



**Department of War
Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
2025 Year in Review**

Introduction

For the 16th consecutive year, the Department of War (DoW), through its Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) network, has remained committed to supporting the mission and objectives of its network members. The vital work conducted to manage and conserve amphibians and reptiles on military lands is essential for biodiversity and ecosystem health, but most importantly supporting healthy landscapes for military training and testing. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the DoW Legacy Resource Management Program (DoW Legacy Program) for their continued financial support, which has facilitated numerous projects and deliverables.

This report summarizes our significant accomplishments in 2025 and our ongoing commitment to conserving amphibians and reptiles on military lands worldwide, ensuring mission readiness while protecting vital ecosystems. ***Thank you for your continued support and collaboration in these important efforts.***

Please note our name change from Department of Defense PARC to Department of War PARC.

Cover Pictures

Gray Treefrog (top left) -Paul Block

Rob Lovich with Massasauga (top center) - Matt Kleitch

Yellow Ratsnake (top right) - Chris Petersen

Texas Horned Lizard (middle left) - Paul Block

American Bullfrog (middle right) - Paul Block

Biologist with turtle trap (bottom left) - Tangled Bank Conservation

DoW PARC Members (bottom center) - DoW PARC

Central Ratsnake (bottom right) - Chris Petersen



DoW PARC Mission Statement

In support of military readiness, DoW PARC strives to sustain amphibian and reptile populations and habitats through proactive environmental stewardship, conservation, outreach, and partnerships.

Farewell to Rob Lovich

In 2025, DoW PARC bid farewell to Dr. Rob Lovich (a.k.a Tank Top Rob), DoW PARC National Technical Representative and co-founder of our network, who retired from the Navy. Rob's innovative ideas, extensive expertise in herpetofauna, and larger-than-life personality were instrumental in the establishment of DoW PARC in 2009. His contributions profoundly shaped our network's successes over the last 16 years. Rob's legacy is embedded in our ongoing efforts, and his impact will resonate in our future achievements.

Photo by Chris Petersen



Mission-sensitive Species Priority List

In December 2025, DoW PARC released an updated version of the *Department of War Herpetofaunal Mission-sensitive Species Priority List* report. Developed in partnership with Military Services, this report serves as a tool for senior DoW leadership and natural resource managers to prioritize proactive conservation actions to help prioritize proactive species and habitat conservation and management actions to help reverse decreasing population trends and/or prepare installations for potential listings. Key changes in the 2025 update included removing the Northern Red-bellied Cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) and Florida Pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*) from the priority species list and adding the Southern Hog-nosed Snake.

Updated DoW Mission-sensitive Species List for Amphibians and Reptiles

| Common Name | Species Name | Number of DoW Installations Confirmed Present |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Alligator Snapping Turtle | <i>Macrochelys temminckii</i> | 17 |
| Blanding's Turtle | <i>Emydoidea blandingii</i> | 10 |
| Eastern Diamond-backed Rattlesnake | <i>Crotalus adamanteus</i> | 29 |
| Gopher Frog | <i>Lithobates capito</i> | 15 |
| Gopher Tortoise (eastern population) | <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> | 32 |
| Southern Hog-nosed Snake | <i>Heterodon simus</i> | 12 |
| Spotted Turtle | <i>Clemmys guttata</i> | 42 |
| Western Pond Turtles | <i>Actinemys marmorata/pallida</i> | 12 |
| Western Spadefoot | <i>Spea hammondi</i> | 11 |
| Wood Turtle | <i>Glyptemys insculpta</i> | 14 |

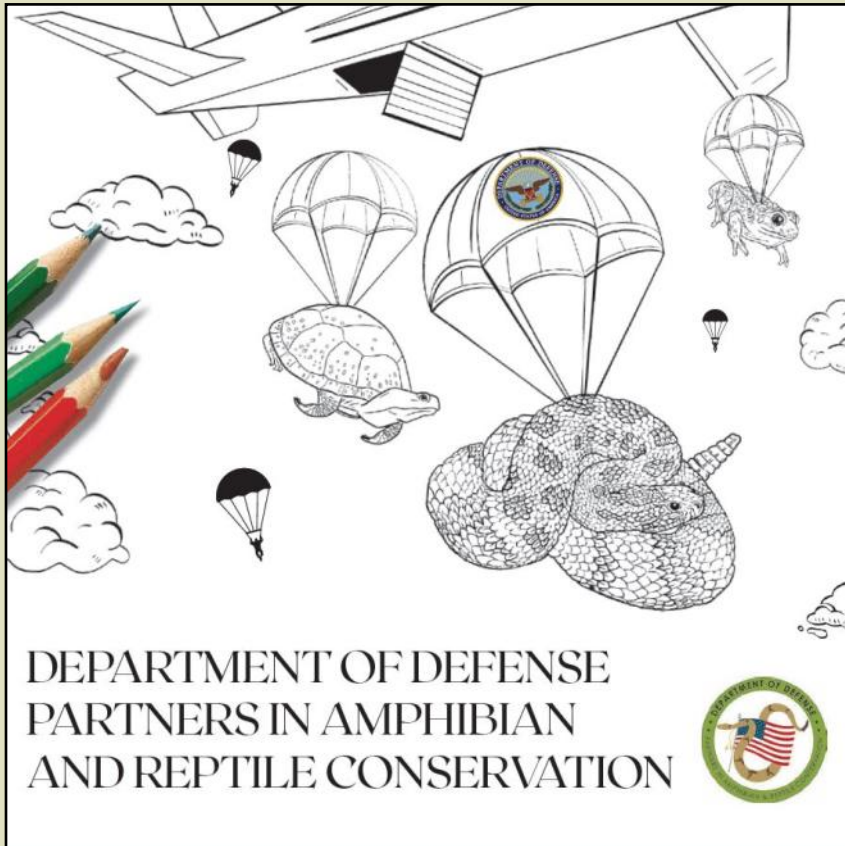
Southern Hog-nosed Snake

In 2025, DoW PARC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Southern Hog-nosed Snake, completing BMPs for all amphibian and reptile mission-sensitive species. These guidelines assist DoW resource managers in planning and implementing effective conservation actions. Previously developed BMPs for the Spotted Turtle, Gopher Tortoise, Wood Turtle, Western Pond Turtle, Red-bellied Cooter, Blanding's Turtle, Gopher Frog, Western Spadefoot, Alligator Snapping Turtle, Eastern Diamond-backed Rattlesnake, and Florida Pinesnake can be downloaded from the [DENIX DoW PARC website](#).



Southern Hog-nosed Snakes-Photos by Jeff Hall (top) and J.D. Willson (bottom)

DoW PARC Coloring Book

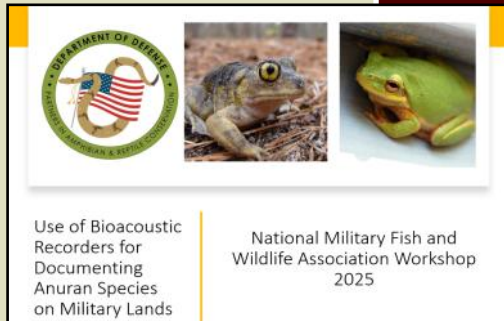


Completed in May 2023, DoW PARC's coloring book quickly became one of our most popular products to date. The coloring book highlights a variety of common and at-risk amphibian and reptile species confirmed present on DoW lands, and includes illustrations for coloring, range maps, photographs, and information about each species ecology and life history. One thousand copies of the coloring book were printed and distributed in 2025 to several hundred military personnel at Earth Day, Amphibian Week, and other outreach events. More hard copies will be printed in 2026.

NMFWA 2025 Contributions

Although our leadership was unable to attend the 2025 NMFWA workshop in Louisville, Kentucky, we contributed to the event by developing two recorded presentations. The first, titled “*Use of Bioacoustic Recorders for Documenting Anuran Species on Military Lands*,” explored the benefits, methodologies, and analysis of data collected using bioacoustic loggers. The second presentation, “*DoD PARC Network Update*,” provided an overview of ongoing and upcoming projects, updates to the amphibian and reptile priority species list, and insights into how our network supports military readiness and conservation.

DoW PARC looks forward to conducting a technical workshop at the 2026 NMFWA workshop.



Department of War Photo Share Site

Launched in August 2011 and migrated to SmugMug in August 2023, the DoW Natural Resources Photo Share Site serves as a repository for photos of plants, animals, and habitats on military lands. With approximately 12,700 photos available for sharing, the site saw thousands of views in 2025, with several hundred new photos added. The photos are free to use and have no copyright restrictions. Access is private but easily obtainable via invitation. Interested parties can contact Chris Petersen (christopher.e.petersen4.civ@us.navy.mil) for access.

Blanding's Turtle—Chris Petersen



Penton's Toad—Brent White



Sierran Treefrog—Lucas Geurs



Burrowing Toad—John Himes



Couche's Spadefoot—Paul Block



Eastern Diamond-backed Rattlesnake—Chris Petersen



Bioacoustic Recorders

In 2025, DoW PARC loaned bioacoustic loggers to ten military installations to document frog and toad species presence. These installations (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; Naval Support Facility Dahlgren; Marine Corps Reserve Center Syracuse; Marine Corps Reserve Center Tampa; Naval Fuel Terminal Craney Island; Naval Station Norfolk; Fort Knox; Fort McCoy; Yakima Training Center; Camp Blanding) recorded over 2,500 hours of data from spring to late summer. DoW PARC analyzed these data at no cost and provided the results to the participating installations for integration into their Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs). Interested installations can reserve bioacoustic loggers for 2026 by contacting Chris Petersen (Christopher.e.petersen4.civ@us.navy.mil).



Wildlife Acoustics SM4 Acoustic Logger—photo by Chris Petersen

Western Pond Turtle Surveys

To support ongoing conservation efforts for the Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys pallida/marmorata*), a DoW mission-sensitive priority species, standardized surveys were conducted across 13 military installations in California during 2023-2024. In 2025, the University of Illinois completed a comprehensive demographic and life-history analysis, providing a detailed assessment of population status across these DoW sites. The analysis documented strong regional differentiation, with population sizes ranging from robust to critically low, consistently adult-biased and often male-biased demographic structures, contrasting growth trajectories between Northwestern and Southwestern populations, and indications of low recruitment across much of the range. This updated understanding of Western Pond Turtle status on military installations can directly inform management actions to address demographic constraints, and contribute to coordinated, range-wide conservation planning.



Photos provided by the University of Illinois

California Conservation Genomics Project



In 2025, DoW PARC and the California Academy of Sciences, along with various partners, collected herpetofauna specimens from military bases across California. Specimens will be accessioned in perpetuity for science to fill gaps in collections from military lands, and a subset of species will have their genomes sequenced to compare with a statewide effort that does not presently include sampling from military lands. The genetic results will provide a modern investigation of the overall biodiversity of amphibians and reptiles for the entire state of California.



California Academy of Sciences survey team at Travis Air Force Base (top). Voucher specimens collected on DoW lands by the California Academy of Sciences (bottom). Photos provided by the California Academy of Sciences

Bio-inventory Strike Team

In 2025, DoW PARC, DoW Partners in Flight, and the DoW Small Mammal Initiative finalized a report for surveys conducted during 2024 for reptile, amphibian, bird and bat species at Air Force installations Hurlburt Field, located in the panhandle of Florida, and Point Arena, located in northern California. The primary objective of the surveys was to search for DoW mission-sensitive species that have potential occurrence on the two military sites but have not been confirmed present. These data will improve the understanding of the distribution of at-risk species on military lands across the range of each species, and if confirmed present, assist military natural resource managers to plan, prioritize, and implement conservation and management actions that provide a benefit to these species. Download the report [here](#).



Photo by Chris Petersen

Using Genomic Resources to Proactively Monitor Imperiled Species on DoW Lands

In alignment with DoW's goal to prevent the decline of at-risk species, DoW PARC awarded a cooperative agreement to Tangled Bank Conservation in 2023. This project investigates the genomics of nine mission-sensitive species across approximately 30 military installations. The goal of this project is to evaluate the current genomic health of populations on and adjacent to DoW sites by estimating recent population trajectories, levels of genetic diversity among populations, effective population sizes, and migration levels among populations. Year 1 focused on genetic sampling and health evaluation of three species: Alligator Snapping Turtle, Northern Red-bellied Cooter, and Gopher Frog. In Year 2, genetic samples were collected from 28 installations for six additional species: Blanding's Turtle; Eastern Diamond-backed Rattlesnake; Florida Pinesnake; Gopher Tortoise; Spotted Turtle; and Wood Turtle. The Year 1 and 2 reports will be available in 2026.



Photos provided by Tangled Bank Conservation



Herpetofauna Database

For over a decade, DoW PARC has collaborated with military installations, the DoW Legacy Program, and the Office of the Secretary of War to enhance data collection and develop a comprehensive inventory of amphibians and reptiles across nearly 500 military properties. This herpetofaunal inventory serves as a cornerstone for biodiversity management on military lands, supporting conservation efforts, mitigating regulatory burdens, safeguarding mission readiness, and providing insights into ecosystem health. In 2025, we partnered with the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute to migrate the inventory data online and develop user-friendly tools for information retrieval and summary. We anticipate completing this initiative in 2026, with potential expansions to the online inventory database.

Species Profile Videos

To educate military residents and natural resource managers about amphibian and reptile species, DoW PARC has produced a series of species profile videos. Each video, ranging from three to seven minutes, features narration, photographs, and video footage of specific species found on military sites. Our latest episode highlights the Mediterranean Chameleon. All 19 videos are available on the [DoW PARC YouTube Channel](#) and [mil-Tube](#), collectively amassing over 47,000 views.



Mediterranean Chameleon—
Chris Petersen

Welcome to the
Species Profile Video
Series



Episode 19



Paul Block

Mediterranean Chameleon
(*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*)

Looking Ahead

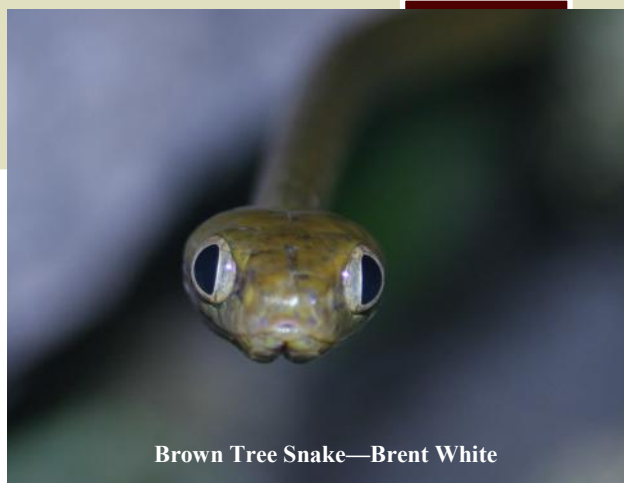
Mission-sensitive Species Genomic Study – DoW PARC and Tangled Bank Conservation will continue conducting the genetic material analysis in 2026, with a summary report for 2025 samples forthcoming.

Document Updates – In 2026, DoW PARC will update key documents, including our strategic plan and network charter, to ensure alignment with DoW directives.

Acoustic Loggers – With additional funding from the DoW Legacy Program, DoW PARC plans to expand our inventory of acoustic loggers to approximately 40 units for loan to military sites.

eDNA Surveys for Western Pond Turtles – DoW PARC has applied for DoW Legacy funding to conduct eDNA surveys for Western Pond Turtles on military sites in Oregon and Washington, where their distribution is not well understood. To date, funds have not been received for this project.

Genomic Data Collection Training – DoW PARC is pursuing funding for a cooperator to develop a standard operating procedure for natural resource managers outlining how to collect genome-scale tissue samples in the field, and conduct a training session on this procedure during a National Military Fish and Wildlife workshop or a DoW Legacy Program Webinar Series.



Brown Tree Snake—Brent White

DoW PARC Leadership & Short Biographies

Jennifer Oelke-Farley—DoW PARC Network Manager

Department of War Natural Resources Lead

Deputy Assistant Secretary of War (Environmental Management & Restoration)

Office of the Assistant Secretary of War (Energy, Installations, and Environment)

Michael Langston—DoW PARC Legacy Program Representative

DoW Legacy Resource Management Program Director

Military Service DoW PARC Representatives

Eric Beckley—U.S. Army

Jason Applegate—Army National Guard

Vacant—U.S. Navy

Jacque Rice—U.S. Marine Corps

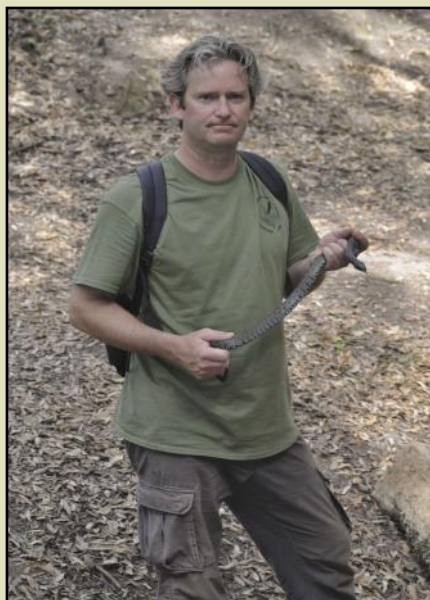
Paul Jurena—U.S. Air Force

Photos provided by DoW PARC unless otherwise noted



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Herpetofauna Expertise: radio-telemetry, pitviper ecology, development of scopes of work/government cost estimates for herpetofauna surveys, inventory and monitoring, educational/outreach materials, acoustic loggers.

Photo by Tom Olexa



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Photo by Paul Block



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Photo by Chris Petersen



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Name: Rogan Maxwell

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Herpetofauna Expertise: Brown treesnake control methods, reproductive biology of squamates, thermobiology of squamates, occupancy modelling, radio telemetry