



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 19 Number 3

March 2008

President's Message

Jim Horton

Spring is officially here (as of last Thursday)! Plants are emerging and amphibians are calling. Keep your eyes and ears ready for amphibian activity (and don't forget to fill out your data sheets). I had a chance to check out some amphibian breeding ponds and they are in full swing! Now is the time to see them because they won't be active for too long.

Check out our new front page on the HHS website! Richard Searcey has done a nice job with it. We still have the same familiar message board. Please give us your comments about the website on whether you like it or not. More educational information will be added to the site in the coming weeks!

If you are interested in exhibiting your animals at one of our shows, you're in luck! Saturday April 19 is our exhibit at the Garfield Park Conservatory from 10 A.M to 2 P.M. Of course we have the big one in Evansville, the Reptile Invasion. That will be down the road a bit - June 14 & 15. And, even further on the calendar is the Reptile Days

The HHS has continued to educate and exhibit with our animals but we would like to move in the direction of conservation of amphibians/reptilians. I have solicited a few institutions offering our assistance with numerous help with herp monitoring, surveying and (or) similar projects. We hope something will pan out here in the future. If you know of any landowners, nature centers, or any institutions that are in need of help with projects involving herps, please contact any board member by phone or email.

Don't forget our alternate meeting night Wednesday, the 26th.

SPECIAL NOTICE

**We are scheduled for Room 105 at Butler for the
March, April and May meetings.**

WELCOME NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS!

Renewals

Robert Tyler

Mitchell Wehrle

Jim Horton

Garret Kazmierski

Richard Nohr – (sustaining member)

*******March General Meeting – Special Date*******

Wednesday, March 26

General Meeting: Wednesday March 26th 7:30 P.M.

**Guest Speaker: N. Thomas Hakansson,
University of Kentucky**

Topic: The Herps of Kenya

Butler University, Gallahue Hall, Room#105

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is proud to announce that our guest speaker is N. Thomas Hakansson from the University of Kentucky. Dr. Hakansson, originally from Sweden, lived in Africa for three years doing field work. He has been active as a field herper and has written articles on the natural history and distribution of reptiles. Among his research was a long term field study of the reproductive ecology of the European adder (*Vipera berus*). This resulted in several articles with him as a co-author, the last of which was published in the journal Nature.

When he was younger he kept a number of snakes, mainly different types of vipers. He currently owns several species of *Uromastyx*, which he says are wonderful and personable lizards.

His talk is an account of his herpetological observations during his three years living in coastal Africa. During his field experiences he found many herps such as the green Mamba, irascible burrowing vipers, a multitude of beautiful tree frogs, and a variety of other fascinating creatures.

This is a perfect chance for our members to take a tropical break from our winter season.

A reminder that our meeting will be March 26th, the fourth week, not the usual third week. See you there!

Herps and the Science Olympiad

Ed Ferrer

On Saturday February 23rd Butler University was the site of the Science and Mathematics Olympiad. This is an academic competition that pits two-member teams from high schools and middle schools in different categories. This year one of the categories was Reptiles and Amphibians for middle schoolers and Herpetology for high school students. The Hoosier Herpetological Society volunteered to make up test questions with answers and supply specimens and other items to make the event a practical or lab oriented test situation. The students, teacher coaches and other people involved in the competition gave very good comments about the herp experience.

I want to thank HHS members Jim Horton, David Mitchell, Angela Thomas, Roger Carter, and Rick Marrs who helped me by bringing live specimens, photos, and helping monitor the test and assisting in grading the answer sheets. A special thank you for Dr. Steve Perrill how stopped by and helped supply answer sheets for the students.

This is a good example of how the Hoosier Herpetological Society works to educate the public regarding amphibians and reptiles and the conservation of these often misunderstood part of our natural wildlife.

HERPETOLOGY GREATS

CARL PATTERSON SCHMIDT — 1890-1957

Carl Schmidt was an American biologist and herpetologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In 1922 he established the Herpetological Department in Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. He had written many publications including: *The American Alligator* (1922), *Crocodiles* (1944), *Crocodile Hunting in Central America* (1952), *Checklist of North American Amphibians and Reptiles* (1953), and *Living Reptiles of the World* (1957), which he co-authored with Robert Inger.

A Trip to the Cincinnati Zoo

by Ed Ferrer

On Friday Mar. 1st Holly Carter invited me to travel with her and Roger to go to the Cincinnati Zoo on Saturday. Having a huge case of "cabin fever", I jumped at the chance to get out and see some wildlife in one of the highest rated zoos in the United States.

After a breakfast at Bob Evans, we were off to the Buckeye state for our zoo visit. It was a chilly 42 degrees but it was good to get out of the house. We went to the Manatee Springs exhibit which showed the huge, surprisingly graceful manatees viewed from underwater. This exhibit also an excellent display of Florida reptiles that included large, beautiful specimens of timber rattlesnakes and Eastern diamondback rattlers. Also, included in the exhibit were several rat snakes and corn snakes. Other displays included a Florida cottonmouth and a Southern copperhead as well as several species of turtles, frogs and toads. Other displays featured skeletons of various reptiles such as alligators and alligator snapping turtles. I really enjoyed this exhibit because I think it showed how important reptiles and amphibians were to the Florida wilderness.

Due to the cool weather many of the ungulates (hoofed animals) were not on exhibit. We did see some beautiful bongo antelopes with their striking chestnut brown coat marked with white stripes and some zebras. I also loved the gorillas. They are so awesome and intelligent looking! I enjoyed the polar bears shown in an exhibit, similar to the one in our Indianapolis Zoo, which allows both underwater and above water viewing. We saw two beautiful white tigers that due to the chilly weather were quite active instead of juts laying around and hiding as they often do in hot summer days.

The Reptile House was very impressive. In the center of the room was a a pit of crocodiles and turtles. Many types of snakes were displayed including many different rattlesnakes, colorful tree vipers, many types of pythons and a large king cobra. Both Gila monsters and beaded lizards were shown. There was enough variety in realistic exhibits to surely please any "herp" hobbyist.

The Nocturnal House offered nighttime views of many nocturnal animals including vampires bats, large fruit bats, fennec foxes, barn owls among other creatures shown under red lights. The cat house offered many smaller, less famous members of the cat family. My personal favorites were the clouded leopard and the ocelot.

After wandering up and down the hills of the Cincy Zoo we stopped for a lunch and then visited the bird house and the marvelous World of Insect house. My favorite exhibit was the leaf cutting ants. It was just amazing watching them marching into the nest carrying the bits of leaves. We then headed back to Indy a little tired from our hiking but glad we got out of our houses. If you are ever in the Cincinnati area, I highly recommend a trip to this zoo.

Helpful Herp Hints

Cleaning the enclosures of skittish lizards such as basilisks, agamids, or whiptails can be a challenge.

Escapes are very common during this time. Try changing them over to a temporary tank in the bathtub. They lose traction on the slippery surface and this prevents them from escaping. For smaller lizards, don't forget to cover the drain plug.

GOOD GRIEF

Submitted by Dave Mitchell (from Nuvo publications)

In early January, when a national deep freeze extended even to the Florida Keys, iguanas fell into their natural hibernation-like torpor, and some compassionate Floridians, unaccustomed to seeing iguanas that appeared nearly dead, took them indoors to warm them up, which is a big mistake. The owner of the veterinary clinic in Marathon said one "sweet lady" called him about the 5-footer she had dragged inside. "When it woke up," said the vet, "she couldn't understand why it seemed to becoming after her. When they warm up, they go back to being a wild animal."

Since at least the early 1990's trillions of discarded plastic items have converged, held together by swirling currents, to form the Great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch that now covers an area twice the size of the United States and weighs about 100 million tons. "Every little piece of plastic manufactured in the past 50 years that made it into the ocean is still out there," said one researcher quoted in a February dispatch in London's The Independent. An oceanographer predicted that the Patch would double in size in just the next decade. A 2006 United Nations office estimated that every square mile of ocean contains, on average, 46,000 pieces of floating plastic

Federal Proposal Banning Pythons and Boas

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has made a significant move towards banning the importation and interstate transport of Boa Constrictors and Pythons in the United States. Quietly published in the Federal Register, the agency is accepting public comments until April 30. If enacted this will devastate an already hard hit industry, dealing a fatal death blow to a large number of businesses dependent on this segment of the industry and drying up the supply of these pets to pet owners across the United States.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or We), are reviewing available biological and economic information on constrictor snakes in the Python, Boa and Eunectes genera for possible addition to the list of injurious wildlife under the Lacey Act. The importation and introduction of constrictor snakes into the natural ecosystems of the United States may pose a threat to the interests of agriculture, horticulture, forestry; to the health and welfare of human beings; and to the welfare and survival of wildlife and wildlife resources in the United States. An injurious wildlife listing would prohibit the importation into, or transportation between, States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States by any means, without a permit. Permits may be issued for scientific, medical, educational, or zoological purposes. This document seeks comments from the public to aid in determining if a proposed rule is warranted.

<http://www.pethobbyist.com/sitenews/...hons-Boas.html>

Online comments can be made here:

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=SubmitComment&o=09000064803a565f>

Or mailed here:

U.S. Mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing,
Attn: RIN 1018-AV68, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 222,
Arlington, VA 22203.

Instructions: We will not accept e-mail or faxes. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Comments section below for more information).

Herpetology Weekend

Natural Bridge State Resort Park, May 2 & 3

Registration upon arrival: \$5 per adult / \$2 per child age 12-17 / Free for children under 12

FRIDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS: 7:30 PM AT THE ACTIVITIES CENTER

Marty Rosenberg: Amazing Amphibians and Remarkable Reptiles

John MacGregor: Herpetologist's Galapagos Adventure

SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS: 7:30 PM AT THE ACTIVITIES CENTER

James Kiser: Herpetology of the Big South Fork National Recreation Area

Tom Biebighauser: Building Habitat for Spadefoots in British Columbia

FIELD TRIPS: Field trips leave the Hemlock Lodge at 9:00am and 1:30 pm on Saturday

Visit herp hot spots with knowledgeable herpers for fun, photography, and slime!

Venom Extraction: At the Kentucky Reptile Zoo at 1:00 pm Saturday and Sunday

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE: Quiz your knowledge of amphibians and reptiles - you might win a herpin' prize!

For more information contact the
Park Naturalist Office at 606 663-2214
or brian.gasdorf@ky.gov

HHS Members exhibit photos at nature center

Several members are exhibiting their amphibian and reptile photography at the Zion Nature Center in Zionsville. The display runs until early April. The nature center is open to the public on weekends.



Roger and Holly Carter, Pat Hammond,
Angela Thomas and Jim Horton

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS IN HERPING

By Garry Bryan

The fear of snakes is Ophidiophobia or how my mother felt **normal** people should feel about snakes; even a picture of a snake would “give her the willies” and “make her skin crawl” she used to say. Unfortunately, for her, I was not **normal**; I developed a weird fondness for these scaly legless reptiles at a very young age, bringing home, in my butterfly net, a baby watersnake when I was six. In my mothers eyes things went down hill from there.

By eleven, I had a few “pet” snakes that my mother grudgingly allowed me to keep caged on the back porch. There was but one condition included in this arrangement: all snakes had to be released before cold weather arrived, no snakes allowed in the house **yet**.

I had one favorite snake then, a rather large, docile watersnake that tolerated handling well which might explain, but not adequately, why I decided to tote this robust three and a half foot watersnake onto the roof one pleasant Sunday morning.

As fate would have it, my mother was doing laundry that morning as well. “Natrix”, the watersnake, crawled about on the warming tarpaper while my pre-adolescent mind wandered afar. My unsuspecting mother labored below, from the laundry room to the clothesline, a route that took her directly beneath both son and serpent.

Unbeknownst to me there was a hole in the porch roof that by coincidence lay just above the back door. Natrix, more sharp-eyed than his captor, spotted this escape route and made a beeline towards it, evidently not appreciating our morning convenes. Startled back to life when I realized that only part of the snake was now visible on the roof, I made an awkward yet successful grab at the tail just as it was about to disappear and drop to the porch below. I thought I had headed off a real disaster. I was sorely mistaken.

My mother, with a basket load of wet laundry, had just stepped through the back door at the precise moment that Natrix exited the roof, he now dangled just inches from my ophidiophobic mother’s face. Evidently, some unpleasantness occurred betwixt my mother and the dangling serpent, as there was a raucous commotion from below, the result of the laundry basket, the back door and my shrieking mother colliding with large garden implements falling to the floor. Her shrill scream, colorful expletives and use of my full name, including middle, was not a good sign. Cold weather had not yet arrived but I knew it was time to “release the serpents”.

My poor mother was involved in various snake dilemmas through the years, one of which involved her bonnet style hair dryer and a chilled boa constrictor, but that story will have to wait for another time.

NEW BOOK: THE BIOLOGY OF THE [COMMON] SNAPPING TURTLE

\$75.00 hardcover Plus \$7.50 Shipping and Handling.

February 2008

240 pp. 15 halftones, 48 line drawings

John Hopkins University Press

Anthony C. Steyermark, Michael S. Finkler & Ronald J. Brooks. John Hopkins University Press. 240pp.

About The Authors:

Anthony C. Steyermark is an assistant professor of biology at University of St. Thomas. Michael S. Finkler is an associate professor of biology at Indiana University. Ronald J. Brooks is a professor of zoology at the University of Guelph in Ontario. edited by Anthony C. Steyermark, Michael S. Finkler, and Ronald J. Brooks

Description:

The name "snapping turtle" conjures up images of powerful, prehistoric-looking beasts that lurk in the dark waters of local swimming holes. Beyond its status as childhood legend, *Chelydra serpentina* is one of the most interesting reptiles of the New World. One of our largest turtles, this animal weighs up to thirty-five pounds, lays as many as one hundred eggs and can deliver a nasty bite. Due to its wide distribution, abundance, and large reproductive output, the Common Snapping Turtle has become one of the most extensively studied species of reptiles.

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Anthony C. Steyermark, Michael S. Finkler, Ronald J. Brooks, and a team of experts detail the systematics, energetics, growth patterns, sex determination, and population genetics of snapping turtles and devote special attention to the fossil record of the snapping turtle family Chelydridae.

The first broad biological treatment of the Common Snapping Turtle, this is the definitive reference for anyone working with or interested in this fascinating reptile.

How To Order:

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Credit card ^We only accept Master or Visa card. Send us you cc number, expiration date and of course billing address, and if different shipping address. (For safety sake, split the credit card number in two and send in different emails.)

HERP HAPPENINGS

March 26, 2008 – HHS General Meeting, Special Guest Speaker: N. Thomas Hakansson, (University of Kentucky). Topic - The Herps of Kenya

March 28, 2008 – Friday Night Frog Watch, Eagle Creek Park, 8:30 PM-10 PM, \$5.00, Learn frog calls, and visit ponds to search for frogs. Bring flashlights, rain gear, and boots/old shoes. (317) 327-7148 (other dates: April 18 & May 23)

April 13, 2008 – 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 (Other dates, June 29, August 24.)

April 19, 2008 – HHS live amphibian/reptile exhibit at Garfield Park, Indpls. 10am-2pm

May 2 & 3, 2008 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Park, Slade, Kentucky,

May 24, 2008 - Hoosier Herpout – Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, Monroe Reservoir, Camping, field herping, identification, photography and camping.

June 6-8, 2008 – North American Amphibian Conference, Erving, MA, www.tnaac.org

June 14,15, 2008 – Reptile Invasion, Large public exhibit of amphibians/reptiles and programs. Wesselman Woods Nature Center, Evansville, IN 10-4

July 26, 27, 2008 – Reptile Days at the Indiana State Museum, 11-4 (Sat.) & 12-4 (Sun.)

INDIANATURTLECARE.COM

Indiana Turtle Care, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to the conservation, rehabilitation, education and rescue of turtles and tortoises.

Central Indiana Frog Watchers

(the local chapter of the National Wildlife Federation's Frogwatch). Monthly meetings are held at the Camp Cullom Nature Center in Frankfort, IN. For more info. Contact Wendell Zetterberg at wzetterberg@hotmail.com or (765) 249-2298

HHS member spotlight profile

Name – Tristan Stahl

Town or city - Fishers

Age you found interest in herpetology? Age 8

What (amphibians/reptiles) do you like? Sideneck turtles, cornsnakes, red-eared sliders

What (amphibians/reptiles) do you keep? One cornsnake but my house has several others I can handle.

Do you exhibit your animals at hhs shows? I help my brother exhibit his herps.

What do you like most about the hhs? There is always a good program that is new and exciting.

When did you join the HHS? - 1999

Other hobbies? Caving, hiking, and music.

Do you field herp? If so where have you been? The amphibian ponds in brown county

Where do you get your herps? My brother gets them for me.

Have you ever bred any herp species? (if so, what kind?) no

Anything else you would like to ad? I enjoy photos of herps.



Helpful Herp Hints

Cleaning the enclosures of skittish lizards such as basilisks, agamids, or whiptails can be a challenge. Escapes are very common during this time. Try changing them over to a temporary tank in the bathtub. They lose traction on the slippery surface and this prevents them from escaping. For smaller lizards, don't forget to cover the drain plug.

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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 7:30 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.**

2008 OFFICERS

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MEMBER AT LARGE	Mike Wood	twobears@embarqmail.com

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, 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

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Address Correction Requested

☐ If this area is checked, your membership will expire this month!