



# 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

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**HHS Meeting - March 15th 7:00 p.m.  
Holliday Park Nature Center**

**Guest Speaker: Mike Pingleton  
Topic: "*Herp Travelogue of Thailand*"**

The Hoosier Herpetological Society welcomes Mike Pingleton as this month's guest speaker. Mike has done about everything regarding reptiles and amphibians. He has bred and sold many species of 'herps' and written numerous articles in magazines such as Reptile magazine and others. He has also published a book on the red-footed tortoise. Mike has traveled extensively throughout the world and always documents his findings in wonderful programs. This month he will share his experiences in Thailand in what promises to be another informative and entertaining account of his trip to the Orient. Those members who have seen his presentations before know that this is meeting that can't be missed! See you there.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

### RENEWALS

Mike Wood

Friends of Garfield Park

Nikki Shonk/Tanya Beck

Jeff Wines

David Miller

Laurie Mitchell

Garry Bryan

Pat Hammond

John Olson

### NEW MEMBERS

Alan Darwactor

Heather Carmody

Joy Fulk

# President's message

Jim Horton

It is now very early spring in Indiana and amphibians are starting up. Salamanders are in ponds and frogs are calling in wetlands, marshes, fields, puddles, and other suitable breeding areas.

As the next round of warm temps and rains occur, take a trip to the nearest wetland and take a look/listen. It only happens once a year!

I'd like to thank our members who volunteered their Saturday for the HHS program at the Eagle Library. We had a good stream of curious onlookers who were prepared with plenty of questions. Thanks to HHS member Mary Hylton for this opportunity.

Another **thank you** to everyone who helped exhibit animals at Garfield Park on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. We have a great core group of members and I'm proud to be a part of it.

HHS member, Sammy Stark was unable to make it to the meeting last month. He still wanted to present his beaded dragon this month. Sammy (and his lizard) will be our Herp of the Month presenter.

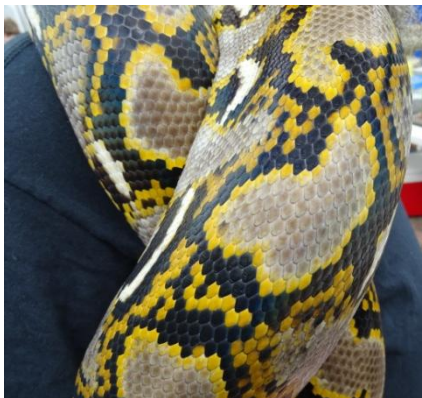
## HHS AT GARFIELD PARK

Photos by Jim Horton

HHS members were in full gear at the Garfield Park Conservatory on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. The visitors and the park staff were incredibly pleased with our live animal exhibits. Dale Schoentrup's sulcata tortoise walked the floors at times under supervision – a real crowd pleaser.

A big thanks to everyone who took their time to load up and display their animals for the day.

Nikki Shonk, Roger and Holly Carter, Dale and Lori Shoentrup, Heather White, Rex Morrell, Abbie Watson, Katie Kolcun, and Jim Horton displayed live amphibians and reptiles.



# HHS live herp display at Eagle Library

Special thanks to our members for providing their time and amazing animals for the event:

Roger and Holly Carter, Rex Morrel, Abbie Watson, Jim Horton, Neill Jones, Kimberly Scott, Heather and Kira Hayes.

Thanks to Mary Hylton for orchestrating this event and the kind donation!



## Last month's meeting

By Jim Horton

Our guest for February was Kristen Wiley, director of the Kentucky Reptile Zoo. Her talk covered their recent conservation training with the Department of Forestry in St. Lucia. Training was needed due to dangerous interactions with the St. Lucia viper (*Bothrops caribbaeus*) and the people who inhabit the island.



Jim Harrison and his wife, Kristen focused on community safety, training, and handling of venomous snakes.

She reported that there were only about 2-3 people on the island who had any experience handling venomous snakes or any snakes for that matter.

Apparently the old way of doing things after a venomous snake bite was to get the victim on a long 30 mile boat trip to the nearest island with medical facilities (Mar Island). There, the patient was given an antivenom that was produced in France and it wasn't a good match for the particular species found on these islands. Now they have Costa Rican antivenom. This antivenom is produced specifically for *Bothrops* and other local species and it is much cheaper in price.

The husband and wife duo worked with locals on catch and release techniques. They built indoor natural settings of rock and plants for a more 'in the field' effect. Training also included handling sick or injured snakes, safety, and minimizing contact with the snakes.

Kristen was happy to report that recent snake encounters on the island have been successful.

While on the island, they had some free time and couldn't resist some field herping. The couple took a short boat trip to the island next door, Maria Major. They didn't come up with many species but did see a whiptail, a forest racer, and some invertebrates.





## KNIVES AND HERP ART

Article and photos by Roger Carter

My new herp knife is a large Bowie knife that was shown in the latest catalog from the Smokey Mountain Knife Works in Tennessee. We received this catalog just before Christmas.



The description from the catalog says "Features: 440A stainless steel blade with full color custom snakeskin onlay. Brass spine accent, guard and double rivets. Wood handles with lasered rattlesnake on front. 14-1/2" overall. Nylon belt sheath with embossed patch."



There is a scale pattern on the blade with the word "Sidewinder" in black script on the blade and the S is shaped to look like a silhouette of a snake. I think the "snakeskin onlay" is some sort of pattern that is laminated onto the blade.



The image of the rattlesnake on the handle is a rattlesnake in the process of striking at something. The "embossed patch" on the sheath shows a scale pattern, a

close-up of a rattlesnake head with its mouth open that looks like the snake is in mid-strike and the word "Sidewinder" in front of the open mouth, this is the same script that is on the blade.



The blade is 9-3/8 inches long, 2-1/16 inches at its widest point and 3/16 inch thick and is very sharp. This was manufactured in China by a company called Rough Rider Knives. I don't know why they call this a sidewinder Bowie because from the pattern and the picture on the box this is a Western Diamondback Rattlesnake. It's still a nice heavy Bowie knife.

## HAND HELD HERPS

Article and photo by Roger Carter



The Spotted Salamander, *Ambystoma maculatum*, is a fairly large salamander averaging six to eight inches in length. It has a blackish background with yellow spots on its body and the spots on its head are sometimes orange. This salamander covers a large territory from Maine to eastern Texas and is found in most of Indiana except for the sand prairies in northwest Indiana. It is found in hardwood forests near small ponds where they breed in the spring. They are sometimes found in rotting logs and under leaf litter. They eat earthworms and other invertebrates.

The spotted salamander in this picture was found under a piece of old roofing tin in southern Indiana during the June 2015 Hoosier Herp Out. For those reading this, the Hoosier Herp Out is our spring picnic and field trip. In the morning we do some field herping, then go back to the shelter house where we cook food, stuff ourselves and then it's back to field herping for the rest of the afternoon.

# Sea turtles' 'lost years' mystery starts to unravel



A neonate sea turtle with tracking device attached to its shell makes its way in Atlantic waters.

*Credit: Jim Abernethy*

Source: sciencedaily.com

Small satellite-tracking devices attached to sea turtles swimming off Florida's coast have delivered first-of-its-kind data that could help unlock the mystery of what endangered turtles do during the "lost years."

The "lost years" refers to the time after turtles hatch and head to sea where they remain for many years before returning to near-shore waters as large juveniles. The time period is often referred to as the "lost years" because not much has been known about where the young turtles go and how they interact with their oceanic environment -- until now.

"What is exciting is that we provide the first look at the early behavior and movements of young sea turtles in the wild," said UCF biologist Kate Mansfield, who led the team. "Before this study, most of the scientific information about the early life history of sea turtles was inferred through genetics studies, opportunistic sightings offshore, or laboratory-based studies. With real observations of turtles in their natural environment, we are able to examine and reevaluate existing hypotheses about the turtles' early life history. This knowledge may help managers provide better protection for these threatened and endangered species."

Findings from the study appear today in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

A team of scientists from the UCF, Florida Atlantic University, University of Miami (UM) Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, and University of Wisconsin, tracked 17 loggerhead turtles for 27 to 220 days in the open ocean using small, solar-powered satellite tags. The goal was to better understand the turtles' movements, habitat preferences, and what role temperature may play in early sea turtle life history.

Some of the findings challenge previously held beliefs.

While the turtles remain in oceanic waters (traveling between 124 miles to 2,672 miles) off the continental shelf and the loggerhead turtles sought the surface of the water as predicted, the study found that the turtles do not necessarily remain within the currents associated with the North Atlantic subtropical gyre. It was historically thought that loggerhead turtles hatching from Florida's east coast complete a long, developmental migration in a large circle around the Atlantic entrained in these currents. But the team's data suggest that turtles may drop out of these currents into the

middle of the Atlantic or the Sargasso Sea.

The team also found that while the turtles mostly stayed at the sea surface, where they were exposed to the sun's energy, the turtles' shells registered more heat than anticipated (as recorded by sensors in the satellite tags), leading the team to consider a new hypothesis about why the turtles seek refuge in Sargassum. It is a type of seaweed found on the surface of the water in the deep ocean long associated with young sea turtles.

"We propose that young turtles remain at the sea surface to gain a thermal benefit," Mansfield said. "This makes sense because the turtles are cold blooded animals. By remaining at the sea surface, and by associating with Sargassum habitat, turtles gain a thermal refuge of sorts that may help enhance growth and feeding rates, among other physiological benefits."

More research will be needed, but it's a start at cracking the "lost years" mystery.

The findings are important because the loggerhead turtles along with other sea turtles are threatened or endangered species. Florida beaches are important to their survival because they provide important nesting grounds in North

America. More than 80% of Atlantic loggerheads nest along Florida's coast. There are other important nesting grounds and nursing areas for sea turtles in the western hemisphere found from as far north as Virginia to South America and the Caribbean.

"From the time they leave our shores, we don't hear anything about them until they surface near the Canary Islands, which is like their primary school years," said Florida Atlantic University professor Jeannette Wyneken, the study's co- PI and author. "There's a whole lot that happens during the Atlantic crossing that we knew nothing about. Our work helps to redefine Atlantic loggerhead

nursery grounds and early loggerhead habitat use."

Mansfield joined UCF in 2013. She has a Ph.D. from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and a master's degree from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami. She previously worked at Florida International University, through the Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies (CIMAS) in association with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Marine Fisheries Services. She was a National Academies NRC postdoctoral associate based at NOAA's

Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and remains an affiliate faculty in Florida Atlantic University's biology department where Wyneken is based.

With colleagues at each institution Mansfield conducted research that has helped further the understanding of the sea turtle "lost years" and sea turtle life history as a whole. For example she and Wyneken developed a satellite tagging method using a non-toxic manicure acrylic, old wetsuits, and hair-extension glue to attach satellite tags to small turtles. Tagging small turtles is very difficult by traditional means because of their small size and how fast they grow.

## 2017 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

**April 9, 2017** - 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 (HHS members only)

[www.midwestreptile.com](http://www.midwestreptile.com) Other show dates: June 25, August 27, November 5

**March 15, 2017** – HHS monthly meeting, Guest speaker: Mike Pingleton, Topic - *Thailand Herp Travelogue*.

**March 24 & 25** - Amphibian Outing at McCormick's Creek State Park, Spencer, IN  
Live animal exhibit, talks, day and night hikes.

**April 19, 2017** – HHS monthly meeting, Guest speaker: Andrew Ahl (keeper, desert biome, Indianapolis Zoo), Topic: *Eastern Massasauga Survey in Michigan*

**April 21/22, 2017** – Herpetology Weekend, Slade, KY. A weekend of presentations and field trips in search of amphibians and reptiles.

May 17, 2017 – HHS *Hoosier Herpout*, A day of field herping, photography, barbeque, optional camping, and an evening herp presentation.

**May 17, 2017** – HHS monthly meeting, Guest speaker: Ethan Kessler and Seth LaGrange, (Southern Illinois University), Topic: *Alligator Snapping Turtle Survey*. They will bring a live alligator snapping turtle to the meeting.

**July 19-22, 2017** – 40<sup>th</sup> Annual International Herpetological Symposium, Chiricahua Desert Museum, Rodeo, NM. [www.internationalherpetologicalsymposium.com](http://www.internationalherpetologicalsymposium.com)

**October 20-22, 2017** – Midwest Herpetological Symposium. Bloomington, MN, Hosted by Minnesota Herpetological Society



## ***Your HHS Board of Directors for 2017***

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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 7:00 p.m. at Holliday Park Nature Center. Membership is open to all interested individuals. **No venomous animals are allowed at the General Meetings.**

# **www.hoosierherpsoc.org**

## **HHS CUB SCOUT SHOW**

Photos – Jim Horton

The HHS thanks Roger and Holly Carter and Jim Horton for donating their time at a cub scout lock in. March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Carter's and Jim presented an educational program along with chances to get close up to live amphibians and reptilians.

Their efforts were rewarded with a donation check of \$250 for the HHS.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

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