

# 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 34 Number 2

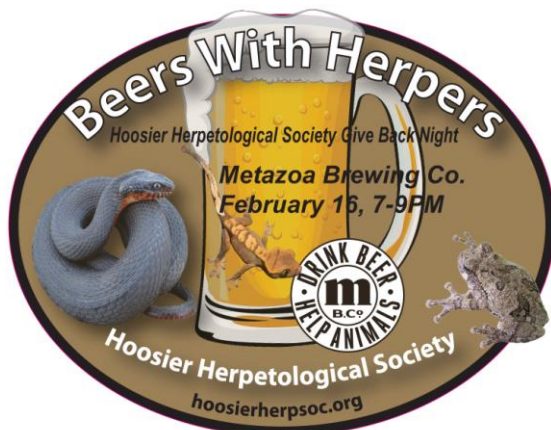
February 2023

### HHS Meeting

**February 15, 7:00PM, Holliday Park Nature Center**  
**Guests – Jim Horton (HHS) and Kristin Bingham (Holliday Park)**  
**Topic: Central Indiana FrogWatch Chapter Training**

Join Jim and Kristin for a look at FrogWatchUSA. This nationwide citizen science project is gaining in popularity. Be a part of helping science and our local frog and toad populations here in Indiana.

Even if you aren't considering participating in Frogwatch, you'll gain knowledge behind the inner workings of the program and learn about our native frogs and toads here in Indiana.



# 2023 Photo Contest Winners!

Congratulations to our photography contest entrants who placed this year!  
Thanks to all participants as well!

## **“Wild” category**

First place - Doug Stemke

Second Place - Jim Horton

Third Place - Ethan Estabrook

## **“Captive Category”**

First Place - Nan Schulte

Second Place - Anglea Thomas

Third Place - Jim Horton



## **TIMES HAVE CHANGED**

Early on in the reptile hobby there wasn't much captive breeding and any reptiles that were on the market were "Wild Caught" which at the time was the normal.

There were a few companies to order from and the animals came to us with parasites, and some dehydrated.

It was up to us the keepers to get them healthy, and even then the stress was hard on many of them which in turn we had to learn to deal with.

If we were lucky, they came in properly sexed as long as they were purchased thru reputable dealers.

Then people started breeding them in captivity and the hobby gained in popularity.

There was no cell phones or internet we actually traveled to see each other's collections of "normal looking" species of reptiles, and they were awesome to see the cleaner look and healthy animals.

As time went on new morphs were developed and it was an exciting new time, being a snake person, it was jaw dropping to see what was happening with basic colubrids, boas, and pythons.

There are some incredible morphs on the market now and who knows where it will take us next.

But....I have to admit I miss the days of early captive breeding, the excitement and travels.

Sometimes I look at some new morphs with very high prices and think to me that's just ugly and normal looks better.

Many of the "old timers" true pioneers of the reptile world are no longer with us anymore. I often think about those friends and have a heartfelt gratitude for the friendships and all I was taught both successes and failures.

It would be interesting if we could go back in time and have the newer generations see those animals and the excitement of the times when the animals were the top priority, I have no doubt they would enjoy it.

Look how far we have come and ask where do we go from here?

Mike Wood, Warsaw In

## **HHS board meetings**

**Board meetings are always the second Wednesday of the month, 7:30pm**

**Contact any board member for more locations.**

# 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!

## Renewals

Jonathan Renshaw

Nan Schulte

## Hoosier Herpetological Society Annual Student Presentation Award

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is offering an educational award of \$300 for outstanding herpetological research projects. This award is being offered to students from academic organizations within Indiana. The awarded applicant will present the research topic at one of our upcoming meetings in 2023. Meetings are held every third Wednesday at Holliday Park @ 7:00pm in Indianapolis, IN.

To be considered, please provide a description of the research topic and provide contact information by April 1st, 2023. Email application materials to ([hhsstudentaward@gmail.com](mailto:hhsstudentaward@gmail.com))



## President's message

Jim Horton

We had a busy day at Garfield Park on February 4. See who was there with photos in this issue. Look for us at Metazoa Brewing on the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month! We'll have our animals with us. Come on out and have a beer or two and support the HHS and Metazoa.

We're still looking into the situation with our website. We will let you know when a fix is near. Check social media for current updates.

The HHS Student Presentation Award is open to any student working on a project in the field of herpetology. If you win, you'll get \$300 and the opportunity to be one of our monthly guest speakers.

This month we will conduct FrogWatch Training at our meeting. The HHS has partnered with Holliday Park for a FrogWatchUSA central chapter. Even if you don't plan to be a part of this citizen science program, you just might learn a bit about our native frogs.



# The Black Kingsnake

Article and photos - Jim Horton

Black kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis getula nigra*) are one of the three “black” snakes that range in Indiana. This species isn’t the only kingsnake found here. The prairie kingsnake (*Lampropeltis calligaster*) is the other in the genus.

Black kingsnakes have a larger range than that of the prairie king. However, both ranges overlap on the western portion of Indiana.

Black kingsnakes are a large, stocky bodied snake.

Overall color is black with yellow crossbands or speckling throughout. Some specimens are almost completely black. The ventral side is handsomely patterned in a checkered black and white or cream.

Black and white bars on the upper lip are a good field feature. No other black snake in Indiana has it. The head is not distinct from the neck. The scales are smooth and have a shiny appearance. This species has a single anal plate. Young are black with yellow chain-like patterns.



The genus *Lampropeltis* is oviparous. Females will deposit 6 to 20 eggs in damp, rotting logs, wood chip piles, and other moist suitable substrate. Young hatch by means of a single, temporary egg tooth.

As adults, this species will reach 35 – 45 inches in length. The record in North America is 82 inches!

Habitat is both upland and lowland in sparse, dry woods, rocky hillsides, overgrown fields, forest edges, and near old buildings and structures. They are also found along the margins of wetland habitats. Herp enthusiasts may find them under boards, flat

rocks or other cover. Seasonal activity is early April to late October.

Black kingsnakes inhabit much of southern Indiana and into west-central Indiana along the Wabash River.

Prey may include, rodents, birds, lizards, and other snakes. This species is a powerful constrictor, often taking on snakes its own size. Kingsnakes are immune to the venom of North American pit vipers. They can easily survive a bite from a copperhead or rattlesnake in an attempt to consume it.

Many locals welcome these snakes as “friends” due to its ability to keep the venomous snakes in check.

When surprised, this snake will draw its body into an S-shaped position and strike repeatedly. It will also vibrate the tail to ward off predators. A foul musk irritant may also be emitted from the cloacae.

This snake will typically calm after gentle handling. However, they are also known to bite and chew when irritated. When they decide to chew away at one’s hand or finger, it may be difficult to get them to release.



Kingsnakes are popular with herpetological enthusiasts due to their many unique characteristics and “sometimes” gentle disposition. They are definitely a favorite of mine to encounter in the field.

## References:

Minton, *Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana*, revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001  
Powell, Conant, Collins, *Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern/Central North America*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016



**Stream treefrog (*Hyloscirtus tolkieni*)**

Source: [discoverwildlife.com](http://discoverwildlife.com)

Just a single individual of *Hyloscirtus tolkieni*, a stream treefrog, has been found and captured, despite focused searches during the initial fieldwork. However, this one individual was enough for the authors of this paper to be able to describe it as a new species. This is because it was distinct enough in its morphology from other species in the *Hyloscirtus* genus.

With only one individual found so far, the species' known distribution is limited to the place where it was found and captured – the southern eastern slopes of the

## New species of Treefrog discovered in Ecuador

Cordillera Oriental, a chain of Andean mountains in the Río Negro-Sopladora National Park of Ecuador.

This genus of treefrogs is called stream treefrogs as they are usually found near streams, in which they breed. For this species, the specific epithet 'tolkieni' is named in honour of the author J.R.R. Tolkien, known for his works such as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The scientists say that the colours of the newly described species “evoke the magnificent creatures that seem to only exist in fantasy worlds”.

## HHS at Garfield Park

Our members showed up at the Garfield Park Conservatory on Saturday, February 4 to exhibit amphibians and reptiles while discussing their biology and other amazing facts. Our crew entertained a large crowd for four hours of everything herps! There was almost never a break from the crowd during our time there on Saturday. Needless to say, the staff at the conservatory were thrilled!

We appreciate our members, staff at Garfield Park, and our visitors. HHS members in attendance were, Ethan Estabrook, Kimberly Scott, Roger Carter, Holly Carter, Rex Morell, Jazmyn Noaks, and Jim Horton. Thanks to Dale Schoentrup and Jonathan Renshaw for being there and supporting the show.





# KNIVES AND HERP ART

Story and photos by Roger Carter



This is a nice set that I bought as separate pieces instead of a set. The large knife shows the head and a few inches of the body of a rattlesnake while the smaller knife shows the last three and one-half inches of the tail of the rattlesnake. Both blades are forged Damascus steel with brass guards while the head and tail of the snake are made from deer antler. On the handles near the blades is engraved the manufacturer "LONE WOLF".

The large knife is ten and one-eighth inches long with the blade five inches long. The small knife is six and thirteen/sixteenths inches long with the blade two and five/eighths inches long. Both blades are sharp.

## 2023 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

**February 15, 2023** HHS meeting, Topic – FrogWatchUSA training. FrogWatchUSA is a citizen science data collection platform.

**February 16, 2023** – “Beers with Herpers” location - Metazoa Brewing.

**February 25, 2023** – HHS at Marsh Madness birding event in Linton, IN. Live herp display.

**February 26, 2023** - Midwest Reptile Show, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. 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) Other dates 3/26, 6/26

**March 15, 2023** – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Katelyn Calhoun (documentary filmmaker), Topic: TBA

**April 19, 2023** – HHS meeting, Topic – TBA

**July 25-28, 2023** - International Herpetological Symposium in Schaumburg, Illinois.



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Look for the HHS  
on social media



**www.hoosierherpsoc.org**

### ***HHS Board of Directors - 2023***

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WEBSITE COORDINATOR	Open		
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	Rex Morell	(317) 894-1193	<a href="mailto:wrexmorell@gmail.com">wrexmorell@gmail.com</a>

**Don't forget that the HHS has an Amazon Smile account. If you shop Amazon, please look for us!**

**The Monitor is printed on 20% post-consumer recycled paper.**

Frogs will soon be on the move to breeding wetlands. Here are two of our common leopard frogs.



Southern Leopard Frog (*Rana sphenoccephalus*)



Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

\_\_\_\_ New Member

\_\_\_\_ Renewal

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\_\_\_\_ Sustaining Membership \$25.00 or more

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