



THE MONITOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOOSIER HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A non-profit organization dedicated to the education of its membership and the conservation of all amphibians and reptiles

Volume 20 Number 4

April 2009

President's Message

Jim Horton

Indiana has a new State Herpetologist.

At the DNR Technical Advisory Committee in late 08, Katie Smith (DNR Fish and Wildlife Division) introduced Sarabeth Klueh as the state's new herpetologist, to replace Zack Walker, who had left the post earlier in the year. We wish Sarabeth well in her new position here in the Hoosier state!

Unfortunately folks, I have some bad news for the HHS. The Annual "Reptile Days" at the Indiana State Museum has been canceled due to our sliding economy. Everyone has to make cuts in these trying times and this is only one reflection that has impacted the HHS. This event had been going on for some 17 years and it was one of our largest exhibits. We hope that the recession turns around soon and maybe next year things will be more in tune.

I have yet even more bad news. Another annual event has also come to a halt. The Reptile Invasion has been cancelled due to a total faculty change at the Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. The *Reptile Invasion* has been a great fundraiser and educational event for almost 20 years. The last eighteen years has been tradition for HHS members to travel to Evansville in the second week in June.

However, they are still in the planning stages of the Reptile Roundup. This program will feature native herps and is June 20 (10am-2pm). The staff at WWNP would greatly appreciate HHS members (especially those in the Evansville area) that can help provide native herps for this event.

The HHS is definitely in need of fundraisers and exhibits. If you know of any ideas or have a place in mind for a live animal program, please contact any HHS Board member.

All the fun hasn't been spoiled. There are some great opportunities coming up to get out and enjoy the natural world. Herpetology Weekend is in Slade, Kentucky, May 1&2. This particular weekend is a great outing geared towards adults and kids alike. It features field trips, the Kentucky Reptile Zoo, and Guest speakers at night. This is a great time if you love herpetology and the outdoors!

Don't forget our own Hoosier Herpout coming up May 16. It is one of our annual events down in the Bloomington area. It features a cookout, fieldtrips, and camping if you so desire. The Herpout is a great time for members to enjoy photography, identifying herps and plants and all of nature's finest!

The HHS has donated \$100 to Indiana Turtle Care. This not-for-profit organization has been rescuing, rehabilitating, and housing turtles and tortoises for several years. We are proud to help ITC in any way possible.

Don't miss this our Guest Speaker for April, Mr. Mike Pingleton - Field Herpetologist extraordinaire! His presentation will be "Herping the Carolinas".

WELCOME NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS!

New member:

J.Marc French & Mitzi Smith

Renewals:

Anita Carter, sustaining

Garrett Kaz mierski

Brett Clark

Carl Schwartz, DVM

Paul Hofsommer

Thanks for you membership and continued interest in the HHS!



**Printing – Courtesy of
HardingPoorman Graphics**

Monthly Meeting: Wednesday April 15th, 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Mike Pingleton, U. of Illinois

Topic: "Herping the Carolinas"

Butler University, Gallahue Center (science building) Room#108

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is proud to announce that April's guest speaker is Mike Pingleton. Mike has been involved with field herpetology and herpetoculture for over 30 years. His field activities have taken him to many interesting places across the United States. These trips are documented in his on-line journals. Over the years Mike has raised and bred many species of snakes, lizards, tortoises and frogs. He is the author of two books on redfoot tortoises and serves as a trustee for the World Chelonian Trust. If you attended the 2006 Midwest Herpetological Symposium that we hosted in Indianapolis, you no doubt remember that Mike was sharing his many experiences Friday night with slides in our hospitality room. **See you there!**

A review of a presentation by Dr. Lannoo on Malformed Frogs

By Wendell Zetterberg

On March 3, Dr. Michael Lannoo, Professor, Anatomy and Cell Biology, Indiana University School of Medicine, spoke to a crowded Dean's Auditorium about "Malformed Frogs and the Collapse of Aquatic Ecosystems", also the title of his newest book (released in July 2008). Dr. Lannoo is an expert on amphibian declines and malformations and has been instrumental in the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC in the Midwest. His 1998 book, Status and Conservation of Midwestern Amphibians and his 2005 book Amphibian Declines: Conservation Status of United States Species has been key to conserving and understanding amphibians and their plight.

The three reasons for malformations are genetic, epigenetic and trauma, with epigenetic being the main cause. Epigenetic malformations are caused by an outside source causing the genes to change. (ie..parasites, pesticides). Much of Lannoo's work was a collaboration with parasitologist Dan Sutherland, and their findings show that many of the cases thought to be parasites, after a radiogram (x-ray) did not seem to be possible to have been caused by parasites. Many of the cases assumed to be trauma, after a radiogram, showed curved bones and other signs not possible to have been caused by predation. Bony Triangles (a phrase Lannoo coined) have been found in many frogs with malformations. Many of the malformations found did not exactly fit into any of the dubbed categories. "Distinguishments we make as humans are not always followed by the animals."

50% of the frogs in the US are malformed, while 10% of salamanders are shown to be malformed. He said he believes this is more related to more frogs being studied and that frogs are easier to find and less secretive. Globally, Europe has the most malformations, followed by North America. He said he has been to Antarctica and can assure us there are no amphibian problems there.

Lannoo said he was said to say that Science has failed the public on this issue. The Public came to Science worried that the malformations and declines would become a problem for humans as well, and Science looked for the causes, but not the cure. He mentioned Love Canal to bring this into perspective. His advice is simple, whether the cause is pesticides caused from runoff, or parasites, caused by increased trematodes from eutrophication, caused by runoff, runoff is the main problem and they key to fixing this. He called today, "Post Atrazine Mad Max Thunderdome kind of world."

Drought has shown to be beneficial to the malformation problems helping to control the algae blooms that host more parasites. There is also evidence to show some frogs are developing resistance to parasites, pesticides, and even to the chytrid fungus that is such a global amphibian problem.

While much of this issue is "gloom and doom", I left with a feeling of rejuvenated hope that we can still save the frogs, and ourselves along the way.

HERP HAPPENINGS

April 15, 2009 – HHS General Meeting, Guest Speaker – Mike Pingleton, Field herper and photographer. Topic – "Herping the Carolina's"

April 19, 2009 – Midwest Reptile Show, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Southwest Pavilion, Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis. \$5.00 admission, reptiles, amphibians, books, cages, feeder animals, and other supplies. Sell your herps and dry goods free of charge at our H.H.S. information booth. For info: (317) 861-5550, www.midwestreptile.com Other dates - June 21

May 1 & 2, 2009 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Park, Slade, KY. Field trips, talks, and Kentucky Reptile Zoo tours.

May 16, 2009 – Hoosier Herpout, Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, Monroe Reservoir, Bloomington. Hiking, herping, camping, and a cookout!

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www.theevansvillereptileshow.com

July 18, 2009 – HHS live herp exhibit. Johnson County Library, 10am-2pm

Oh, Snap

By Rick Marrs

As a participant in numerous HHS live animal exhibitions, I'm used to answering many questions. Invariably, whenever I display turtles, I am asked, "Is this a snapping turtle?"

These words are frequently uttered with an index finger extended within mere centimeters of the reptile in question.

Fortunately, the object of this inquiry is usually a red-eared slider, painted turtle, or even an eastern box turtle. Most HHS members may find it inconceivable that such a large segment of our population cannot identify a species as well known and distinctive as the common snapper.

No other chelonian possesses that long, massive tail with stegosaurian plates. One look at the over-sized head equipped with that raptorial, flesh-laceration beak should alert the observer that he is in the presence of the notorious Snapping Turtle of legend and lore.

Milk snakes don't milk. Whip snakes may not whip. Snapping turtles, on the other hand, really do snap!

Much has been written about the supposed power in a snapper's jaws. A widely held belief that a large snapper can easily bite a wooden broom handle in two. My skepticism about this myth arose when my Uncle Ralph caught a 54-pounder in Michigan's Grand River. This behemoth was subsequently provoked by his son, cousin Eddie, who teased it with a broom. True to its nature, the enraged reptile chomped down on the offending implement. The handle was definitely worse for wear, but far from severed. Perhaps a determined snapper could, after much work, manage to break a broomstick in half, but certainly not in one bite.

Fingers are another matter. The only person I know who has blamed a snapper for any missing digits is one of my other Michigan relatives. Uncle "Doodle" claimed that his obviously truncated left pinky was the result of a hard-fought battle with a snapper of improbable dimensions. We young'uns took his admonitions seriously enough to be extremely wary whenever we went swimming in the Potawatomie Bayou. (Years later, his wife, Aunt Gertrude, intimated that he actually slammed the door of his AMC Gremlin on his hand after a night over imbibing at the local saloon.)

I've always had a special place in my heart for snappers. Maybe it's their pugnaciousness and ability to thrive in places where other species languish. Maybe it's because a snapping turtle was the first herp I ever saw in the "wild." My respect and fascination for amphibians and reptiles, indeed, for all things wild and natural, took root that day my five-years-old former self proudly brandished an irate seven-pound snapper before my mother's eyes.

The look on her face made it quite clear that I had stumbled upon something truly cool.

Things that make you go Hummmm....

Mike Wood

Last year I held back an exceptionally colored female blood python for future breeding projects. She's a real looker and calm to handle but a picky, finicky eater. I have to tease her to get her to eat.

I feed frozen thawed and I usually take the rodent out of the hot water and at least give it a quick paper towel dry to get the majority of the water off. They then take it from tongs. 3 months ago I didn't get the rat as dry as usual and was moving above the blood python. Water dripped from the frozen thawed rat onto the head of the young blood python and BAMMMM! She nailed the rodent with lightning speed. Since then I purposely do that and she feeds every time now with no problem. Next time you have a picky eater, give it a try.

HHS MEMBER - IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sheryl Mitchell

Town or City: Bloomington

Age you found interest in herpetology? About 10 years ago, when I started working at a local pet store. I actually was very curious about them as a kid, but my grandparents (especially my grandpa) were terrified of snakes, so it took me awhile to explore herps on my own

What (amphibians/reptiles) do you like? Most of them! I have a real soft spot for geckos, Beardies, and snakes

Do you exhibit your animals at HHS shows? Not yet, but I would really like to!

What do you like most about the HHS? It gives me the chance to meet and talk with people who also enjoy herps (and don't give me "the look" that a lot of people do when they find out I have snakes in my bedroom, lol)

When did you join the HHS? About 9 or 10 years ago?

Other hobbies? Books, Tabletop RPG (D & D, Gurps, Hackmaster, White Wolf, etc.), Video Games, Movies (especially cheesy b monster movies, lol), Afghan Hounds, Aquariums, Bladed Weapons, SCA, Volunteering for the Save The Frogs group, Volunteering for my son's elementary school PTO, Music, Percussion, Singing, Hulu, TV (Fringe, Supernatural, Dollhouse, Terminator, House, The Closer, Bones, Saving Grace, Doctor Who. Lost), Scaly Tailz (doing free educational herp demos, and taking in herps that need a new home), SnakeBytes TV.

Do you field herp? Not really...I would love to give it a try sometime, though

Where do you get your herps? Midwest Reptile Show, Amy Baird (the world's most adorable Western Hognose), and Adoptions.

Have you ever bred any herp species? (if so, what kind?) I haven't done that yet. I'm a little worried that if I did, I wouldn't be able to part with any of the babies, lol

Anything else you would like to add? I hope to become more involved with the HHS, especially attending more meetings! I am so very glad that we have such a wonderful group, with so many informed herpers, who are willing to help out others with their herps!

Herpetology Weekend - May 1&2

Natural Bridge Park, Slade, KY

Experienced herpetologists will lead field trips into the Red River Gorge National Geologic Area to observe reptiles and amphibians in their native habitat. Evening presentations will focus on reptile and amphibian natural history and conservation. Some demonstrations will include live venomous snakes! Field trips to the Kentucky Reptile Zoo.

Registration upon arrival, \$5/adult and \$2/child. For more information contact Park Naturalist Brian Gasdorf at Brian.Gasdorf@ky.gov or call (606) 663-2214 x2104.

Rare reptile found first time in 200 years

A hatchling with lineage dating to the dinosaur age found in New Zealand

By Ray Lilley (Associated Press)

MSMBC Fri., March 20, 2009

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - A hatchling of a rare reptile with lineage dating back to the dinosaur age has been found in the wild on the New Zealand mainland for the first time in about 200 years, a wildlife official said Thursday. The baby tuatara was discovered by staff during routine maintenance work at the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in the capital, Wellington, conservation manager Raewyn Empson said.

"We are all absolutely thrilled with this discovery," Empson said. "It means we have successfully re-established a breeding population back on the mainland, which is a massive breakthrough for New Zealand conservation."

Tuatara, which measure up to 32 inches (80 cm) when full grown, are the last descendants of a lizard-like reptile species that walked the Earth with the dinosaurs 225 million years ago, zoologists say.

There are estimated to be about 50,000 of them living in the wild on 32 small offshore islands cleared of predators, but this is the first time a hatchling has been seen on the mainland in about 200 years.

The New Zealand natives were nearly extinct on the country's three main islands by the late 1700s due to the introduction of predators such as rats.

Empson said the hatchling is thought to be about one month old and likely came from an egg laid about 16 months ago. Two nests of eggs — the size of pingpong balls — were unearthed in the sanctuary last year and tuatara were expected to hatch around this time.



"He is unlikely to be the only baby to have hatched this season, but seeing him was an incredible fluke," she said.

The youngster faces a tough journey to maturity despite being in the 620-acre (250 hectare) sanctuary and protected by a predator-proof fence. It will have to run from the cannibalistic adult tuatara, and would make a tasty snack for birds of prey, Empson said.

"Like all the wildlife living here, he'll just have to take his chances," Empson said.

"They've been extinct on the mainland for a long time," said Lindsay Hazley, tuatara curator at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery on South Island. He added that "you can breed tuatara by eliminating risk, but to have results like this among many natural predators (like native birds) is a positive sign."

About 200 tuatara have been released since 2005 into the Karori Sanctuary, which was established to breed native birds, insects and other creatures.

Tuatara have unique characteristics, such as two rows of top teeth closing over one row at the bottom and a parietal eye — a dot on the top of the skull that is believed to be light-sensitive and is sometimes referred to as the animal's third eye.

Classifieds

For Sale: 2.2 CB 04 jungle carpet pythons high yellow, group price 1500.00 (proven breeders). .2 CB 04 green tree pythons Biaks 2500.00 group price (proven breeders). 1.1CB 07 womas high contrast 1200.00 for the pair.(EXCEPTIONAL PAIR). 1.2 CB 05 savu pythons 700.00 group price (proven breeders)

2.3 CB 04 blood pythons high reds 2000.00 group price, (proven breeders). 1.1 CB 08 albino blood pythons 1800.00 pair. 1.2 CB 07 100% pure diamond pythons 3200.00.

All snakes are guaranteed healthy, properly sexed, come with feeding records and bloodline records. Mike Wood Email - twobears@embarqmail.com

For Sale: Hatchling Crested geckos, \$20.00 Jim Horton Stardali84@hotmail.com (317) 865-0464

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Hoosier Herpout '09

It's almost time for the 9th Annual Hoosier Herpout!

Hardin Ridge Recreation Area (Hoosier National Forest), Monroe Reservoir,
Bloomington, IN

Saturday, May 16th - 9:00 A.M.

Meet at the shelter house near the boat ramp. Rain or shine

There is an entry fee at the gatehouse. Campers will waive the fee.

Schedule: we will leave to herp the area shortly after 9:00 a.m. and will return sometime before 12:00 p.m. for the cookout. Those members camping can also herp on Sunday.

The herpout is a chance for our members to get out and field herp the hills of beautiful Southern Indiana. We should see a variety of herps including venomous species. We will also be taking counts on our finds in the wild. Wear the proper gear and herp at your own risk. The H.H.S. assumes no responsibility for accidents or injuries. Please be careful and have fun!!

Barbeque

The H.H.S. will provide the burgers and dogs. Please bring a covered dish and your own beverages. Hardin Ridge offers class “A” camping (showers, electrical hookup) and class “B” (showers) camping.

We will most likely be camping in the “Southern Point” campgrounds (class B).

For more information, call Jim Horton (317) 865-0464.

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING BANNING NON-NATIVE SPECIES APRIL 23 ACTION NEEDED!

Proposed bills are on the way in the U.S. House concerning animals that are imported. U.S. House of Representatives bill 669 has been introduced. It is a new version of last years bill (Non-native Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act, H.R.6311) that died in the 07-08 session. This proposed law could “blanket” a large number of animals (including amphibians and reptiles).

Trying to curb non-native wildlife species that negatively impact the U.S., the bill (H.R.6311) sought to establish a risk-assessment approach that imported species would be would undergo before being allowed into the country. Unapproved species would be banned, and the status of animals in people’s possession would remain in doubt. (Reptiles Magazine-June2009)

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) stated that HR 669 contains many of the problematic provisions found in last year’s bill, plus even more restrictive provisions.

If you have an interest in or keep “exotic” or non-native U.S. herps, this is something you will want to take a close look at and voice your opinion.

When replying, please do so with a calm and professional response. The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) stated that this will be a long process and urges people to remain calm while the bill works its way through the legislator.

From the PIJAC website:

- IT IS PARAMOUNT THAT ALL SEGMENTS OF THE PET INDUSTRY ARE PERCEIVED AS HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THIS PROCESS. IF PERCEIVED OTHERWISE, WE WILL LOSE OUR CREDIBILITY AND WITHOUT OUR CREDIBILITY, OUR COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL VOICES WILL HAVE LITTLE TO NO IMPACT.

Please visit the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PJAC) website: pijac.org and the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) website: usark.org for more information.

PROPOSED PYTHON BAN

A recently introduced U.S. Senate bill (S. 373) would ad the entire Python genus to the Lacey Act. This would ban the importation and interstate commerce of **all pythons**. The bill was introduced in February over concerns regarding the invasive species (particularly Burmese pythons) in Southern Florida.

This is another long process that requires your patience and professional response.

Again, visit the PJAC and USARK websites for information on these bills and the potential impact on the herp hobby and industry.

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the education of its membership and the conservation of all reptiles and amphibians. General monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Butler University, Gallahue Hall, Room 105 or 108. Membership is open to all interested individuals. **No venomous animals are allowed at the General Meetings.**

Your HHS OFFICERS for 2009

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Suggestions, submissions and articles for *The Monitor* are welcome. Submit your typed or legibly hand written articles by the first Wednesday of each month to: PO. Box 40544, Indianapolis, IN 4620-0544 or 7712 Miracle road, Indianapolis, IN, 46237. Email articles to: stardali84@hotmail.com

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