



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 18 Number 2

February 2007

President's Message

Jim Horton

Happy February! Hopefully we will get to see some of the spring amphibians real soon!

By now most of you are probably aware of the legislation involving herps in Indiana. We are trying our best to get to a point in all of this that makes sense and one that we can live with.

Our Website Coordinator, Richard Searcey, has informed us that he is planning to overhaul the website. That is great news! I look forward to seeing the new and improved site. Richard has a sneak preview on our current site of what it will look like. As of presstime, Richard has opened the new message board for members. The new message board will accompany pictures much easier than the old one!

Please stay tuned to the website and or message board as we may post any possible meeting cancellations due to weather conditions.

I We tried in past years by handing out the data log sheets and there was very little participation. Let's try it again this year.

Herpetological Facts

Resource: Minton S. A. 2001. Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana, Indiana Academy of Science

General Meeting: Wednesday, February 21st, 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Steve Nard, Monty's Reptiles

Topic: "Monitor Madness"

Butler University, Gallahue hall, Lecture Room#108

Steve Nard from Monty's Reptiles in Terre Haute will present a program on various monitor lizards, their different species and husbandry concerns for the herp hobbyist. His presentation will be on power point along with a few live monitors to view and handle. It promises to be a great program so plan to attend.

BILL #1472 ON HOLD FOR NOW

The herpetological community had gathered in unison in full support of stopping or restructuring bill #1472. Wednesday, January 31 was the public hearing for the bill that included regulations for wild animals such as kangaroos, monkeys, hybrid wolves and herps. The number of individuals opposing the bill was overwhelming. In fact, it was standing room only. Not everyone was able to offer their own words. Luckily, Roger Carter was one of the few herpers chosen from the crowd to speak and he represented the H.H.S. well.

Another opponent of the bill who was representing the herpetological community was Brett Nelson, an attorney and herper himself. He sounded off with stern facts which drew applause from the audience.

The session spilled over the scheduled time due to the number of individuals speaking in opposition of the bill. Some of the committee members had generously volunteered to stay over to talk with everyone who didn't get their words heard. These gentlemen were very kind and understanding regarding our cause of concern.

With hope, we can work with lawmakers and help assemble a resolution that - responsible and law-abiding citizens can agree upon.

Cold blooded facts

Submitted by Amy Baird

Crocodiles always grow new teeth to replace old ones, on average about every two years.

Frogs cannot swallow with their eyes open.

The Russell's Viper (Africa) accounts for over 6000 human deaths annually. This is more than any other snake.

"Pytho" is Greek for "rot". In Greek mythology, a giant serpent harassed Apollo's mother so he killed it and decreed it should be not be buried but left to rot.

UNDERGROUND HERPING

By, Elliot Stahl

All photos by Elliot Stahl

In Indiana there is about only one place where you can go herping in January and that is underground in caves where the temperature stays at about 55 degrees Fahrenheit year round. On January 6th 2007 I along with four other cavers set out to do some vertical caving in Harrison-Crawford State Forest. That day we visited a cave near Indiana Creek known as Devils Dungeon. Upon arriving at the small entrance to Devils Dungeon I observed that there were many boulders around the entrance, including one large boulder wedged in the middle of the entrance, there were also many rocky ledges and logs laying around the entrance. I commented before rigging the pit, that it looked like a good place for snakes, and that it was very likely that we would find one at the bottom of the pit. Devils Dungeon is a 67-foot vertical drop, in order to get into it requires rappelling and climbing equipment.



Cave emerging

I rigged the rope, and then rappelled into the pit first. After I reached the bottom I scanned the floor and immediately noticed a young spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*). I picked him up and moved him away from the rope, so that he would not get stepped on. After I called "off rope" to signal that somebody else can come down, I noticed another spotted salamander, except this one was a larger adult. Just after I reached down to pick up the larger spotted salamander, I found a small Eastern Garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*) approximately 10 inches long lying near the salamander. I put the larger spotted salamanders on a ledge where he would be safe from getting stepped on, and I picked up the garter snake. While examining the ledge a little more I spotted a large Jefferson's salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*). Chris Bell descended the drop next, and he spotted an Eastern newt

(*Notophthalmus viridescens*) on the floor. We put the newt up on the ledge along with the other salamanders and Chris held the garter snake while I photographed the three salamanders and the newt. Besides all of these salamanders, there were also many cave salamanders (*Eurycea lucifuga*) in the pit as well. When I finished photographing the salamanders, I spent some time taking some pictures of the garter snake. While I was taking pictures of the snake I spotted another spotted salamander poking his head out of a hole in the mud and rock covered floor of the pit.



Jefferson's, spotted salamanders and newt.

I snapped a photo of him as well. When I finished photographing the herps Chris and I moved them out of the way of the rope so they would not get hit by any falling rocks. We decided to leave all the salamanders, the newt and the garter snake in the pit, because the cool moist environment was a great habitat for the amphibians, and as for the garter snake, it was much colder outside then it was in the cave, and there were plenty of salamanders and worms and bugs down there for him to eat. Although it was cool in the cave sun rays do reach the bottom of the pit, and besides garter snakes are quite cold tolerant snakes. There was also a small stream at the bottom of the pit, so water was certainly not scarce. When we finished looking at the herps and exploring the cave, we climbed back to the surface. It turned out to be a very successful day of underground herping.



Eastern Garter Snake

Photo Contest winners and participants

Print winners

First place: Timber Rattlesnake in leaves – Elliot Stahl

Second Place: Racer in Bush – Jim Horton

Third Place: Mojave Rattlesnake – Elliot Stahl

Slide winners

First Place: Copperhead on Log – Angela Thomas

Second Place: Three Bearded Dragons – Angela Thomas

Third Place: Red Salamander – Angela Thomas

Other entries:

(Slides)

box turtle, pinecone skink, veiled chameleon – Angela Thomas

Snail eating snake, Alligator in water, Red-eye treefrog – Jim Horton

(Prints)

Box turtle in hand, Box turtle and rabbit, Argentine Boa, Black Hognose(spredding head) – Pat Hammond

Elliot and Texas Indigo - Dave Stahl, Timber Rattler, Eastern Hognose – Elliot Stahl, Crested Geckos, Blue dart frog - Angela Thomas, Cornsnake closeup, Tiger salamander – Jim Horton

Crested gecko (yellow), African Sideneck turtles, Crocodile skink, armadillo lizard – Stacy Simison, Girl and Sand Boa, Burmese study class – Dave Mitchell, Leucistic Leopard gecko, Iguana (blue) – Laurie Mitchell.

An Anaconda Story

By Garry Bryan

My 1966 reptile collection consisted of the usual mundane species native to central Indiana, irritable water snakes, musky garters, and irascible racers. The “exotic” reptiles included one common boa constrictor I was keeping for a friend, and a free “chameleon” I received when I purchased 100 mealworms for a buck through an ad in *Field and Stream* magazine. This collection was boring and I needed a boost.

A search through my assortment of price lists revealed a myriad of exotic reptiles, green iguanas, false water cobras, spectacled caimans, cooks tree boas and numerous venomous snakes, but what should I buy. All spectacular animals indeed but I decided on a green anaconda *Eunectes m. murinus*, also known as the Anaikolra “elephant killer” or Matatoro “bull killer”. A snake that may reach 20 feet in length and weigh over 200 pounds, yeah, that is just what I needed.

I ordered the snake from a “zoo” in Tarpon Springs, Florida; they sold wild caught anacondas from juvies to 15 feet. Was I concerned about buying a wild caught anaconda? Certainly not, I already had a tame wild caught boa constrictor and the anaconda was just a distant relative, i.e. the water boa. Swell, Just like a boa I figured, only green. So, without receiving any parental permission, I bought a money order that would cover the cost and shipping of a 7-foot green anaconda. Fortunately, it would turn out; I could not afford a larger one.

For weeks, I waited for my green boa to arrive; in the mean time, I polished my husbandry skills by feeding my “chameleon” mealy bugs and the boa, dead birds that I tied to a string and tossed around in the cage while making squeaky bird noises. Snakes are deaf. Who knew?

It was like Christmas in August when the local railway express office called, my shipment had arrived: Since I was too young to drive, I called my friend Joe, who coerced his

mother into taking us to the REA depot to pick up my package. Strangely, when Joe's mother discovered there was a seven-foot snake in said package, she vehemently requested that Joe and I, with snake, ride on the Vista Cruisers tailgate all the way home.

I suppose the bloodstains on the shipping container should have given me a hint of what could follow but being naïve in the ways of the "water boa", I assumed the snake had been injured and was in need of my extensive medical knowledge. Thank goodness I had all the necessary pharmaceutical paraphernalia, Dri-Die 67 for mites, Listerine for mouth rot, a turkey baster for force-feeding and a 19-page TFH booklet on green anoles. I was a regular Dr. Welby.

With the box opened, however, I saw no blood inside; that was encouraging but *what's up with all the blood?* After much frustration, Joe and I managed to open the tightly knotted snake bag, which instantly brought two-feet of anaconda exiting from within. Startled, I attempted to control the "escaping" snake by grabbing it about a foot below the head while Joe tried to grab it directly behind the head. *Wild Kingdom* style Joe misjudged the target; the anaconda did not; the mystery of "*what's up with all the blood*" was revealed. There was a vociferous **Arrgh** from Joe followed by an impressive string of expletives with much hand flailing, complete with a striking amount of blood splatter! This surprise bite to Joe's hand was painfully deep and bloody, not what I was expecting from a green boa, so *my* emphasis changed quickly from admiring it to stashing it unceremoniously into a cage, away from unprotected appendages.

Joe's mother, who was waiting patiently, took her son home for prompt medical attention and almost certainly a stern warning about hanging out with that weird, skinny kid who kept snakes for pets.

A few hours passed and the anaconda had "settled" into its new home; two friends stopped by and were curious to see my new acquisition. They were unaware of the disastrous unpacking debacle.

Now, I being the neighborhood snake "expert" reasoned that the anaconda, aka bull/elephant killer, had just been upset from his long travel northward and was merely suffering from a serpentine version of jet lag. Armed with my newfound confidence and naivety, I led my two friends into my serpentarium/wooden shed. The anaconda was behind the cage door and appeared serene, very similar to the boa constrictor, its cousin, housed across the room. Apparently, my jet lag theory was correct. I was a herpetological whiz kid! I slowly opened the cage door; the anaconda, other than a few tongue flicks, made no move. I gently grasped the rear of the snake, tugging firmly to pull it partially from the cage. Success, I was the new Ross Allen! I then lifted the risky toothed end, and slowly pulled the snake free of the cage. At this point, I might have patted myself on the back but the anaconda had tightly coiled itself around both arms, and was tongue flicking like crazy, gazing at my friends as they retreated into a corner. I felt their admiration as they watched me tame this awesome serpent, yes; I was indeed to be the next Ross Allen.

While basking in their admiration, a new but more tactile sensation quickly took hold, literally to my stomach! The anaconda, obviously not over his jet lag, decided to enlighten me with a painful 180-degree deep, stabbing, twisting, tugging, and vengeful bite to my belly!

As I screamed profanities, my two "friends" took the saying "don't let the door hit you on your way out" to heart. I just heard the door slam when the anaconda latched onto my right hand; again with a deep, twisting, tugging, vengeful, biting. I clumsily dodged a follow up strike just inches from my face.

The next few seconds were chaotic. The cage was low to the floor so I had to drop to my knees to access the cage door but because of my rudimentary carpentry skills, the door was jammed shut. I was now on my butt with a seven-foot angry anaconda coiled around my left arm, now an anaconda chew toy was too busy stopping anaconda jabs to my ego swollen head to open the stuck door. Boa constrictors cousin my butt, this was Satan's evil spawn!

Fortunately, due to my panicked screaming, one of the "friends" cautiously returned. He found me attempting to seize the anacondas menacing head but August sweat, my blood, anaconda cloacal secretions and a few unmentionable secretions of my own made it impossible to maintain

a secure grip; with its well-anchored coils the anaconda would simply pull free and start with the deep, twisting, tugging, vengeful biting thing. Albeit ineptly, my friend and I did get the destructive biting end back into the cage and using the cage door as a shield, managed to unwind the remaining coils and get the door secured.

The tired but triumphant anaconda retreated to the far end of his cage while I, shaken and humiliated, retreated to the bathroom to “lick my wounds” and ponder my newfound respect for anacondas

Please give to the nongame wildlife portion on your tax forms.

Don't forget to purchase or renew your fishing/hunting license for the 2007 year.

WELCOME NEW AND RENEWED H.H.S. MEMBERS!

New

Brett Nelson (Sustaining Membership)
Fred Schwomeyer (Sustaining Membership)

Renewals:

Eugene Holmes
Jeff Hern
Robert Tyler
Jeff Wines
Ed Roemer
Pat Hammond

Winter Breeding Amphibian Trip?

Jim Horton

Herps are in the dormant period for now but not for long. As many of our members are aware, the winter breeders will soon make their appearance for the New Year! As in the past decade (plus), we have taken the trip to Brown County to view, photograph, and take in the sounds of early spring. Generally, we don't have a set date due to the unexpected emergence of these cold weather herps. I will call those interested when conditions are right – the first fifty/sixty degree temps. with rain (usually late February or early March). We leave in the early evening when the frogs are calling and salamanders are most active. It may be on a weeknight but we will try to make a weekend if possible. This natural event is a sight to see if you haven't been there. Please contact me by phone or email if you would like to join us.

Email: stardali84@hotmail.com

Phone: (317) 865-0464

Herp of the month

If you would like to write about your favorite herp for “Herp of the Month, just send an email attachment, or even “snail mail” to Jim Horton at: stardali84@hotmail.com or HHS, P.O. box 40544, Indianapolis, IN 46204

HHS ON MYSPACE

HHS member, Wendell Zetterberg has created a page on Myspace to gain interest and possibly new members in the Hoosier Herp Society. If you visit the site, you'll find that we are generating many friends, old and new! <http://www.myspace.com/hoosierherpsociety>

22nd Midwest Herpetological Symposium Shot glasses

Own a piece of history!



Front and back design

Now available – Beautiful blue shot glasses from the 22nd Midwest Herpetological Symposium. Get them at the General Meetings or at the Midwest Reptile Show – HHS booth for only \$2.00 each

SYMPOSIUM SHIRTS FOR SALE

2006 Midwest Herpetological Symposium "official" shirts are now on sale at the reduced price of \$12.00. These shirts feature amphibians and reptiles from Indiana.

Sizes are limited so hurry for best selection! Look for them at the Midwest Reptile Show or the General Meetings!



Close up of design



Symposium T-shirt

HERP HAPPENINGS

February 21, 2007 – HHS General Meeting, Topic “Monitor Madness” Guest Speaker: Steve Nard from Monty’s Reptiles. Steve will discuss different monitor species and proper husbandry. Live animals and a Power Point presentation.

February 25, 2007 – 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

April 21, 2007 – HHS Live herp exhibit, Garfield Park Conservatory. Time – 11am – 3pm. Focusing on rainforest herps.

April 28, 2007 – Earth Day Indiana. Downtown Indianapolis at the War Memorial Park.

May 4th & 5th 2007 – Herpetology Weekend. A funfilled weekend of herp presentations, live animal demonstrations, and field trips! Natural Bridge State Resort Park, Slade, KY

May 19, 2007 – Hoosier Herpout. Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, Hoosier National Forest, Monroe Reservoir, Bloomington.

June 9&10, 2007 – Reptile Invasion, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve, Evansville, IN. One of the largest fundraisers of the year. Features programs and live animal exhibits.

July 14 and 15 – Indiana Pet Expo, White River State Park, Indianapolis.

Classifieds

For Sale: 75 gallon saltwater aquarium and all accessories. Like new, \$200.00 obo. Call (317)373-6010

For Sale: For sale: female Dummeril’s boa almost three feet long, \$125; female carpet python, partially stripped, four feet long, \$125; female womas, \$650 each. Call Roger (317)873-6561 or e-mail at drymarchonzz@hotmail.com.

For Sale: 2 Neodesha arboreal cages 2ft x 2ft, in excellent condition 100.00 each.

Green tree pythons c.b. 03/03/06 high yellow parents, 400.00 each. P. Metallica Gooty Ornamental tarantulas c.b.02/21/06 rare in U.S. collections 300.00 each. all animals guaranteed to be eating and healthy. Mike Wood 574-269-3441 or email at: 2bears@myvine.com

Ride Needed: Bloomington HHS member in need of a ride to the meetings, and possibly the Midwest Reptile Show. Will chip in \$ for gas. Please tell me I’m not the only HHS member in the Bloomington/Bedford area! Contact Sheryl at Roseoar1@aol.com

For Sale: 2006 c.b. Argentine Boas, \$120.00. C.B. 06’ Kenyan sand boa, 25.00, Call Jim Horton at (317) 865-0464 or email stardali84@hotmail.com

Monty’s Reptiles, Education and Adoption

A non-profit organization based in Terre Haute, IN dedicated to educating the public about local and exotic reptiles. We also take in unwanted reptiles, and find new appropriate homes for them.

Website: www.montysreptiles.org Steve Nard (812) 210-8505 email – montysreptiles@yahoo.com

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Visit the H.H.S. website at:
www.HoosierHerpSociety.org

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.**

2007 OFFICERS

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Suggestions 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 46240-0544 or 7712 Miracle road, Indianapolis, IN, 46237. Articles on PC or compatible, formatted, 5¼ or 3½ disks are accepted. To have your disk returned, you must provide a self addressed, stamped envelope within your mailing to us. Back issues of *The Monitor* are available. Send requests to our PO. Box, or contact Holly Carter. Quarterly Advertisement Rates for publishing your ad in *The Monitor* are: ¼ Page - \$10.00; ½ Page - \$15.00; and Full Page - \$25.00. Classified Ads are free to all paid H.H.S. members and will be printed for two months. All ads must be submitted in writing to the Editor by the first Wednesday of each month. All artwork is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without written permission from the artist.

**Hoosier Herpetological Society
MEMBERSHIP FORM**

☐ **New Member**

☐ **Renewal**

Name _____ **Date** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Phone _____ **Email Address** _____

☐ **Corresponding Member \$12.00**

☐ **Individual Member \$15.00**

☐ **Sustaining Member \$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, your membership will expire this month