

# **TURTLE SURVIVAL ALLIANCE SYMPOSIUM CODE OF CONDUCT**

**07/19/2022**

**[To be updated prior to each annual symposium]**

## **BACKGROUND**

Established in 2002, the Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles (the Symposium) is an international forum co-hosted by the Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation (TSA) and the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) to present, consider, and debate scientific research and viewpoints that are relevant to the field of turtle and tortoise conservation. Participation is open to anyone interested in the topics at hand and who pays the fee charged for attendance when the Symposium occurs in person, or who can access the YouTube Live link when the Symposium is presented online. Members of TSA may receive a discount on the fee charged to attend an in-person Symposium.

Anyone interested in submitting an abstract to present at the Symposium must do so pursuant to the guidelines, including deadlines that are prescribed and published each year. Speaker and poster presentation selection is solely at the discretion of the Symposium organizing group established annually by TSA and the TFTSG. Membership in TSA or the TFTSG is not necessary in order to present at the Symposium.

Participants may register for field trips organized by TSA in connection with the Symposium. TSA may also hold dinners and hospitality, social, or other events in conjunction with the Symposium. Participants may be required to pay additional fees to attend these field trips or events. Any such field trip or event will be considered to be part of the Symposium, regardless of whether it occurs before, during or after the Symposium, and whether or not it occurs at the venue of the Symposium.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The TSA and the TFTSG are committed to providing a safe, productive, and welcoming environment for all volunteers and Symposium participants at both in-person meetings and on virtual platforms. Individuals attending the Symposium and events have a right to an environment free from discrimination, bullying, inappropriate behavior, and harassment. These behaviors will not be tolerated at Symposium activities including social events sponsored by other organizations and those held at public or private facilities (including banquets). Each participant, including any speaker, poster presenter, exhibitor or volunteer, each guest of a participant, each service provider and any TSA employee, officer, Board member, or intern, will receive, and must agree to abide by, the terms of this Symposium Code of Conduct (Code) when registering for the Symposium. Participants may also be required to abide by any other policies or rules in furtherance of the Code announced at the Symposium.

TSA, the TFTSG, and the hosting entity reserve the right to change or alter the Symposium program or to remove a speaker or poster presenter at any time. Anyone who has violated this Code in the past or who is violating this Code may be denied, or removed immediately from, a speaking or presentation opportunity and may be subject to other sanctions set out in this Code. If it is known to TSA that a person is alleged to have committed, or has committed, a violation of a similar code at a similar scientific or conservation meeting or conference, including but not limited to a meeting or conference of Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, or a meeting of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, TSA may remove that person from consideration as a speaker or poster presenter and may refuse to accept that person's registration to attend the Symposium.

This Code defines expected and unacceptable behavior at the Symposium and Symposium associated events, both in-person and virtual, and the procedures for reporting and addressing unacceptable behavior (i.e., violations of the Code), including potential outcomes and consequences of unacceptable conduct. A violation of this Code may also constitute a violation of TSA's Code of Ethics for TSA's employees, officers, Board members, and others working directly with or for TSA.

### **EXPECTED CONDUCT:**

Examples of expected and acceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct themselves at the Symposium, events, and activities as they would at their place of work including, but not limited to, all Symposium-sponsored or affiliated presentations, workshops, socials, banquets, fundraising activities, and field trips.
- Treat everyone with respect and consideration, and value a diversity of views and opinions.
- Communicate thoughtfully with others and be considerate of the multitude of views and opinions that are different than your own, in all situations including but not limited to: while presenting, in one-on-one conversations, at exhibitor tables, and within group discussion.
- Assume good intentions of all participants.
- Critique ideas rather than individuals and avoid personal attacks directed towards others.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and sensitive to the experience of fellow participants.
- Welcome new participants and value the diversity they bring to the Symposium.
- Ask before initiating physical contact.
- Engage in friendly, consensual interactions among individuals and avoid potentially non-consensual physical contact with others.
- At Symposium events where alcoholic beverages are served, participants are expected to drink responsibly while also upholding the standards

described in this Code.

- Alert members of the TSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (see contact list below) if you notice a situation that violates this Code or someone in distress.
- Comply with all applicable laws, including wildlife protection laws.
- Respect the rules, policies, and property of the Symposium venue, hotels, or contracted facility.
- Look out for the safety and comfort of your friends and colleagues.

## **UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT**

Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so participants in the Symposium and events must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of seniority, as those in more junior or subordinate positions may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior because of a real or perceived imbalance of power.

Consumption of alcohol or use of other potentially behavior-altering substances is not an excuse for engaging in Prohibited Conduct. The Symposium co-hosts and venue staff have the right to deny service to participants and may require a participant to leave an event. The TSA and TFTSG expect that responsible drinking extends beyond Symposium events.

Reporting an incident in bad faith is also considered a violation of this Code.

Participation in, facilitation of, or promotion of harassment, intimidation, or discriminatory behaviors at the Symposium in person, or on virtual platforms, or social media associated with the Symposium, or other associated activities organized by TSA will not be tolerated. The TSA reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary and appropriate, including the immediate removal or blocking of individuals from virtual or social media platforms and the deletion of comments from the same, if comments or behavior are deemed to be unacceptable. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical, emotional, verbal abuse or threats against any attendee, speaker, volunteer, exhibitor, TSA employee, officer or Board member, service provider or other Symposium or event guest.
- Disruption of talks at the Symposium or other associated events/activities organized by TSA.
- For exhibitors and Individuals: placement of materials on exhibitors' tables other than your own without permission.
- Photographing/copying/sharing of presentation slides if the presenter includes a statement or image indicating confidentiality or copyright protection.
- Publicly sharing the location or contact information of any other participant beyond information shared in the Symposium materials.

- Public sharing of sensitive locality data that might create risk to those sites from illegal harvesting.

## **HARASSMENT**

The TSA has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, harassment, or objectification, including sexual harassment, or any form of bullying.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct of a sexual nature that makes a person feel uncomfortable. Harassment and sexual harassment may also violate applicable US laws. Examples of behavior constituting sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome physical contact or inappropriate touching.
- Physical violence, including sexual assault.
- The use of threats or rewards to solicit sexual favors.

### **Verbal Conduct**

- Comments, jokes or insults based on appearance, age, private life, etc.
- Sexual comments, stories, or jokes.
- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Repeated and unwanted invitations for dates or physical intimacy.
- Condescending or sexist remarks.
- Sending sexually explicit messages or images electronically or by phone.

### **Non-verbal Conduct**

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material or images.
- Sexually suggestive gestures.
- Whistling or “cat calling”.

## **RESPONSIBLE DRINKING**

At some Symposium events, alcoholic beverages are served or available. TSA expects participants to drink responsibly while also upholding the standards described in this Code. TSA and Symposium host staff have the right to deny service to participants and may require a participant to leave an event. It is expected that responsible drinking will extend beyond TSA events.

## **REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT**

The Symposium co-hosts have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment. Anyone reporting a violation or suspected violation of the Symposium Code of Conduct must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations made with a malicious intent or knowingly false will be viewed as

a Code violation.

If you believe that you or anyone else is, or is about to be, a victim of conduct which is criminal in nature, please contact local law enforcement by calling 911 (in the US) and immediately notify facility security. When time permits, please share your experience with any member of TSA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (the EDI Committee) (see below) or any TSA officer or Board member, host organization staff, or on-site security personnel.

If you believe that you or anyone else is the subject of conduct of any sort that may violate this Code, whether or not it is conduct that may result, or did result, in notification of law enforcement or facility security, please contact any of the members of TSA's EDI Committee named in the table below:

Heather Barrett TSA Board Member Cell: +1-352-231-2772 email: <a href="mailto:hbarrett@bfreebz.org">hbarrett@bfreebz.org</a>	Becca Cozad Symposium Planning Committee Cell: +1-281-330-5551 email: <a href="mailto:racozaad@gmail.com">racozaad@gmail.com</a>
Susie Ellis TSA Board Member, Chair of EDI Cell: +1-540-660-4152 email: <a href="mailto:susieellis53@gmail.com">susieellis53@gmail.com</a>	David Hedrick TSA Digital Content and Community Coordinator Cell: +1-423-645-3796 email: <a href="mailto:dhedrick@turtlesurvival.org">dhedrick@turtlesurvival.org</a>
Cristina Jones TSA Board Member Symposium Planning Committee Cell: +1-480-254-7065 email: <a href="mailto:cristina@turtlesurvival.org">cristina@turtlesurvival.org</a>	Patricia Koval Chair of TSA Board Cell: +1-416- 456-4038 email: <a href="mailto:pkoval@rogers.com">pkoval@rogers.com</a>
Craig Stanford Chair of TFTSG Cell: +1-626 497 0699 email: <a href="mailto:stanford@usc.edu">stanford@usc.edu</a>	

If you report a violation or suspected violation of this Code, you must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegation made with a malicious intent or which is knowingly false will be viewed as a Code violation.

Violations of this Symposium Code of Conduct should be reported verbally by a complainant to one of the above-named members of the TSA EDI Committee, preferably immediately after the violation has occurred. The EDI Committee may later request a written report. The report should include all the pertinent documentation needed for the EDI Committee to investigate the violation (including but not limited to date, time, misconduct observed, name of the person accused, and names of others who may have witnessed the misconduct, and any visual or audio evidence of the

violation. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation or to the extent allowed by law. All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to promptly by at least two TSA EDI Committee members. Actions to be taken will be discussed beforehand with the victim of the violation, wherever possible.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the member of the TSA EDI Committee who received the complaint will communicate the allegation and provide all supporting materials to the full TSA EDI Committee. Complaints will be handled with respect for the privacy of the victim and the alleged violator and will be confidential to the extent practical, given the circumstances.

If a complainant believes that the violation is of a criminal nature, TSA will assist the victim, if requested, in notifying legal authorities. If the victim does not believe that the complaint is of a criminal nature, the TSA EDI Committee member receiving the complaint will listen to the victim and discuss next steps.

TSA will employ a “Two Strikes” policy for most Code violations depending on the severity of the offense. Individuals will receive a warning as described below for a first violation. Following the second violation, more severe consequences may be levied. **An exception to this Two Strikes policy will be made when an egregious violation occurs (including, but not limited to, one that requires intervention by venue security or law enforcement).** In such instances the TSA EDI Committee may proceed directly to Removal, Rescission, or Barring Participation.

## **Two Strike Policy:**

### **Strike 1: Warning**

- Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately; this strike will be considered a first “strike” warning.
- A person who has engaged in unacceptable behavior may be warned of an alleged or actual Code violation at any time during the Symposium, or afterwards based on the timing of reporting and opportunity for an appropriate investigation.

### **Strike 2: Removal, Rescission, or Barring Participation**

Upon egregious violation, or following a second incident of unacceptable behavior which constitutes a violation (i.e. the second “strike”), authorized officers or employees of TSA or venue security may take any action which is, in their discretion, deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal of the violator from the Symposium without warning or refund of any amounts paid to attend the Symposium or associated field trips or events. TSA reserves the right to:

- Prohibit attendance by the violator at any future Symposium or any other

TSA-organized or hosted event, as well as at, or in, any TSA working group or other TSA-related activity.

- Deny consideration of the violator for any award, endorsement, leadership role, or project assignment associated with TSA.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

TSA works with venue staff to make sure that meeting participants are safe. **If you believe that you or anyone else is in immediate danger at any time, please contact local law enforcement by calling 911 (in the US) and immediately notify facility security.**

All participants should report any questionable activity to a member of the EDI Committee, TSA employee, or Board member or to venue security for immediate action. **If you see something, say something. As a participant:**

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Regardless of where you are, use the buddy system when walking to and from the Symposium venue and networking events, especially during early or late hours.
- Do not wear your Symposium badge on the street. Take it off as soon as you leave the venue.
- Do not carry a lot of cash.
- Do not leave personal property unattended anywhere, any time.