

SPRING 2019

# HOGNOSE SNAKE PROJECT UPDATE



Huron Stewardship Council & Laurentian University



## Project summary

We had a fantastic start to this project, and are very excited to be back again for another season! This year is particularly exciting because Allie Gallon, a Masters student from Laurentian University, will be taking the reins. Marcus and Cristen (technicians from 2018) will also be back to help with field work. Similar to last year, we will be surveying for Eastern Hog-nosed snakes and their habitat along the beach and Maitland River, within the inlet marina, near the airport, and within the surrounding area.



This population of rare, non-venomous snakes was discovered in 2011. Provincially and federally, they are listed as a "threatened" species.

## We are learning more about:

- Population size
- Habitat use
- Movement and home range
- Conservation needs
- Impacts of invasive species (Phragmites)

## Meet the researcher



Allie Gallon

As a girl born, raised, and worked on the prairies all her life, studying and working in Ontario is a brand-new experience for me! However, to be spending my next few summers in an agriculturally-driven community certainly won't be new, in fact, it will feel just like home!! I landed my first job working with snakes back in 2013, and have been in awe of them ever since. A lot of the fear and misunderstanding of snakes is what has driven me to study them, so I can pass on my knowledge and help dispel the fear! I am so excited to meet and start working with many of you to know more about these slithering snakes!

PLEASE REPORT HOG-NOSED SNAKE SIGHTINGS IMMEDIATELY: 226-868-3160





## When we find a snake...

We record its size, weight, habitat, and location, insert a micro-chip, and take a blood sample. These measurements allow us to monitor the population. A licensed veterinarian also implants a transmitter into some adult snakes so we can follow them with a radio receiver and antenna (this is called radio-telemetry).

## Highlights from 2018

- 15 new snakes were found
- 8 different snakes were tracked 3 x per week
- We found 2 nesting sites and 3 hibernation sites
- Invasive Phragmites was controlled in snake habitat
- We learned that males and females have different home ranges and habitat needs
- We learned more about seasonal habitat use: Snakes were often found along the beach in May and June, then moved along the bluff and Maitland River in July and August

## Contact us

Snakes will start emerging from hibernation very soon! If you see a Hog-nosed snake, please take a photo and call us immediately at 226-868-3160. We are also looking for volunteers to help monitor nest sites this summer. Please let us know if you would like more information or have any questions - we would love to hear from you!

## Identification Tips:

1. Uprturned snout (like a hog): This is the most reliable feature
2. Thick body
3. Defensive behaviour (may act like a cobra or play dead); despite this display they are non-venomous and completely harmless to humans and pets
4. Colour is variable! Adults tend to be a solid black, grey, or olive colour, while juveniles have a blotched pattern.

Hog-nosed snakes have great camouflage and are experts at hiding in plain sight!



All photos by J. Mullen

*Thank you*

We would like to acknowledge everyone who has reported sightings, allowed us property access, and helped with the project. Your support is invaluable!  
- Cristen, Marcus & Allie



**PLEASE REPORT HOG-NOSED SNAKE SIGHTINGS IMMEDIATELY: 226-868-3160**

