



Robert Zappalorti



Ronald Brooks

Pritchard Turtle Conservation Award

Recognizing lifetime achievements, 2022: Robert Zappalorti & Ronald Brooks

by Anders G.J. Rhodin and Rick Hudson

After the passing of Peter Pritchard in 2020, the Behler Award Committee honored his legacy by renaming our previous Turtle Conservation Appreciation Awards to the Pritchard Turtle Conservation Lifetime Achievement Awards. These awards are presented to notable individuals in special recognition of their lifetime achievements and long-term impact on turtle conservation or biology.

This year, the 3rd annual Pritchard Awards honor the lifetime achievements of Bob Zappalorti of the United States and Ron Brooks of Canada. We recognize and honor them for their important contributions to turtle conservation, ecology, and natural history.

Robert T. Zappalorti started his career in 1964 as a reptile keeper at the Staten Island Zoo in New York. There, he initiated intensive studies on Bog Turtles in New Jersey, which have continued for almost 50 years. In 1977, he founded Herpetological Associates, Inc., an environmental consulting company that provides reptile and amphibian surveys, adverse impact analyses of development projects, and produces mitigation and conservation plans. His most important lifetime contributions have been his long-term, in-depth studies on Bog Turtles. This research uncovered many se-

cretive behaviors of these turtles including mating and nesting habits, ecology, as well as defining their home range, diet and foraging behaviors, activity periods, and hibernation. We honor him for these studies that have helped focus conservation efforts on this Critically Endangered species.

Ronald J. Brooks is Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph in Canada. He retired in 2006 after 36 years of teaching integrative biology. His work on turtles has focused on the ecology, life history, and conservation of Canada's populations of Snapping Turtles, Midland Painted Turtles, Wood Turtles, Blanding's Turtles, Eastern Musk Turtles, Spiny Softshells, and Spotted Turtles. Most of these studies, often in collaboration with colleagues, were at the Algonquin Wildlife Research Station in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario, where he was Director from 1983 through 2001. He is especially proud of his work on the conservation of Canada's turtles, and specifically that Snapping Turtles are no longer considered "vermin" or "game species." Instead, they are regarded as a species at risk, with widespread popular public support for their protection. We honor him for his important work on turtle ecology and conservation in Canada, and also for mentoring and educating many students. 🐢