which is the largest collection of Canadian herpetological specimens in the world. Francis's knowledge of these herpetological museum specimens has helped countless graduate students and researchers. More than just a curator of specimens, Francis has been a curator of knowledge (Figure 2). Before the age of scholarly search engines, Francis was an amazing resource for knowing the herpetological literature, including not only journal articles, but also student theses. Francis was, and still is, the person to talk to when reviewing the herpetological literature.

In addition to honouring Francis Cook's many contributions to herpetology, we especially want to recognize his long dedication to CFN. Francis was the Editor-in-Chief of CFN for an impressive 34 years, making

him the longest serving editor in the journal's 100+ year history. Francis first took on the editorial reins from 1962 to 1966, a time long before email and web submission of manuscripts. He stepped forward again in 1981 to edit the journal, remaining as the Editor-in-Chief until 2010. In total, Francis edited 35 volumes of CFN. After stepping down as the Editor-in-Chief, Francis continued on as the Associate Editor for herpetology and tributes from 2011 to 2016 (see Catling *et al.* 2016).

After conceiving the idea of this special issue, we put out a call for papers to Canadian herpetologists, including to members of the Canadian Herpetological Society, and they did not disappoint. Twenty-two articles and notes on all aspects of herpetology in Canada are part of this special issue. In fact, we received so many submissions that we had to split the special issue into two issues of CFN: 132(1) and 132(2). Eight articles and notes focus on turtles, six on snakes, four on frogs and toads, three on salamanders, and one is a checklist of amphibians and reptiles; we did not receive any submissions on lizards. These articles also represent the geo-

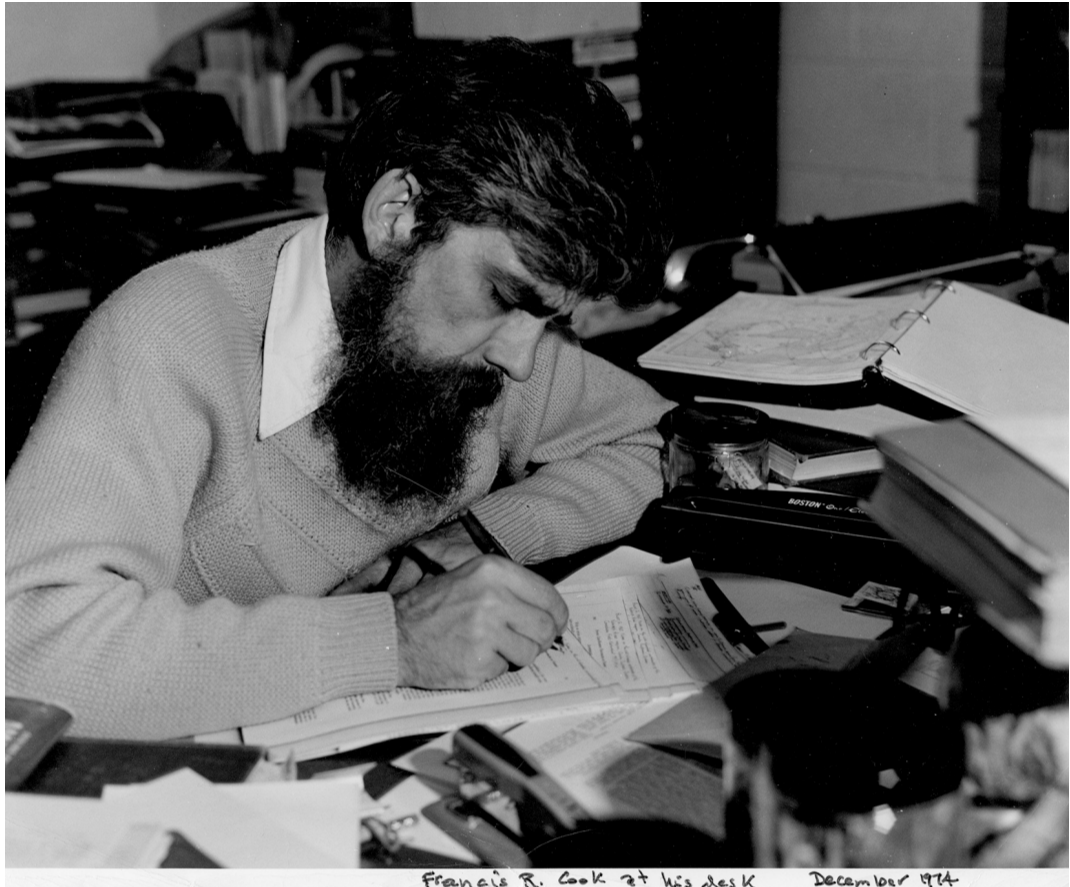


FIGURE 2. Francis Cook at work at the Canadian Museum of Nature, 1974. Photo: Canadian Museum of Nature.

graphic breadth of Canada, with articles from the Maritimes, eastern Canada, the Prairies, the West Coast, and even northern Canada.

In Part I of the special issue we have 12 articles and notes describing patterns of colouration (McAlpine and Gilhen), updates to species distribution (Gilhen and Power; Power and Gilhen), various aspects of fitness (Eye *et al.*; Gregory and Farr; Halliday and Blouin-Demers; Seburn), habitat use (Green and Yagi; Slough and deBruyn), behaviour (LeGros), sex-bias in capture rates (Moldowan *et al.*), and by-catch (Lennox *et al.*). Species described in this issue include three turtle species—Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), and Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*); five snake species—Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), Western Terrestrial Gartersnake (*Thamnophis elegans*), Great Basin Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer deserticola*), Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (*Crotalus o. oreganus*), and Western Yellow-bellied Racer (*Coluber constrictor mormon*); three species of frogs and toads—Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*), Fowler's Toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*), and Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*); and two salamander species—Eastern Red-backed Salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) and Mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*).

Part II of the special issue will contain 10 articles and notes. Topics include habitat use (Atkinson-Adams *et al.*; Cairns *et al.*; Edkins *et al.*; Marchand *et al.*; Powell *et al.*), predation (Karson *et al.*), range expansions and species checklists (Choquette and Jolin; Rashleigh and Crowell), toxicology (de Solla and Gugelyk), and a variety of natural history observations (Cairns *et al.*; Davy *et al.*; Powell *et al.*). Species described in that issue will include three turtle species—Snapping Turtle, Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta bellii*), and Spiny Soft-shell Turtle (*Apalone spinifera*); two snake species—Bullsnake (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*) and Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*); one frog species—

Spring Peeper; and one salamander species—Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*).

Herpetology is alive and well in Canada, with herpetologists studying interesting and important aspects of the natural history and ecology of amphibians and reptiles across the country. This special issue highlights the research being conducted by a subset of these herpetologists and, just like with Francis Cook's research, there is a great diversity of what herpetologists are studying in this country.

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