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Oral & Poster presentations



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Foreword

As the organizer of the 2025 Societas Europaea Herpetologica Congress in Bonn and SEH treasurer, it is a pleasure to reflect on this extraordinary event. We welcomed 340 participants—including organizers and volunteers—from 40 countries spanning six continents, demonstrating the truly global and inclusive spirit of our society. The presence of colleagues from almost every European country, as well as from Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, the United States, and beyond, highlighted our international reach and collaborative ambition.

The scientific programme was as diverse as our participants, featuring 188 oral presentations across up to five parallel sessions and 95 posters that showcased current research and new directions in herpetology. Plenary lectures, thematic symposia, and engaging workshops encouraged stimulating debate, interdisciplinary learning, and forward-looking perspectives on conservation, taxonomy, phylogenetics, and citizen science.

A true highlight of our congress was the quartet of plenary talks, each bursting with energy and fresh perspectives. We were captivated by exciting new insights into amphibian chemical communication, inspired by thought-provoking discussions of evolutionary body size dynamics, fascinated by the cutting-edge research on speciation and species boundaries in Caucasian rock lizards, and delighted by a deep dive into the astonishing anatomical diversity of blind snakes (Scolecopidia). The passion and creativity of our speakers—ranging from established leaders to brilliant early-career scientists—sparked lively dialogue and set an inspiring tone for the entire meeting.

Supporting the next generation of herpetologists is a core value of SEH. I am delighted that 128 students took part in the congress, with 17 benefiting from DGHT Student Conservation Grants that eased the path to active participation. Social events, from the opening reception to field trip and museum tours, fostered vibrant exchange and lasting connections.

Organizing SEH 2025 was both a challenge and a privilege. My heartfelt thanks go to the scientific and local organizing committees, our generous sponsors, the many volunteers, and—most of all—every participant, whose enthusiasm and passion ensured the success of this meeting. This Abstract Book records your contributions and energy, and stands as a testament to the strength, talent, and diversity of our herpetological community.

Claudia Koch

Treasurer, Societas Europaea Herpetologica
on behalf of the SEH 2025 Local Organising Committee

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Participants of the 23rd European Congress of Herpetology

Diana Abondano	Bernat Burriel-Carranza
Judith Adam	Nicolas Büscher
Maja Ajduković	Natalija Čađenović
Adel Alba	Francesco Canepa
Steven Allain	Salvador Carranza
Elvis Almeida Pereira Silva	Miguel A. Carretero
Ábel Angelusz	Stephan Cassin
Umilaela Arifin	Ratul Chakraborty
Pim Arntzen	Jakko Chmura
Vojtech Balaz	Niki Chondrelli
Emese Balogh	Glorija Ćirković
Zsombor István Bányi	Viviana Cittadino
Natia Barateli	Michelle Clemens
Andrea Barbi	Vincent Clément
Aaron Bauer	Gerardo Antonio Cordero
Sara Bento	Jelena Ćorović
Boris Berlijn	Claudia Corti
Ilaria Bernabò	Andrea Costa
Emanuele Berrilli	Michael Cota
Millie Berry	Raymond Creemers
Wouter Beukema	Jennifer Crees
Lekshmi Bhuvanendran Pillai Sreelatha	Jelka Crnobrnja-Isailovic
Vukašin Bjelica	Urban Dajcman
Sabrina Bleidißel	Denisse Dalgo
Ellen Blomme	Maik Damm
Sarah Bock	Gabriele D'Antonio
Sergé Bogaerts	Joshua Darkin
Wolfgang Böhme	Prem Alberto Daswani Aguilar
Anja Bolčina	Nathan Dehaut
Leonard Bolte	Mathieu Denoel
Philipp Böning	Matteo Riccardo Di Nicola
Begüm Boran	Maria Dimaki
Tim Borutta	Carolin Dittrich
Collin Bos	Adam Joseph Doncheff Marques
Ursula Bott	Pedro Henrique dos Santos Dias
Irina Bregenzer	Marija Drobnjaković
Katarina Breka	Mykola Drohvalenko
Kinsey Brock	Charles Duchatel
Andrés Brunetti	Christophe Guy Yves Dufresnes
Amadeusz Bryla	Clément Duret
Mátyás Budai	Juliane Durst
Stephan Burgstaller	Georgina Roxanne Eccles

Margaret Eppli
 Jesse Erens
 Karin Ernst
 Paula Eterovick
 Joaquim Faria
 Joana Fernandes
 Eduardo Fernández Meléndez
 Ana Isabel Ferreira
 Vincenzo Ferri
 Francesco Ficetola
 Léa Fieschi-Méric
 Clara Figueiredo Vázquez
 Dominik Fischer
 Nicholas Joris Fleck
 Morris Flecks
 Martino Flego
 Jim Foster
 Rafaela França
 James France
 Martyna Frątczak
 Daniel Alejandro Freire Espin
 Niklas Fuchs
 Ibuki Fukuyama
 Mariam Gabelaia
 Trenton Garner
 Katharina Geiß
 Lara Gemeinhardt
 Laurenz Gewiss
 Leif Yngve Gjerde
 Cédric Godart
 Philippe Golay
 Günter Gollmann
 Pia Golob
 Ana Golubović
 Ivan Gomez-Mestre
 Sara Grau Camps
 Jeanne-Jo Gregory
 Frederic Griesbaum
 Richard Griffiths
 Annegret Grimm-Seyfarth
 Kurt Grossenbacher
 Jimena Renee Grosso
 Ilona Grüner
 Tanvi Gurjar

Václav Gvoždík
 Matthäus Haase
 Jakob Hallermann
 Balint Halpern
 Andrew Hamer
 D. James Harris
 Olivia Hartmann
 Mona Hederich
 Stefan Heilscher
 Tim L. Heller
 Klaus Henle
 Jelger Herder
 Adam Hermaniuk
 Sebastian Hernandez Nieto
 Stefan Thomas Hertwig
 Sylvia Hofmann
 Monique Hölting
 Ralf Hörold
 Wen-San Huang
 David Hudry
 Karen Hugemann
 Matthew Hulse
 Giorgi Iankoshvili
 Mattia Iannella
 Renata Ibelli Vaz
 Polina Ibrogimova
 Flora Ihlow
 Natasha Inskip
 Yuval Itescu
 Daniel Jablonski
 Martin Jamieson
 Alina Janssen
 Dušan Jelić
 Ulrich Joger
 Nicolas Joudrier
 Olga Jovanovic Glavas
 Alisha Jung
 Mikołaj Kaczmarek
 Christine Kaiser
 Hinrich Kaiser
 Andrea Kásler
 Andreja Kavčič
 Anna Kawamoto
 Clara Victoria Keusgen

Tom Kirschey
 Nerinea Klebs
 Claudia Koch
 Jörn Köhler
 Ferris König
 Thore Koppetsch
 Yurii Kornilev
 Adriana Kościańska
 Antonín Krása
 Klaus-Detlef Kühnel
 Yasemin Kukla
 Fanny Kupferschmid
 Sourish Kuttalam
 Axel Kwet
 Nay Win Kyaw
 Jim Labisko
 Janja Laka
 Anssi Laurila
 Mischa Lauterbach
 Meven Le Brishoual
 Lidija Leković
 Hans Christoph Liedtke
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 Colette Martin
 Angele Martins
 Maya Master
 Shaquille Matthys
 Eryn McDonald
 Konrad Mebert
 Boglárka Mészáros
 Carmen Meyer
 Peter Mikulicek
 Matéo Millet

Benjamin Monod-Broca
 Pia Munninghoff
 Łukasz Myczko
 Victor L N de Araújo
 Bence Nagy
 Marisa Naia
 Tamika Nash-Hahn
 Tadeáš Nečas
 Oksana Nekrasova
 F. L. Alexander Neugebauer
 Thais Nogueira
 Ute Nüsken
 Alberto Omizzolo
 Mark O'Shea
 John Benjamin Owens
 Ceren Nur Özgül
 Maciej Pabijan
 Saunak Pal
 Mark Pankin
 Petr Papežík
 Aristeia Paraskevopoulou
 Dikansh Parmar
 Frank Pasmans
 Ana Paunović
 Guillem Pérez i de Lanuza
 Silviu Petrovan
 Alice Petzold
 Maria Alejandra Pinto Erazo
 Katja Poboljšaj
 Heike Pröhl
 Zuzanna Purwin
 Eleonora Pustovalova
 Julia Putze
 Gergő Rák
 Riinu Rannap
 João Rato
 Sebastian Ratz
 Timm Reinhardt
 Jendrian Riedel
 Eva Ringler
 Dennis Rödder
 Mark-Oliver Rödel
 Markus Roesch
 Evgeny Roitberg

Henri Rommel
Giacomo Rosa
Cecilia Roscetti
Etienne Röthlein
Attila Placido Sachslehner
Luca Salomon
Daniele Salvi
Sebastiano Salvidio
Manuel Sampaio
Mascha Sappok
Robin Saulnier Masson
Mark D. Scherz
Dirk Schmeller
Lion Schneidewind
Lisa M. Schulte
Christian Schulz
Elisa Schulze
Silke Schweiger
Maud Segal
Janette Siebert
Giulia Simbula
Ádám Simon
Ana Skledar
Nicholas Smith
Kari Sönnichsen
Jeroen Speybroeck
David Stanković
Julia Steinbinder
Sara Strah
Iurii Strus
Vasylyna Strus
Susanne Stückler
Alexander Suh
Emina Šunje
Robin Suyesh

Zyta Szadkowska
Natalia Szymańska
Gülçin Tan
David Tarkhnishvili
Anagnostis Theodoropoulos
Arthur Tiutenko
Mariami Todua
Ábris Tóth
Sergi Tulloch Jiménez
Evan Twomey
Flora Uessler
Aleksandar Urošević
Sylvain Ursenbacher
Jean-Pierre Vacher
Balázs Vági
Loïc van Doorn
Mona van Schingen-Khan
Diana Vasconcelos
Deepak Veerappan
Michael Veith
Mojca Vek
Dobravka Velenská
Zsolt Villás
Jonas Virgo
Dylan Vonhoff
Judit Vörös
Jie Wang
Rob Ward
Bálint Wenner
Ben Wielstra
Anamarija Zagar
Oana Zamfirescu
Stefan Zamfirescu
Oleksandr Zinenko
Ronald Zollinger

Plenary talks



CONSERVATION

The marsh frog invasion: diversity, pathways, opportunism and effects

Mathieu Denoël

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium
Corresponding author: Mathieu.Denoel@uliege.be

Fabien Pille

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Clément Duret

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Pablo Padilla

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Luca Salomon

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Soline Bettencourt

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Anne-Constance Comau

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Aurore Lacombe

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Léa Lorrain-Solignon

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Justine Pavis

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Laura Pinto

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Victorine Renard

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Pauline Tendron

Laboratory of Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians, FOCUS, University of Liege, Belgium

Anthony Herrel

Museum national d'Histoire naturelle, CNRS, France

Mattia Falaschi

Università degli studi di Milano, Italy

G. Francesco Ficetola

Università degli studi di Milano, Italy

Daniel Jablonski

Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

Christophe Dufresnes

Museum national d'Histoire naturelle, CNRS, France

Abstract

Amphibians are declining worldwide, but some species stand out for their ability to invade large areas after being introduced. While some invasions are well documented, others are more cryptic and often underestimated despite local warnings. This is the case of the marsh frog, *Pelophylax ridibundus* for which an integrative overview of the invasion patterns, ecology and risks to native amphibians is lacking. To fill this gap, we reviewed published invasion cases in Europe and conducted an interdisciplinary study of the phylogeography, spatial, trophic and thermal ecology of the marsh frog (*Pelophylax ridibundus sensu lato*). We found that introductions have occurred in 19 European countries, involving many lineages of the species from three continents, which fits well with the history of importation of live frogs into Europe, mainly for consumption of their legs, but also for research, education and ornamentation of ponds. These introductions resulted in some country-wide invasions, which led to large spatial niche overlaps with native amphibians. The establishment of the invaders was facilitated by their opportunism, characterized by their tolerance to a wide range of temperatures, their presence in various pond environments, and their ability to prey on a large variety of both aquatic and terrestrial organisms, including other amphibians such as newts and tree frogs. Taken together, these results place the marsh frog as one of the most complex and opportunistic invasive amphibian species in the world. They call for more research and genome-wide molecular analyses to assess patterns of genetic diversity, structure and gene flow between the lineages involved across the whole invaded and native areas. They urge the need for a complete commercial ban on the import of live water frogs to prevent further introductions but also limit the risk of multiplying lineage combinations, a Pandora's box that could boost the invasiveness of the species.

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