

Otters, Beavers, Turtles, & Frogs!

Hosted by NH LAKES

Wednesday, November 4, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Follow-up Q&A After the Webinar:

Question: “How do I keep otters from using my boathouse as their toilet?”

Answer (Patrick Tate, NH Fish & Game): Denying otters access to the boat house is the only fool proof way to keep otters from creating an otter toilet.

Question: “Will beavers attack humans, and if so, why?”

Answer (Patrick Tate, NH Fish & Game): On rare occasion beavers have attacked humans. Some cases have been beavers effected by rabies while others appear to have been possibly territorial defense.

Question: “We’ve always attributed open mussel shells in the water and shore to otters – is this true?”

Answer (Patrick Tate, NH Fish & Game): The mussel shells you are seeing are most likely deposited by muskrats. Muskrat consumption of freshwater mussels is very common.

Question: USDA has a proposal of inserting a pipe into the wall of the beaver dam to control the height of the water and the surface area—how successful is this and how often has it been used?”

Answer (Patrick Tate, NH Fish & Game): Beaver pipes do work when properly installed, maintained, and realistic expectations are considered. Proper maintenance of the beaver pipe system is the key to installation success.

Question: “Do you know how to tell the age of a turtle?”

Answer (Josh Megyesy, NH Fish & Game): Yes, wood, spotted, Blanding's, and eastern box turtles can be aged by counting the lines (called annuli) on their individual plastron scutes (the plates on their bottom shell). This is just like counting the growth rings on a cut tree. It's always just an estimate, but gets close enough. Other turtles such as painted, snapping, or mucks turtles don't have plastron annuli so estimates are done by weight and shell length.

Question: “What is the mortality rate of amphibians in vernal pools drying up before they mature?”

Answer (Josh Megyesy, NH Fish & Game): Mortality can be as high as 100%, but luckily that is rare in NH. Even when vernal pools do dry up early, amphibian larvae have been shown to speed up their metamorphosis under stress (e.g., drought or increased pollution).

Question: “Can you comment on fungal diseases affecting amphibians in NH?”

Answer (Josh Megyesy, NH Fish & Game): Both *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd) and *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) have the potential to spread among amphibians in NH. Bd has been detected here, but no mass mortalities have been reported. More research and monitoring needs to be done on amphibians in NH, but for now we are just making basic recommendations such as not transporting amphibians between ponds or wetlands. Climate change could potentially exacerbate the spread or morbidity as well.