

# 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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## Hoosier Herpetological Society meeting

**Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM**

**Holliday Park Nature Center Auditorium**

**Holliday Park Nature Center Auditorium**

**Guest Speaker, Justin Guyer, Guyer Genetics**

**Topic: "Crazy Colubrids"**

Our guest speaker for September is Justin Guyer of Guyer Genetics. Justin has been breeding corn snakes and other North American colubrids for 16 years. He was involved for several years as an on the air host of "Herpin' Time Radio. For two years he was on the planning committee for the Texas Rattlesnake Festival. He has field herped many parts of the United States. In 2018 he discovered a previously unknown population of Eastern spadefoot toads in Illinois which was recorded in the Illinois Natural History Survey. Obviously, Justin has a wide range of experience in the field of herpetology. He will be discussing his breeding of corn snakes as well as other topics in herpetology. Those of you who have attended the Midwest Reptile Show in the Indiana State Fairgrounds will recognize him as a frequent knowledgeable vender at the reptile shows.

Indy Parks has given the OK on meetings and activities for the indoor venue. However, they are limited to 18 people in our meeting room. Please stay at least 6 feet apart if possible. Wear masks as needed.  
Please check our social media and website for updated information.

**We will live stream this event online**

**Please check the HHS facebook page for more information.**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Thank you and welcome to the Hoosier Herpetological Society! Thank you to our returning members! Without all of you, we wouldn't be the organization that we've grown to be today!

### RENEWAL MEMBERS

Ethan Estabrook  
Mike and Chrissy Hacker  
Rick Marrs

## HAND HELD HERPS

Article and photos by Roger Carter

The Northern Red-bellied snake, *Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata*, is a small snake that measures eight to ten inches long. Their colors are brown, gray, or black sometimes with a light stripe down the back. The scales are keeled. There are three light spots behind the head that can form a collar. The ventral surface can be red, yellow, or orange. The few that I've seen were more red than orange. Their range is from New England into Canada, west to Minnesota and northeastern Iowa, south to Georgia, and spotty through the mid-west states in wooded areas and sphagnum bogs. They eat earthworms and slugs. An interesting behavior, when they are caught or startled, they curl or snarl their upper lip on either side of their face. One field guide mentioned that this behavior doesn't lead to any attempt to bite.

The snake pictured here was an adult that was caught during the Hoosier Herp Out on June 2015 in southern Indiana. You can't see from these black and white pictures, but the ventral surface of this snake was a nice shade of red and the upper body was a dark color. I didn't notice it curling up its lip. If I remember right, it was found under an old piece of roofing tin. It had musked and defecated a little but everyone got all the pictures that they wanted and naturally, the snake was released back to its tin. To see the red belly, go to the web site for the Hoosier Herpetological Society, [www.hoosierherpsoc.org](http://www.hoosierherpsoc.org)





Northern Red-bellied snake, *Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata*

## President's message

Jim Horton

We will be back in our normal meeting room this month but there will be limitations. **Only 18 people will be allowed to attend in person.**

To remedy this problem for those of you who may not be able to make it, HHS member Abbie Watson has agreed to stream it live online again!

Good news! Ed Ferrer has secured guest speakers to fill out the year! Hope to see you at our meetings or online on the HHS Facebook page.

We had a good time helping the Indiana Wildlife Federation and Indy Parks with a Bioblitz at Southwestway Park recently. Due to the hot and dry conditions of our typical late summer, we didn't find great numbers. It was good to be assisting in this project!

Thanks to our renewing members and welcome new HHS members! Hope to see you at our next meeting!

Please check our website, Facebook and Instagram pages for updated information regarding our monthly meetings and other club functions. If Indy Parks changes the options for meetings or activities, we will post it.



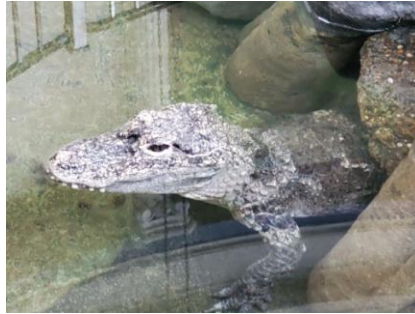
# Cincinnati Zoo Visit

by Ed Ferrer and Rex Morell

Rex Morell and I were discussing things to do and I mentioned that I haven't been to the Cincinnati Zoo in about 10 years and it was a relatively short trip from Indianapolis. As a child my parents would take me and my three brothers every year. (When I was young, Indianapolis didn't have the type of zoo they have now.)

Rex got the tickets through the internet (as per COVID-19 restrictions) and we were off. The weather was ideal, about low 80's with low humidity! (That is unusual since Cincy' is normally hot and very humid!) When we arrived, we were also surprised that the parking lot was covered by aluminum layers, providing welcome shade while we waited for our programmed time to enter.

Since we were "herpers", we naturally headed first to the Reptile House. We found many species of snakes and other reptiles displayed in naturalistic settings. Rex was most impressed by a beautiful Jamaican boa, its iridescent scales giving off a rainbow of colors. Also impressive was the yellow-tailed Cribro which was very active. I was impressed by two huge Eastern diamondback rattlesnakes (My favorite rattler.) and a large king cobra that mostly obscured by all the foliage in the cage. In the center exhibit there was a Chinese alligator.



This was the most endangered alligator in the world. Only about 200 exist in the world!

We then went to the cat exhibit where we saw a beautiful Malayan tiger and two gorgeous snow leopards. Also, on exhibit was a bobcat, who was sleeping on top of his hide box. In the African plains exhibit we saw elephants, giraffes, several species of antelopes and a large group of impressive lions. In another exhibit we saw an albino white lion.

We entered the famous Insect House which had an enormous collection of all kinds of insects, varying from huge praying mantises and walking sticks to butterflies and moths.



Tarantulas and scorpions were impressive. Another display was the huge exhibit of leaf cutting ants that went from one room to the other. If you visit this zoo, you must include this

unique area!



WE then went to Manatee bay and saw an amazing display of sea creatures and huge skeletons of crocodiles and sea turtles. The last time I visited the Cincy' Zoo there was a huge display of seven different snake species found in the Southeastern United states. Included was several rat snakes, corn snakes, a copperhead and rattlesnakes. I was surprised that this large display was changed to include one huge normal phase Burmese python and another large granite phase "Burm along with a sign about the invasive Burmese python problem in Florida. We also visited Gorilla World and saw a large family including everything from large silverback males and mothers with newborn babies.



Throughout our visit we were impressed by the wonderful landscaping and flowers that added to our experience. There were also many huge bronze statues of many animal species.

Since Rex has both an alligator and a crocodile in his collection, we took a photo with Rex posing with the large crocodile or alligator statue? If you are taking a trip to Ohio or just

want to go to a zoo that is about one hour and 30 minutes from Indianapolis, we would recommend visiting this impressive zoo.

## HHS Helps Survey Park for Herps

Jim Horton

The HHS was recently involved in a BioBlitz at Southwestway Park on Indy's southwest side. This survey of *all things wild* was created with the Indiana Wildlife Federation and Indy Parks.

I headed up the Herp portion of this event. Dale Shoentrup, Kimberly Scott, and Ian Hahus were on the herp team. This was a self-paced event due to Covid19 concerns.

This event was announced late summer and that was good for the insect and plant teams. It isn't the best part of the season for herps. We did manage to find some decent numbers despite the hot and dry conditions.



Eastern box turtle

The herp team had a videographer (Leslie) on site

following us throughout the morning (courtesy of IWF). We had placed aluminum, wood, and plastic cover boards out earlier that week for the survey. Unfortunately, no herps were found under our artificial cover.

One of our most common finds were Fowler's toads. We probably found 3 dozen in about two days.



Fowler's toad

Cricket frogs were also easily found along pond and other riparian habitats. Three northern leopard frogs darted across our path and we managed to get a pic of only one.

Two eastern garter snakes appeared along the pathways we had taken. Rolling a fallen log revealed a young Dekay's brown snake, followed by its sibling underneath loose bark.

A handsome male eastern box turtle crossed our path in the morning. It is always good to see them and It definitely was a good find in this park!



Photographing our find!

A mountain biker stopped and told us about a large, fast moving black snake that was chasing a frog. From his description of the snake, It was identified as a black racer.

Dale deployed several turtle traps in two oxbow ponds. He captured two adult painted

turtles in one and the rest were empty. At this same pond, Kimberly and Ian captured two juvenile five-lined skinks.

Five-lined skink  
Five-lined skink



Five-lined skink

My day was temporarily halted when I released a large piece of half buried plastic and a big rusty fish hook impaled my left index finger. I made my way to

the Medcheck and they directed me to Emergency in Mooresville. (that's going to cost me!). Once they removed it, I was on my way to the park to finish our survey.



Blanchard's cricket frog

More toads were found but not much more after my return. After the rest called it a day, I hiked along the White River to scout for aquatic

turtles. I counted about 45 total and six species. Two of them, according to Minton's field guide, weren't supposed to be in this region. The Ouachita and false map turtles were the two uncommon species. I was pretty excited about that find. We might possibly have an official range extension!

I'm grateful to have the help of Dale, Ian, and Kimberly. Thanks guys! The long hikes, sweating, and chiggers were all worth it! We are happy to be involved in projects like the BioBlitz and hope to continue to do more in the future.

## 2020 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

**September 16, 2020** – HHS meeting, 7:00 PM, Holliday Park Nature Center Auditorium, Guest Speaker – Justin Guyer (Guyer Genetics). Topic – Crazy Colubrids.

**November 8, 2020**- Midwest Reptile Show, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Harvest 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)

[www.hoosierherpsoc.org](http://www.hoosierherpsoc.org)

## Let's see your work!

Have you been in the field, found herps in the wild, or had good luck with keeping or breeding a species?

Attend any zoos, parks, waterways, or other natural areas?

Then you should write it for your newsletter – the Monitor. Its simple. A paragraph, page, ore more would be just fine! Your fellow members would be interested to read what you've been up to this summer.



## **HHS Board of Directors - 2020**

PRESIDENT	Jim Horton	(317) 443-4845	<a href="mailto:president@hoosierherpsoc.org">president@hoosierherpsoc.org</a>
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## **Appointed Board Members for 2020**

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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.**

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Don't forget to check out the HHS on Social Media!



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MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

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Indianapolis, Indiana, 46240-0544



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