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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

Table of contents

List of participants	4
Plenary talks.....	8
Oral presentations	13
Herp-omics symposium	153
Evolution of phenotypes symposium.....	189
Amphibian larvae symposium	212
Infectious diseases symposium	226
Poster presentations	260

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Plenary talks



BIOGEOGRAPHY

A Biogeographic Overview of Fire-Bellied Toad Diversity

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Abstract

The genetic and phenotypic diversity of species is strongly shaped by their biogeographic history, through processes such as divergence, hybridization, demographic dynamics, local adaptation, and phenotypic plasticity, all interacting with environmental fluctuations. In this presentation, I explore the biogeographic factors underlying patterns of diversity in fire-bellied toads of the *Bombina* subgenus—a well-studied group currently comprising three species: two in Europe (*B. bombina* and *B. variegata*) and one in Asia (*B. orientalis*). To this end, we combined phylogeographic approaches (mitochondrial barcoding and genomic analyses) with morphological, bioacoustic, bioclimatic, and coloration data across several thousand specimens. Molecular data reveal high intraspecific genetic diversity, signatures of both ancient and recent hybridization, and post-glacial expansions, highlighting the need for taxonomic revisions. Phenotypic diversity shows strong variation along geographic and climatic gradients – especially latitudinal and altitudinal – for traits such as body size and ventral coloration. In contrast, genomic divergence remains the strongest predictor of multivariate traits like overall morphology. These findings underscore the value of integrating species diversity within a phylogeographic framework to better understand their evolution and the origins of phenotypic variation across spatial and temporal scales.

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