

## **Ecology and Conservation of the Eastern Spotted Skunk: Preface and General Acknowledgments**

Fewer than 10 years ago, *Spilogale putorius* (L.) (Eastern Spotted Skunk) was an understudied species. While managers and researchers had reported the small carnivore to be in decline, particularly in the Midwest, knowledge of its distribution and ecology was limited due to the species' secretive nature and the lack of adequate funding opportunities for research and conservation. In many states, the Eastern Spotted Skunk was considered a furbearer (albeit one infrequently harvested), rather than a species of conservation priority.

Today, the Eastern Spotted Skunk is the focus of numerous research and monitoring projects across its range. This special issue reflects the recent shift in research priority driven by the collaborative efforts of university and government scientists. The issue comprises 21 manuscripts covering various topics, including distribution, demography, disease, behavior, and survey methodology. We hope this publication furthers the understanding and conservation of this unique mammal and informs future research activities.

This special issue was made possible through the generous contributions of many individuals. First, we thank the numerous members of the Eastern Spotted Skunk Cooperative Study Group (ESSCSG) for their collective involvement. Their enthusiasm and dedication made this special issue possible, and their efforts have contributed immensely towards improving our knowledge and management of this secretive carnivore. We are indebted to the first chair of the ESSCSG, David Jachowski, whose leadership and vision were instrumental in facilitating the collaborative research efforts that are evident in several of the issue's papers. Devyn Adams, Keith Goldfarb, Karl E. Miller, and Chase Uy of the Eagle Hill Institute provided exceptional guidance and assistance throughout the entire publication process. The following manuscript editors oversaw the review process for the papers in this issue: Robert Carter, Steven Castleberry, Luke Dodd, Andrew Edelman, Michelle Gilley, Daniel Green, Cathryn Greenberg, Erin Hewett Ragheb, David Jachowski, Karl E. Miller, Roger Perry, Karen Powers, Katherine Sayler, and David Steen. Last, we owe our gratitude to the many anonymous reviewers that assisted in improving the issue's manuscripts.

– Special Issue Editors:

Andrew J. Edelman  
Steven B. Castleberry  
Luke E. Dodd