

Midwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (MWPARC) Student Travel Grant Report 2025

Awardee: Kevin Green
Professional association: Eastern
New Mexico University

**In one or two paragraphs,
describe the work you
participated in that was facilitated
by this award.**

In May 2025, I was awarded funding to help cover the travel costs for my involvement in a project that tracks the spread of the Common Wall Lizard (*Podarcis muralis*) along the Ohio River, building on work I participated in during 2024. This invasive species is native throughout southern Europe and western Turkey (Schulte et al. 2012), and was first introduced to Cincinnati, Ohio, in the early 1950s. In 2004, it made its way to Indiana, likely by rafting downstream on flotsam along the Ohio River (Walker and Deichsel 2005). The presence of *P. muralis* has drawn concern over the potential impacts on native lizards and prompted eradication efforts of this species (Deichsel and Walker 2010). These eradication efforts were deemed successful until 2023, when observations of *P. muralis* were made at three sites in southeastern Indiana, suggesting they have reestablished within the state. As a result, I continued to assist in field surveys for *P. muralis* along the Ohio River in Indiana and Kentucky with my research advisor, Dr. Drew Davis. From late August to early September 2025, we surveyed 20 sites and recorded abiotic conditions, survey effort (time), and the number of *P. muralis* observed and captured. We detected *P. muralis* at four sites across three counties in Indiana (Dearborn, Clark, and Ohio); none were detected at sites in Kentucky downstream of Cincinnati. Additionally, we failed to detect *P. muralis* at two sites in Indiana where it was detected in 2024, highlighting the ephemeral nature of some of these populations. These survey results have helped map the distribution, abundance, and persistence of *P. muralis* populations across southern Indiana and underscore the challenges of managing this invasive species downstream of a well-established source population in Cincinnati, Ohio.



How has this work aided you in achieving your career goals?

This MWPARC-funded work has given me experience conducting visual encounter surveys, with lizard capture methods, and data collection and management practices. The results of these surveys will be included in a publication that is actively being drafted in collaboration with my advisor and Indiana DNR herpetologists Nate Engbrecht and Jason Mirtl. Our data serves as important baseline information for future monitoring. This work has sharpened my skills in the field and will help with future research. I am grateful to MWPARC for their support and making this fieldwork possible.

Image description: Kevin hunting for the non-native Common Wall Lizard.