

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 37 Number 6

June 2026

HHS Monthly Meeting

Guest Speaker – Katie Kolcun

Katie is a naturalist and wildlife rehabilitator at Eagle Creek Park, as well as the Vice President of the Hoosier Herp Society.

Topic: “Rattlesnake Field Day: Surveying Techniques for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Michigan”

Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes are a federally threatened species ranging throughout the Great Lakes region. Learn how researchers in Michigan locate, monitor, and study these secretive rattlesnakes, explore the habitats they call home, and discover why conservation efforts are critical to the species' future.

Wednesday, June 17, 7:00PM

Holliday Park Nature Center



Western Chorus frog
(*Pseudacris triseriata*)

President's message

Jim Horton

I hope those members who met us in Monroe County for the Herpout had a good time. We had a nice turnout with 23 people attending! Our finds weren't as good as in years past but we had a great time in the field. I'll have a review in next newsletter next month.

Sherman Minton Presentation Award winner – Gracie Hedgpeth from Notre Dame gave us an outstanding presentation last month. Hope you were able to see it. We hope to have Gracie back again for a presentation in the future.

The Annual SnakeFest at Brown County State Park is July 18. The HHS will be partnering with the park for the day featuring live snakes and presentations. Hope to see some of you there for the day.

This month, our own Katie Kolcun will give a presentation for our members about surveying for eastern massasauga. Her talks are always fun-filled and educational! See you at the meeting!

The HHS is hosting the 47th Midwest Herpetological Symposium in November! This MHS is a fundraiser for the HHS as well as an entertaining and educational gathering. We will need our members to help make this a successful conference. If you would like to help with this event, please contact any of our board members.

Welcome new members!

THEA GESSLER
BRYSON BUTCHER

What You Missed at May General Meeting

By Holly Carter



Gracie Hedgpeth, PhD student, Notre Dame. And HHS Sherman Minton Award Winner.
Topic: Developing and Implementing a Prophylaxis Treatment against Chytrid Fungus.
41% of amphibians threatened with doomsday fungus that's water born burrows into skin.
Eradication is not possible as it's globally affected. Instead, improving tolerance and resistance of Chytrid to amphibians at all stages of development being needed. Some vaccines have been tried before but have not worked well.

Gracie has taken live Chytrid Fungus and with equipment from Notre Dame has filtered and detoxified the fungus. This has become an innoculent that is water-soluble and inexpensive to produce. She has been doing research on dosing regimens, mainly on tadpoles in water tanks, and finds even the smallest amount can provide resistance. It's absorbed through the skin and doing 4 day, 8 day, 12 day and 16 day treatments to find the best dosages while tadpoles are going thru their growth stages testing on effectiveness to challenges of Chytrid.

Tolerances (health and survival) of animals seem to be on duration of treatments and not too much on dosage. Over-dosing was tested and found it took a very high exposure of innoculent to produce problems to tadpoles and adults. Problems were breakdown of skin cells.

Testing is being done on a couple of outdoor native ponds to further see how to get the best way to treat these animals in a wild setting.

So far, This is all looking to be very promising.

Indiana's Two Species of Chorus Frogs

Article and Photos – Jim Horton



When winter begins to loosen its grip on Indiana, one of the first signs of spring is not a flower or a budding tree—it is sound. Across wetlands, roadside ditches, and temporary woodland pools, tiny chorus frogs begin calling in loud, raspy choruses that can seem impossibly powerful for animals barely an inch long. Indiana is home to two species of these remarkable amphibians: the Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*) and the Boreal Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris maculata*).

Chorus frogs are among Indiana's smallest frogs, typically measuring only about 1 to 1.5 inches in length. They are usually tan, gray, or brown and are marked by three dark stripes running down their backs, although the stripes may sometimes appear broken into spots. A dark stripe extends from the snout through the eye along the side of the body.

Despite their size, chorus frogs are famous for their calls. Males gather around shallow breeding pools during late winter and early spring, producing a harsh, rising trill often compared to running a fingernail along the teeth of a comb. When dozens or hundreds call together, the sound can be nearly deafening.

The Western Chorus Frog

The Western Chorus Frog is the more widespread of Indiana's two chorus frog species. It occurs throughout much of the state and can be found in a variety of habitats, including wet meadows,

marshes, swamps, and temporary ponds. Breeding typically begins as early as February and continues through April, making it one of Indiana's earliest breeding amphibians.

Like many amphibians, Western Chorus Frogs depend on seasonal wetlands. Females attach clusters of eggs to aquatic vegetation, and tadpoles develop rapidly before temporary pools dry out. Adults spend much of the year hidden among grasses, leaf litter, and other ground cover, feeding on insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates.

The Boreal Chorus Frog

The Boreal Chorus Frog closely resembles the Western Chorus Frog, making the two species difficult to distinguish visually. In fact, they have only relatively recently recognized them as separate species within what was once considered a single species complex. Genetic studies helped clarify the differences and distributions of these frogs.

In Indiana, the Boreal Chorus Frog appears to be limited primarily to the northwestern and western portions of the state. It is also found at places such as Indiana Dunes National Park, where amphibian monitoring programs have documented its presence.

Like its western cousin, the Boreal Chorus Frog breeds in shallow wetlands and temporary pools during early spring. Its appearance, habits, and call are very similar, making field identification challenging without careful study or knowledge of local distributions.

Chorus frogs play an important role in Indiana's ecosystems. Tadpoles help recycle nutrients in wetland environments, while both tadpoles and adults serve as food for fish, birds, snakes, and mammals. Because amphibians are sensitive to environmental changes, their populations can also provide valuable clues about the health of wetlands and surrounding habitats.

The dependence of chorus frogs on seasonal wetlands makes them vulnerable to habitat loss, drainage projects, pollution, and changes in precipitation patterns. Protecting wetlands and vernal pools helps ensure that these early spring singers remain part of Indiana's natural heritage.

Most Hoosiers are far more likely to hear a chorus frog than to see one. Their small size, camouflage, and secretive habits keep them hidden for much of the year. Yet on mild evenings in late winter and early spring, their calls transform wetlands across the state into vibrant soundscapes.

Whether it is the widespread Western Chorus Frog or the more localized Boreal Chorus Frog, these tiny amphibians provide one of Indiana's most recognizable and welcome signs that spring has arrived.

The HHS is selling this comprehensive Indiana field guide for \$40 each.

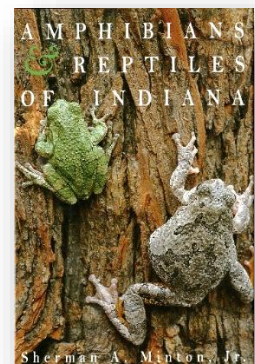
Get your Indiana field guide!

Amphibians & Reptiles of Indiana, Revised Second Edition

Minton, Sherman A.Jr.

ISBN 10: 1883362105 / ISBN 13: 9781883362102

Published by Indiana Academy of Science, 2001



47th Midwest Herpetological Symposium

Indianapolis Indiana

November 13/14, 2026

La Quinta Inn & Suites, 5120 Victory Dr, Indianapolis
Hosted by the Hoosier Herpetological Society



Featured guest speakers:

Dr. Thomas Pauley - Marshall University
Nate Engbrecht - State Herpetologist, Indiana
Jason Holzworth - Wildlife Photographer
Terry Vandeventer – Herpetologist, Miss
Bethannie Perrine – Indiana State University
John Burris – Field herper and world traveler
Twan Leenders – Researcher/Conservationist
Steve Thompson – DVM – Purdue University

Join herpetologists, conservationists, photographers, educators, students, and reptile & amphibian enthusiasts from across the Midwest for a weekend of presentations, live animals, networking, book signings vendors, auctions, and herpetological education.

[47th Annual Midwest Herpetological Symposium | Hoosier Herp Society](#)

FROG
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WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE TO THE HHS MIDWEST SYMPOSIUM AUCTION?

We are looking for unique herp-related items for the auction. Artwork, books, or any item(s) that might help raise funds. Please contact any board member for information on donating to the symposium auction.

Venomous Himalayan pit viper was actually 5 different species all along

Hidden deep in the towering mountains of the Himalayas, one of Asia's most mysterious venomous snakes has been keeping a major secret for over 160 years. Scientists have now discovered that the so-called Himalayan pit viper is not just one species, but actually five separate species — including three completely unknown to science until now.



Paratype of the newly described species *Gloydius hindukushensis* from northwestern Pakistan and *Gloydius nepalensis* from Nepal. Credit: Dr. Daniel Jablonski and Dr. Frank Tillack

The towering mountain ranges of Asia remain some of the least explored places on Earth when it comes to wildlife. Now, an international team of scientists has discovered that one of the region's most mysterious venomous snakes is not a single species after all. Instead, the Himalayan pit viper group consists of five separate species, including three previously unknown to science.

The findings were published in the open access journal *ZooKeys*. Researchers combined modern genetic analysis with skeletal studies, physical characteristics, and ecological observations to reexamine the snakes. Their work revealed that the Himalayan pit viper, first described in 1864 and long believed to be a widespread single species, actually represents several deeply distinct evolutionary lineages.

Source: sciencedaily.com



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Look for the HHS
on social media



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2026 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

June 14, 2026 - Midwest Reptile Show – Indiana State Fairgrounds, Agriculture/Horticulture Bldg. 10:00AM-5:00PM Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis. \$9.00 admission, reptiles, amphibians, books, cages, feeder animals, and other supplies. www.midwestreptile.com

June 17, 2026 – HHS monthly meeting, Guest Speaker – Katie Kolcun (HHS/Eagle Creek Park) Topic: “Rattlesnake Field Day: Surveying Techniques for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Michigan”

July 15, 2026 – HHS monthly meeting. Topic – Annual Show and Tell meeting. Members are encouraged to bring their favorite live herps, artwork, field guides, or other herpetology related items.

July 18, 2026 - Snake Fest, Brown County State Park. 11:00AM-5PM, Presentations, live snake displays, rattlesnake walk, and more.

August 8, 2026 – HHS river float. Join HHS members in a kayak/canoe for a day of enjoying nature. Water snakes, turtles, and other wildlife are abundant on this trip.

November 13/14, 2026 - Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Hosted by the HHS. Guest speakers (Fri/Sat) Ice-breaker, Live and silent auctions, banquet and more.

www.hoosierherpsociety.org

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new member renewal

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