



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 21 Number 2

February 2010

President's Message

Jim Horton

Hello HHS members! Winter is definitely still here but the spring field - herping season is right around the corner.

Roger and Holly Carter and I recently had a chance to help out one of our more enthused members. Saturday, January 30, HHS members, Carter Ball and his father, Kurt had arranged a herp display at Hazel Dell Elementary for the Pinewood Derby. Needless to say, we were one of the most popular vendor's at the event. Special thanks to Carter for taking on this very special and educational project!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the photography contest. We had 32 entries and all were beautiful shots! It was difficult to pick only a few winners in each category.

Please keep in mind that our meetings will be held in the Pharmacy building, room # 150 until May.

This issue features an article by Ed Ferrer on feeding snakes, the photo contest results, and more!

The new shirts are in!

Same design with "Conservation through Education" added.

Get yours for only \$10.00 at the General Meetings, online, or at the Midwest Reptile Shows.

Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, February 17th, 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Travis Ryan, Butler University

Topic: "Turtles of Board Ripple Canal"

Butler University: Room#150 in the new wing of Pharmacy Bldg.

There are seven species of turtles numbering over 5,000 individuals that inhabit the Broad Ripple Canal. Females lay tens of thousands of eggs along the banks of the canal. Find out what Dr. Ryan and his biology students have learned from many years of research along the canal. Also, be updated on the latest developments designed to save the turtles and protect their nesting sites this spring as Veola Water Company makes improvements that will prevent the banks from eroding. *****New Location!!**

Room#150 in the new wing of the Pharmacy Building!

Annual HHS Photography Contest

Winners and participants

Winners!



Wild category

Frog statue (fountain) – Roger Carter
Ribbon snake with prey in belly – Roger Carter
Spotted salamander – Roger Carter
Long-tail salamander – Roger Carter
Fence Lizard – Roger Carter
Box turtle – Pat Hammond
Corn snake (close-up) - Jim Horton
Jim holding spiny iguana – Pat Hammond
Boa head (close-up) – Jim Horton
Third Place - Rough green snake (in plant) Brittany Davis
Yellow-bellied sea snake – Pat Hammond
Boa in tree – Pat Hammond
Spiny tailed iguana – pat Hammond
Green anole on plant – Brittany Davis
Southern Leopard frog – Brittany Davis
First Place - Bird-eating snake – Jim Horton
Second Place - Red-eye tree frog – Jim Horton
Baby box turtle (in hand) – Angela Thomas
Copperhead on hook – Angela Thomas

Captive Category

Third Place - House Gecko – Brittany Davis
First Place - Gaboon Viper (close up) - Angela Thomas
Komodo dragon – Angela Thomas
Crested gecko – Jim Horton
Komodo head (close up) – Angela Thomas
Gargoyle gecko – Jim Horton
Arizona mountain king – Jim Horton
Leachianus gecko – Jim Horton
Amazon tree boas – Barbara Filtri
Amazon tree boa (Red) – Barbara Filtri
Second Place - Amazon tree boa (orange) – Barbara Filtri
Amazon tree boas (red/orange) – Barbara Filtri

The Kid's category was dismissed due to the lack of participants.



HHS member, Rick Marrs discusses the biology of a Western Slender Glass Lizard (*Ophisaurus a. attenuatus*) during the January meeting. The native Indiana lizard was featured the Herp of the month.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Renewal: Eugene Holmes

Thanks for your membership and continued support in the HHS!

Got Rodents?

Hoosier Mouse Supply can take your orders for rodents and they will deliver to the monthly meeting on Wednesday, the 16th. (317) 831-1219

You may now go paperless

You now have the option to go paperless with your membership. The monitor will be sent via pdf/email to your inbox. This will help save money, paper, and time with folding, stapling, labeling, stamping, and sending the "hardcopy" newsletter. It's as easy as visiting the HHS website clicking the "paperless" button.

United States Association of Reptile Keepers - www.usark.org

Don't forget to purchase or renew your fishing/hunting license for 2010 .



CELEBRATING
10 YEARS!
1999 - 2009

Feeding Your Snake

By Ed Ferrer

When I do educational snake programs I am often asked questions about feeding a pet snake. One of the most asked questions is should a snake be offered live or dead food items? I have heard all kinds of arguments for both sides and I always suggest that snakes should be offered pre-killed prey for several reasons:

(1.) Live mice, rats, etc. often bite in self defense when struck by the snake. They all have long chisel-like teeth that inflict puncture wounds that could become infected.

(2.) Captive snakes are often not the skilled predators often depicted on nature television programs. Sometimes they strike the hind quarters or other areas, making it easy for the prey to bite back.

(3.) Occasionally the prey jumps avoiding the snake's strike and the snake may hit the side of the tank or other items in the cage that might injure the snake's jaws.

(4.) If the snake isn't hungry then you have the problem of removing the prey item which is pretty tricky since both the prey and snake are probably in a very agitated state making recapture difficult and /or the owner may get struck by the snake.

(5.) It is very important to remember if offering live prey to not leave the area because if the snake isn't hungry it will just lay there and the rodent will always gnaw. I have seen cases where the owner returns to the cage only to be horrified that their snake has suffered many serious wounds!

For the above reasons I firmly believe that snakes should be always offered pre-killed prey items. People have said that their snake won't be interested in nonmoving prey. I always tell them to use tongs and move the prey in front of the snake and it will normally strike it and constrict it just as it would a live animal. And above all, don't hold the prey item in your hand or by the tail! The snake may bite the owner's hand by mistake, a very painful and frustrating experience for both the owner and the snake.

Another question asked is what size prey to offer the snake? I never offer any of my snakes any item that is larger than the thickest section of the snake's body. I have seen people brag about how large an item their snake can consume. Prey items that are too large may be taken but there is a risk of over taxing the snake's digestive system or it may be regurgitated later. I would rather feed multiple suitable sized prey at a feeding instead of one over size item.

Frequency of feeding is also a factor. I feed my young snakes once a week until they are about a year old. Then I stretch it to once every ten days and my adult snakes get fed once every other week.

Often people tell me that their snake hasn't eaten for a while. I first ask them to describe the color of the snake. Does it seem dull and are the eyes bluish-grey? If so, the snake is probably going through the "opaque" stage of its shed cycle. They often don't eat during this time. Usually after they shed their skin they have regained their appetite.

Sometimes snakes will not feed for extended periods of time, especially during the winter months when some might normally be hibernating in the wild. Even though the temperatures are constant, they seem to be able to sense less light during the winter months. Sometimes male snakes will go off feed when they are more interested in finding a mate. It seems in my collection the females don't have this seasonal lack of interest in food. Perhaps they are storing up food to use in case they become gravid.

Most of my 24 snakes are good feeders. My California king snake and my reticulated python are my most aggressive feeders. Sometimes my green tree pythons are somewhat reluctant to feed. In such a situation I will warm the prey next to a heat lamp and then gently rub it against their heat sensors along their lip. Often that will stimulate a feeding response. One of my Sinaloan milk snakes and my young blood python are occasionally reluctant to strike. I will then put them in their log hiding areas and then place the dead prey in front of the opening. I will check it later and they will usually eat in this "ambush" fashion. Many of the snakes kept in the pet trade are nocturnal hunters in the wild. If a snake has vertical eye pupils this usually is an indication of a normal nocturnal hunter. I will sometimes lay the prey item in the heated end of the cage and then turn the lights off in my snake room. I can still see because I have several red heat lights stationed throughout the room. When I come back usually the prey will be taken.

Often snake owners get worried when their snake doesn't eat on what they consider a regular schedule. Keep in mind that snakes can often go long periods of time without eating because of their slow metabolism. In fact they eat much less frequently than other cold-blooded reptiles such as lizards. That makes them a very "low maintenance" pet! If the snake doesn't eat for a

long period of time be sure to check for possible signs of respiratory problems such as sneezing or open mouth display. This could mean that they have some sort of breathing problem that could lead to their loss of appetite. In that case a trip to a veterinarian may be needed.

Although many of these suggestions are "common sense" they serve as good reminders of successful practices when dealing with issues regarding feeding snakes. I have found that trying different techniques can often solve many feeding problems.

COMPARISONS OF ANIMALS

By Holly Carter

Pat Hammond once asked me "What was the difference in horse breeds? Was my breed of horse comparable to like a corn snake?" (I had always been involved with horses and horseback riding).

After thinking about this, I asked fellow herpetology people, Amy Baird and Angela Thomas, both of whom were knowledgeable in reptiles as well as dogs and horses.

The following breeds were compared with looks as in size, body basics, color, personalities and life styles. Some are obvious while others may be open for discussion. Anyway, we had fun trying to typecast several of these animals.

Here are our comparisons: 

FRIESIAN, LIPPIZAN	ROTTWEILER, DOBERMAN	TAIWAN BEAUTY	LACERTA
ANDALUSIAN	HUSKY, MALAMUTE	RADIATED RATSNAKE	CHAMELEON
BELGIAN, SHIRE	MASTIFF, ST. BERNARD	ANACONDA	KOMODO
CLYDESDALE, PERCHERON	NEWFOUNDLAND, SAMOYED	BURMESE + RETIC	MONITORS
SHETLAND PONY	CHIHUAHUA, DACHSHUND	KIRTLAND, RINGNECK	DWARF CHAMELEON

Classifieds/adoptions

For sale: 1.1 pair of red blood pythons c.b. 2008 450.00 pair. 0.1 het albino red blood python c.b. 2007 450.00, 0.1 red blood python c.b. 2009 125.00, Each python is high contrast with a good pattern. They are all eating frozen thawed, guaranteed healthy and properly sexed. Complete records with each snake. Mike Wood - 574-269-3441 2bears@embarqmail.com

Adoption: beautiful female California king snake, approx. 51/2 feet and 12 yrs old. The school board will no longer allow us to use her in the classroom because she bit her handler a few years ago, and as such has not been handled regularly. We would love to find her a new home with an experienced handler who would provide her with a good home. Interested persons may call Stacey Summitt at 812-881-9849 or email stacey.summitt@gmail.com

For adoption: 1.0 African side-neck turtle. Contact Dave Mitchell at turtlelovin@att.net or 317-570-9643

For sale: 2006 captive bred Indian sand boa, great eater! 70.00, 1.1 Javelin sand boas, 60.00 each.
Jim Horton (317) 865.0464 or stardali84@hotmail.com

Wanted: Herpetological Field Technicians (3-month and 6-month positions) in Yellowwood and MMSF. Nine Herpetological Field Technicians are needed to assist in a study assessing the effects of silvicultural treatments on home range and habitat use of Timber Rattlesnakes and Eastern Box Turtles in Indiana. Work will be conducted as part of the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment.
Purdue University, Dept. Forestry and Natural Resources macgowan@purdue.edu
For more information see - <http://www.cnah.org>

EVENTS

February 13 & 14, 2010 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference PIJAC/USARK Summit Show, Tinley Park, IL 10am-5pm Sat/11am - 4pm Sun. \$15-adults, \$8.00 - Kids under 13, under five – free.

February 17, 2010 – HHS General Meeting, Guest Speaker: Dr. Travis Ryan, Butler University. Topic: “Turtles of Broad Ripple Canal”.

February 27, 2010 – 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. Other dates: April, 17, June 5. For info: (317) 861-5550, www.midwestreptile.com

March 20, 2010 – HHS Reptile/amphibian exhibit, Garfield Park, Indpls.

April 18, 2010 – Z-Greenfest, Zionsville, IN

May 7 & 8, 2010 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Park, KY

July 24 , 25 – Evansville Reptile Show

INDIANATURTLECARE.COM

Indiana Turtle Care, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to the conservation, rehabilitation, education and rescue of turtles and tortoises.

The Monitor is printed courtesy of – **Harding Poorman Group**



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 Board of Directors for 2010

PRESIDENT	Jim Horton	(317) 865-0464	stardali84@hotmail.com
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Hoosier Herpetological Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

☐ Corresponding Membership \$12.00

☐ Individual/Family Membership \$15.00

☐ Sustaining Membership \$25.00 or more

Herpetological Interest(s)

Hoosier Herpetological Society

P.O. Box 40544

Indianapolis, Indiana, 46240-0544

Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

☐ If this area is checked, it's time to renew your membership!