



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 22 Number 5

May 2011

President's Message

Jim Horton

Our annual *Hoosier Herpout* is this weekend, May 14 at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, in Bloomington. If you are into field herping and camping, this is the weekend for you! By the time this newsletter reaches you, we may be out in the field. See the website message board for up-to-date information. Hope to see you there!

June 26 is another live herp display at Holiday Park. HHS volunteers are needed. Please contact me for more information.

With hope, the new poster featuring the native *snakes of Indianapolis* will be available at the meeting. The poster is part of the HHS efforts toward education and conservation. Some of the posters will be donated to local non-profit institutions. There will be a small amount of these posters available. A small fee will be charged for them and all proceeds go directly to the HHS.

Several of us are back from Herpetology Weekend in the Red River Gorge area of Kentucky. It was the 20th year for this fun-filled event. The HHS represented about 12 members over the weekend. To see more on this, see the article inside.

The speaker for this month is Todd Pierson. If you've seen his talk before, you know what to expect. If you haven't, you're missing out on some of the best photos around!

May HHS Meeting

Wednesday, May 18th 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Todd Pierson, University of Georgia

Topic: "Tropical Salamanders: Diversity and Declines...But Not all Doom & Gloom"

Room #150, new wing of Pharmacy Building

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is proud to welcome **Todd Pierson** as this month's guest speaker. Todd is currently a student at the **Odum School of Ecology at the University of Georgia**. Those who have seen his two previous presentations for our society know what an extraordinary field herpetologist and excellent wildlife photographer he is. His talk will cover the incredible diversity of Plethodontidae in the tropics and tales of conservation woes- including corruption, drug-smuggling, and even murder. **Be sure to attend this event!!**

Welcome New Members!

Renewals:

Mike Wood
Garrett Kazmierski
Brett Clark

New Members:

Austin Borton

April Meeting – A Review

Jim Horton

Our special Guest Speakers for the evening: Stacey Summitt (Teacher, University High School, Carmel) and Ty Hoskins (Student – Butler University)

The topic was Amphibians of Panama. The bulk of the program consisted of their studies as students with the Butler University Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) internship program.

They concentrated on 3 field sites ranging from man-made and natural ponds, and swamps. The focus of the study was the Red-Eyed Tree frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*) and the stages of its development.

The students found a few previously unknown occurrences with this species. It is well known that Cat-eye snakes feed upon tree frog eggs. During research, they found that vibrations from cat-eye snakes caused the eggs to instinctively drop into the water below for safety. Adult male frogs work with vibrations as well. Males courting and combating for females will vibrate their bodies to ward off any competition. These vibrations may shake a whole branch with the two frogs on it.

The hourglass frog (*Hyla ebraccata*) was also studied. The two species breed in the same pools. At night during rainy conditions, eggs are laid on leaves. On sunny days, eggs are deposited on vegetation at the surface of the water for hydration and maximum protection from predators.

They also found that the tadpoles of this species will change the color of the tail during cooler temperatures. They are still inconclusive as to why this happens.

Ty Hoskins recently worked with the Tungara frog (*Enaystomops bustulosus*). This species is very

common in the country of Panama. They found that this frog's distinctive call will attract more than a mate. Bats have learned to recognize the call of this species. Small blood-sucking flies have also found a way to pinpoint the particular call of an individual frog.

The remainder of the talk was filled with colorful photos of some of the species they had encountered while in Panama. The Gladiator frog is one of the largest species in Central America. This species is one of the few that provides parental care of its eggs. This frog also is equipped with spurs on its hind legs. The spurs are used while combating other males during courtship.

Other notable species in the program included the Panamanian Golden Toad. Their pics were behind glass at a research center. This vulnerable species was last reported in the wild in 2007. Zoos and other organizations are currently breeding this amazing toad to keep its numbers up in captivity.

Stacey showed a slide asking the audience what was in her hand. A few responded "Caecilian"? It was indeed a caecilian. This large worm-like amphibian is seldom seen in the tropics and it was a great find for her and the other researchers.

One instance while in the field in Panama, Stacey's professor asked her to capture a large frog that was seen near the camp. She grabbed it and it let out a loud *blood-curling* scream. She didn't know that he was just playing around with her as she was unaware of this distress call of the smoky jungle frog.

The fer-de-lance was in one of the last slides. It was hanging around a bit too close to one of the research ponds!

We thank Stacey and Ty for a fantastic program!

20 years of Herpetology Weekend!

Jim Horton (photos-Jim Horton)

The 20th Herpetology Weekend has passed with great success and the folks who run the event in Slade, Kentucky don't plan on stopping it anytime soon.

Slade is located near the Red River Gorge in Daniel Boone National Forest. This area sits at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and it is incredibly picturesque. The rocky walls and outcrops beckon rock climbers and hikers from all over the U.S. and beyond.

You can't beat Herpetology Weekend (HW) for all that is involved. And it's a great deal. For a mere ten-bucks you get a weekend filled with herp-related events. Herpetology Weekend offers presentations featuring prominent biologists, researchers, naturalists and hobbyists. Saturday morning and afternoon gives ample opportunities for guided field trips into the Gorge area. You can't miss out on free admission to the Kentucky Reptile Zoo along with a venom extraction demonstration.

Herping field trips are offered all day Saturday into the Gorge area. This particular area of the Bluegrass State is home to many unique salamanders and HW attendees were not disappointed with their finds!



State Herpetologist John MacGregor identifying a red-elf

A two-hour break after the hikes is a great time to unwind at a favorite pizza hotspot. Miguels Pizza is THE spot for a tasty gourmet pie. Ours was coated with bacon, pepperoni, feta cheese, and banana peppers...mmm!

Herp Weekend attendees meet in the evening at the activity center in Natural Bridge State Park.

This special weekend featured Guest Speakers such as: John McGregor (Kentucky State Herpetologist), James Kiser, (Biologist-Stantec Consulting), Kristen Stanford (Biologist, Ohio State University, "featured on

the T.V. show - *Dirty Jobs*"), Bruce Jayne (University of Cincinnati), and Eric Juterbock (Ohio State University).



Presentations at the activity center

Live amphibian and reptilian specimens are displayed at the activity center as well. This year our friend Jim Harrison of the Kentucky Reptile Zoo exhibited live venomous and non-venomous snakes.

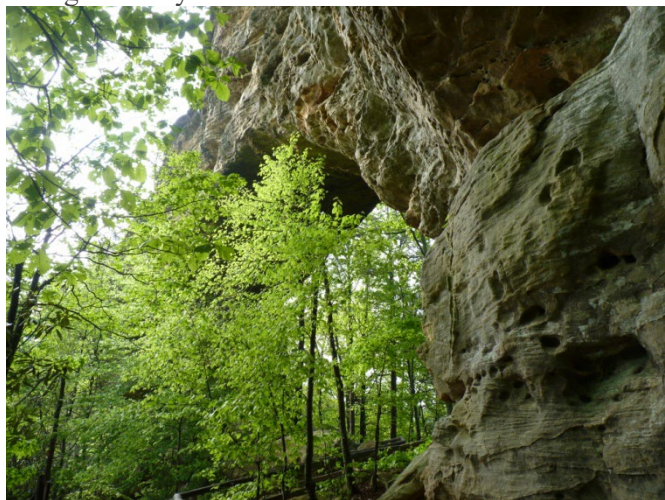
Colorful herp t-shirts are sold each year to help promote the event and to keep HW going financially. Door prizes are also part of the fundraising for HW. This year a one-of-a-kind carving of a tree frog was donated for the main door prize. Tickets sold for five-bucks and guess who won? Yep, I took home the coveted masterpiece!



An elated Jim Horton with winning door prize

After a buffet breakfast at the lodge, it's good to get your blood flowing with some activity. We find that a good way to do it is to hike straight up to the famous Natural Bridge. This sandstone "bridge" is an

incredible formation and a feat of *wear and tear* through time by **Mother Nature**.



The Natural Bridge

After that and before heading home, we stop by the Kentucky Reptile Zoo.



Gila Monster at KRZ

I hope to see even more HHS members next year at one of my favorite herp-related trips. For more pictures of Herpetology Weekend, check out the HHS message board at www.hoosierherpsoc.org

KNIVES AND HERP ART (Part 7)

Photos & story by Roger Carter



This knife has no real artwork on it but it was marketed as “Crocodile Bowie- I” (which meant that I had to have it) and was made in Pakistan. It is a good heavy bowie knife thirteen inches long with a razor sharp blade that is eight inches long and is made from stainless steel. The long slot in the blade is what’s called a blood groove to allow blood to flow freely. The handle is wood with different colors of red, green and tan. I don’t know what the pointed button at the end of the handle would be used for. Since it was labeled “I” I assume that the manufacturer has either made more in a series that I haven’t seen or had intended to make more.

The HHS website coordinator, Barbara Filtri, has created a special section on the home page to showcase herp art. You can all see color pictures of my herp art knives as they appear in the newsletter.

Friday Night Frogwatch Programs – Eagle Creek Park

Learn about frogs that call Eagle Creek Park home and then go out to visit a pond in search of frogs.

May 27 (9pm-10:30pm), June 3, 17 (9pm-10:30pm),

July 8 & 22 (9pm-10:30pm), August 5 (9pm-10:30pm)

\$5.00/person - Meet at the Earth Discovery Center (in park)

Pre-registration required – 317-327-7148 or www.indyparks.org

Keeping *Mole* Salamanders

By Jim Horton

(All photos by Jim Horton)

The Mole salamanders, Genus *Ambystoma*, are a rewarding species for the captive environment. These are robust creatures that do well in the right captive conditions. The Mole species in Indiana include the Tiger, small mouth, Jefferson's, marbled, blue-spotted, streamside, and spotted salamanders. These salamanders are *fossorial* by nature, remaining beneath the surface most of the year. Conditions below ground are moist, dark, and cool. Captive requirements should replicate these subterranean habitats.



Blue-spotted salamander *Ambystoma laterale*

With most amphibians, full-spectrum lighting and high temperatures are not required. *Ambystoma* species are no different. Keeping them is quite simple. They may be kept in glass aquaria, Rubbermaid, or any suitable enclosure. Substrate may be soil, furniture foam, gravel, or moss. A secure lid is also recommended to hold them safely in and to keep other animals (such as dogs or cats) out. Keep them in a cool dry area of the home. Avoid sunlight on the enclosure as this will raise the temperatures in the cage.



Marbled salamander *Ambystoma opacum*

I keep mine in my bedroom (the coolest area in my home). I use Rubbermaid containers for enclosures with shallow water and flat rocks stacked throughout. This way they may submerge in the water and stay dry when necessary.

The use of non-chlorinated water is recommended. Spring water may also be utilized for hydrating amphibians. I use tap water that has sat in open air for 24 hours. This helps dissipate the chlorine.

The mole salamanders are opportunistic and voracious feeders. I once heard someone say that if these salamanders were as large as a dog, they would be dangerous to small children. Natural food items consist of arthropods, vertebrates, and crustaceans. In captivity they may feed on earthworms, young mice, crickets, and super worms (beetle larvae). Even pieces of beef may be offered by tweezers or forceps.



Tiger salamander *Ambystoma tigrinum*

Handling should be minimal. Any handling should be in a scooping method, avoiding any touching of their skin. The skin of salamanders is quite delicate and everything we've touched is absorbed into their body. Cage mates are usually not recommended with larger species such as the tiger salamanders. Large tigers will easily consume smaller species and may take tails, limbs, or digits for a meal as well.

With proper husbandry, these beautiful and hardy salamanders may live up to 15 to 20 years!

EVENTS

May 18, 7:30 PM – General HHS Meeting, Guest Speaker – Todd Pierson, Topic: *Tropical Salamanders: Diversity and Declines...But Not all Doom and Gloom*

June 5, 2011 – Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, Admission \$6.00
www.indianareptileexpo.com

June 15, 2011 – HHS meeting, Topic – *Spiders of Indiana*

June 26, 2011 – 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: 11/13, 12/18 For info: (317) 861-550, www.midwestreptile.com

June 26, 2011 – *Scaly and Slimy Day* at Holiday Park, Indianapolis. Live herp exhibit by HHS members. All current members are welcome to display their amphibians and (or) reptiles. 2:00-3:30PM

August 2011 - 34th International Herpetological Symposium, Fort Worth, Texas

Classifieds

For sale: Decorative Quality Amish built sweater box rack system. Has 28 Clear sweater boxes, heat tape, Helix temperature controller, has rollers, storage space top and bottom, ready to plug in and use - 825.00 (with out Helix heat controller 700.00). Can send pictures or welcome to come and see in person.
Mike Wood 574 269 3441 twobears@embarqmail.com

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.**

(Note: Meetings are currently held at the Pharmacy building, room # 150)

Don't forget our web address!

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

www.Petfinder.com

Petfinder is an online, searchable database of animals that need homes. It is also a directory of more than 13,000 animal shelters and adoption organizations across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Organizations maintain their own home pages and available-pet databases.



Your HHS Board of Directors for 2011

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The Monitor is printed courtesy
The Harding Poorman Group

Got Rodents?

Hoosier Mouse Supply can take your orders for rodents and they will deliver to the monthly meetings. (317) 831-1219

EARPS, Exotic Animal Rescue and Pet Sanctuary (EARPS, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 non-profit rescue group made up of volunteers working together to improve the quality of life for pocket pets, exotic pets, and non-traditional pets through fostering, adopting, and educating, as well as helping control the pet population through spaying and neutering.

The North American Field Herping Association (NAFHA) www.naherp.com



A rare species of the Indiana racer – HA!

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!