

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 31 Number 10

October 2020

Hoosier Herpetological Society meeting

Wednesday October 28th 7:00 PM

Holliday Park Nature Center Auditorium

Guest Speaker: Kristen Wiley, Kentucky Reptile Zoo

Topic: "Target Training King Cobras"

Our guest speaker is Kristen Wiley of the Kentucky Reptile Zoo in Slade Kentucky. Along with her husband Jim Harrison, she operates the Kentucky Reptile Zoo. Their zoo has over 1600 venomous snake from around the world. Every two weeks they "milk" their venom which is used for producing antivenin and in research for making medicines for numerous diseases. They also provide educational programs and have appeared in documentaries on the Animal Planet and Discovery Channel among others. Her topic is "target training king cobras". King cobras are generally known to be one of the fastest and most intelligent of all snakes. It will be very interesting to see what they have learned in working with these unique snakes.

*Kristen Wiley is unable to make the date of our meeting personally.
She has agreed to be at our meeting via-Skype or Zoom

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 and 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
Violet Snyder

NEW MEMBERS

Patrick Glew
Bradley W. Jones
Rocio M. Carrasco

HAND HELD HERPS

Article and photos by Roger Carter

The Eastern American toad, *Anaxyrus americanus americanus*, measures approximately two to four and one-half inches long. The basic color is brown to gray, sometimes with a light stripe down their back. I've seen two specimens that were very dark, almost black. The warts, usually only one or two, are enclosed by a black border. They have large kidney-shaped parotoid glands. These toads have a very large range from the northeast United States, into Canada, west to eastern Nebraska and south to northern Georgia.

The Dwarf American toad, *Anaxyrus americanus charlesmithi*, is smaller than *Anaxyrus americanus americanus* and is colored red. They are found from southern Indiana through to eastern Oklahoma, northeastern Texas, through Arkansas western Kentucky and Tennessee, into northwest Mississippi and a sliver of Alabama. *Americanus*

and *charlesmithi* both eat small invertebrates and can be found in lightly wooded areas with shallow water for breeding.

Figure 1 shows an adult Eastern American toad that we found during the May 2019 Hoosier Herp Out in southern Indiana.



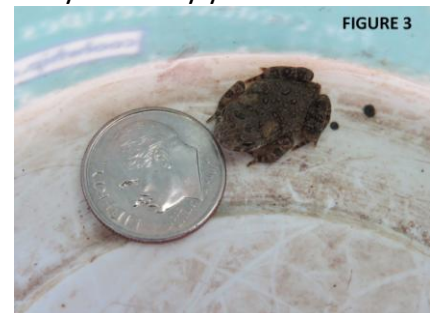
This one was found either on the trail that we were on or right at the edge of the trail. We usually find them out in the open, sometimes under old roofing tin or some other kind of cover. I've seen a few that were pressed right up against a log. These toads sometimes urinate when they are being held in someone's hand so don't rub your eyes. Kimberly

Scott was the hand model for this toad.

Figure 2 shows a picture of a newly morphed Eastern American toad that we found in our back yard.



Figure 3 shows this little one next to a dime for scale. We usually find these little toads in our yard every year.



These pictures were from June 2019.

Figure 4 shows a young Dwarf American toad that we found on September 2020 in southeastern Illinois. This was in the open crossing the path that we were hiking. Shane Delon was the hand model for this toad.



One field guide says these toads can interbreed with Fowler's toad, *Anaxyrus fowleri*, the Canadian toad, *Anaxyrus hemiophrys* and Woodhouse's toad, *Anaxyrus woodhousii*.

HHS/IFA survey for herps in Hoosier National Forest

Text and photos - Jim Horton

Members of the HHS have been hard at work this year helping with herp surveys. The Indiana Forest Alliance (IFA) is working to halt logging in the Hoosier National Forest. The IFA has been surveying portions of the forest for fauna and flora in the area. Their mission is to find plants and animals that are rare or state protected in order to stop potential logging that could prove harmful for these species and the forest as a whole.

The HHS participated in two surveys last month with IFA staff. Late summer is typically dry and vegetation is high. Due to these conditions, surveying for herps is less suitable. Spring would be ideal for this purpose. Nevertheless, the search went forward.

Dr. Rae Schnapp (Director of Conservation IFA) met up with us in Story Indiana. From there we traveled to the Combs Creek area of Hoosier National Forest. The team hiked up and down steep hillsides and followed a dry creek bed to the end of the survey boundaries. A slimy salamander (Plethodon

glutinosus) was found under a fallen log on a ravine.



Slimy salamander

Along the creek, longtail salamanders (*Eurycea longicauda*) were abundant, followed by green frogs (*Lithobates clamitans*). Southern two-lined salamanders (*Eurycea cirrigera*) were also found here but in low numbers. These were all expected finds. Lifting a large flat stone adjacent the creek bed revealed two northern ringnecks (*Diadophis punctatus*).



Northern ringnecks

A northern Black widow (*Latrodectus varians*) was found beneath a log. These don't turn up too often in our searches and it led to some great photo opportunities.



Northern black widow

Dr. Schnapp led us up to a southfacing hillside where a suspected den site was found last year. Due to unseasonal temps (mid-50's) and lack of sunlight, no rattlesnakes were found. On our way out we turned up three nicely patterned adult eastern box turtles (Terrapene Carolina) and a young wood frog (Lithobates sylvaticus).



Eastern box turtle

We hiked a ridge back to the parking lot. Plenty of spider webs crossed our path and stuck to our faces. It isn't fun

to be in the front of a line of hikers in late summer. At a break, we spotted a five-lined skink (Plestiodon fasciatus) making its way up a tree. Once it spotted us it went well above 30 feet. It was the highest ascend I've ever witnessed for this species.

Still hiking, we turned logs and came up with another species for the day. A common wormsneak (Carphophis amoenus) was beneath fallen bark in the damp leaf litter.



Worm snake

Eight species were found during this hike. Unfortunately, we didn't find any protected species. This survey might have been more successful had weather conditions been in our favor.

A second, separate survey was conducted by IFA Director, Jeff Stant, Roger Carter, Dale Shoentrup, and Rex Morell. This survey was in an area close to Lake Monroe. I was unable to attend this hike but I was informed that no reptiles were found. Roger reported longtail and two-lined salamanders, green and leopard frogs, and an American toad.

President's message

Jim Horton

Indianapolis welcomes another reptile show. The Indianapolis Reptile Expo and Exotic Animal Expo will be held monthly at the La Quinta Inn in Beech Grove. The show will be both Saturday and Sunday. Members of the HHS have agreed to man the booth at the show for club promotion and educational purposes. If you would like to help, please contact Ed Ferrar or Rex Morell.

Our next speaker, Kristen Wiley (Kentucky Reptile Zoo) is unable to make our meeting in person. However, she'll still be on the big screen with us via-Skype or Zoom. **Don't forget our October meeting will be on a special later date - October 28!**

Due to the pandemic, there are still limitations indoors at Holliday Park. **Only 18 people will be allowed to attend in person.** We still plan to hold the meeting on Facebook live. Thanks to Abbie Watson for streaming it live online again!

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

Study finds fungal disease of snakes in 19 states, Puerto Rico

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, News Bureau - October 8, 2020

"Ophidiomycosis -- formerly known as 'snake fungal disease' -- is an emerging infectious disease caused by the fungus *Ophidiomyces ophidiicola*," said Dr. Matt Allender, a professor in the veterinary diagnostic laboratory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign who led the new study. "It has been documented in over 15 genera of wild and captive snakes. Infection with the pathogen causes a wide range of clinical signs in snakes, from difficulty shedding skin, to crusts and ulcers on the head and body, and even death in some cases."

Allender is the director of the Wildlife Epidemiology Lab at the U. of I. and an expert on ophidiomycosis.

"We looked for this pathogen in samples from 657 snakes and found that 17% were infected. Our findings include the first reports of this disease in Oklahoma, Idaho and Puerto Rico," he said.

The team tested swab samples taken from snakes representing 58 species. The researchers used a qPCR assay they developed, which amplifies the DNA in small samples to detect and measure the extent of infection. Biologists who collected the samples also inspected the snakes for scabs or other signs of disease. The scientists detected the pathogen in samples from 113 snakes representing 25 species including copperheads, eastern diamondback rattlesnakes, Puerto Rican boas, sidewinders and whip snakes.

"Adults had greater odds of being diagnosed with ophidiomycosis than younger snakes," the researchers reported. "Snakes from Georgia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia all had greater odds of ophidiomycosis diagnosis, while snakes from Idaho were less likely to be diagnosed with the disease."

This likely reflects a larger distribution of this disease in snakes in the eastern U.S. than previously thought, and its possible expansion from east to west, Allender said. The disease was first confirmed in 2006 in a population of timber rattlesnakes in New Hampshire.

Snakes worldwide are suffering as a result of habitat loss, climate change and infectious diseases like ophidiomycosis. Their health and abundance are important to human health, as snakes control populations of small mammals that carry and amplify pathogens that also cause disease in humans such as hanatavirus and Lyme disease, Allender said.

Natural lands on military bases provide an unexpected sanctuary for many threatened or endangered species, he said.

Previous studies by project co-investigators with the Department of Defense have found that amphibian and reptile species living on DOD lands represent nearly two-thirds of the total native amphibian and reptile species documented in the continental U.S.

"Ophidiomycosis has potentially serious consequences for the success of snake conservation efforts in North America, threatening biodiversity across several habitats," Allender said.

The paper "Ophidiomycosis, an emerging fungal disease of snakes: Targeted surveillance on military lands and detection in the western US and Puerto Rico" is available from the U. of I. News Bureau.

2020 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

October 17/18, 2020 - Indianapolis Reptile Expo and Exotic Animal Expo – La Quinta Inn, 5120 Victory Drive, Indps. (317) 779-9851, Sat.-10-5, Sun 10-3

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

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

HHS Board of Directors - 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.**

The Monitor is printed on post-Consumer recycled paper.



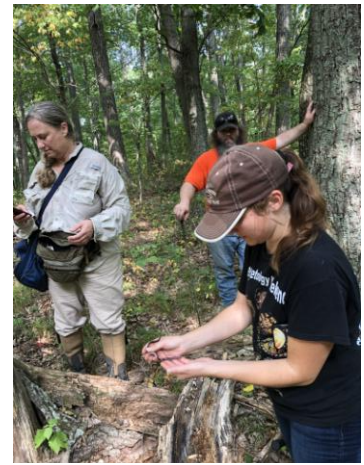
Pics from the HHS survey with the Indiana Forest Alliance



Longtail salamander (*Eurycea longicauda*)



Kimberly Scott, Rex Morell, and Roger Carter



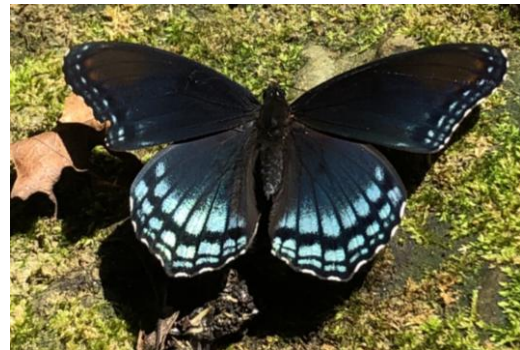
Dr. Schnapp, rex, and Kimberly



Horton and Rex Morell



Eastern box turtle



Red-spotted Admir

The Monitor is printed courtesy of



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



MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

☐ Individual/Family Membership \$20.00

☐ 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!