

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 8

August 2026

HHS Monthly Meeting

Guest Speaker – John Burris

Topic: *Herping China*

Wednesday, August 19, 7:00PM

Holliday Park Nature Center

John Burris is a resident of Northwest Indiana with a passion for reptiles and amphibians. While he does not have formal education in Herpetology, John considers himself a citizen scientist contributing over 8,400 records from 26 countries to HerpMapper. He has worked closely with Nate Engbrecht and the Indiana DNR on projects involving snake fungal disease, plains leopard frogs and chorus frogs. Mr. Burris is a member of the non-profit organization Nova Inventa, which seeks to discover and document new species around the world. John will provide a presentation on herping China, but is also open to any questions regarding herping in Indiana, travel or anything of interest to the group.



President's message

Jim Horton

Big thanks to Katie Kolcun for delivering a great talk for the group last month. Despite some slight technical issues, she kept a professional presentation going. Well done and again, thanks Katie!

SnakeFest was held at Brown County State Park on July 18. The HHS partnered with the state park for the day featuring live snakes and presentations. Thanks to our members who spent the day talking about snakes with part visitors. Look for a review in this issue.

We just had our annual float on the Driftwood River in Edinburgh. We saw some cool species, had good weather, and spent the day with a great bunch of people! See our article in this issue for the highlights.

This month, our guest speaker is John Burris. John is an excellent field herper with a lifetime of experience. This is our first time having John as a guest speaker. I can't wait to see his presentation on China!

We're gearing up for the 47th Midwest Herpetological Symposium in November! I'm confident this is going to be a great conference! If you like herpetology, you'll love this event. There is plenty to offer for everyone!

Welcome new and returning members!

New

Carol Clark
Kaitlin Rogers
Roger Sieloff

RENEWALS

Jet Kaiser
Carl McDougall

What you missed at last HHS Meeting July 15 2026

By Holly Carter

This speaker had originally been set for June, but because of terrible weather it was postponed to July. Katie Kolcun presented - *Rattlesnake Field Day: Surveying Techniques for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Michigan*.

This was a 2 day venom training workshop at Heron Wood Field Station in Kalamazoo Michigan. The event was hosted by Midwest Friends of Wildlife.

The Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake is federally protected by being cited as Endangered in Indiana and designated as a Species of Special Concern in Michigan.

These snakes have a somewhat limited lifespan of 6-7 years, rarely exceed size of 2 feet and do not mature until about 3 years old. They are dependent on wetland systems as they over-winter in crayfish burrows. They are known to eat voles and shrews.

Threats include: wetland destruction, reproduction every other year, low survival rate, predators such as racers, owls, and vehicles.

Preparing for field work: Locate, capture, sample, and tag.

Tools include PVC clear tubes, syringes and test tubes for blood draws, pit tags, locking bucket, waders, chlorhexidine disinfectants, tongs, hooks and bags.

Setting up drift fences, documenting catches, setting up hibernacula areas and possible reintroduction of animals in certain areas.

Future Actions: Recover wetlands, find ways to reduce road mortality, prepare habitat connectivity.

SNAKE FEST 2026

The annual Snake Fest at Brown County State Park was another hit again this year! The event was held from 11:00 to 5:00PM on Saturday, July 18. Attendees enjoyed conversing with exhibitors and leaning about those fascinating limbless creatures.

Programs were held throughout the day. Roger Carter, Eli Major, and Jim Horton gave presentations on snakes. Baily Russel, Katie Kolcun and Holly Carter were also representing the HHS. HHS member Kimberly Scott also stopped by to help. Thanks to these members who spent their time spending the day educating the public about snakes!

Eli Major, BCSP Naturalist, displayed a large timber rattlesnake in a fenced yard near the nature center. Eli kept a close eye on it while lecturing the crowd about the snake's calm disposition. He also discussed timber rattlesnake biology and behavior and took questions from the onlookers.

Another Snake Fest is in the books! Hopefully, we made an impact to some of our guests.



www.hoosierherpsociety.org

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
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](#)

HHS River Float

Jim Horton

Our seven mile float along the Driftwood River was filled with wildlife sightings.



Our crew of 18 kept a distance from some of the more partying revelers on the water. We found a nice gravid northern watersnake not long after we were all settled in our boats. It gave a few bites but quickly calmed down for photos from some of our kayakers.



We made several stops for breaks and exploring the area. Tiny fish were abundant near the shoreline, from minnows to Mad Tom catfish. Small toads, cricket frogs, butterflies, and other invertebrates were found and shared by the crew.



Swimming and disc throwing are other good activities on the breaks.

An adult bald eagle made an appearance for a short time. Near the end of our ride, we spotted an osprey up high on a snag. Plenty of song birds, wood peckers, flycatchers, and other birds were seen and heard throughout the river corridor.



Northern water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) were found basking on many fallen logs and jams. Some were caught for photos. This species will not hesitate to bite the handler and we saw it first hand (pun intended). Queen snakes were spotted under a large, abandoned metal bridge but they evaded capture. We saw them taking cover between large rocks

that support the bridge. This species isn't nearly as common as the northern water snakes.



All three Indiana map turtles. Also make this river home. The common (*Graptemys geographica*), the false (*Graptemys pseudogeographica*), and the Ouachita (*Graptemys ouachitensis*). Several Ouachita maps were found on the river but no false maps were encountered.

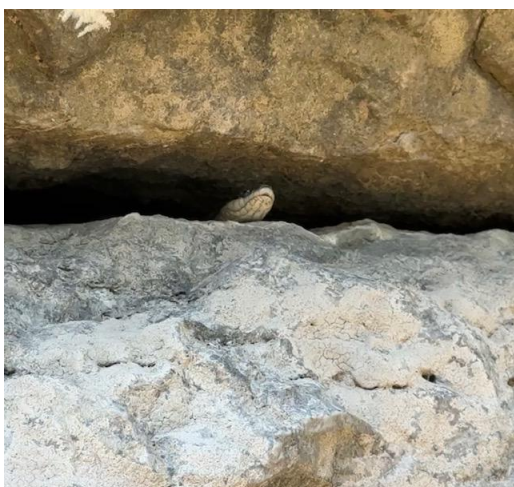


Northern map turtles were easily seen basking on logs along our route. This species was definitely the most abundant on the river. The smaller ones were usually easy to catch for photos and identification. Adults know when it's time to take a plunge to avoid us.



Spiny sofshell

Both species of softshell turtles occur in this river. The spiny (*Apalone spinifera*) and the smooth (*Apalone mutica*). The smooth softshell was definitely the highlight of the day!



Queen snake



Northern map turtle



The Monitor is printed
courtesy of
HardingPoorman

Look for the HHS
on social media



HHS Board of Directors – 2026

PRESIDENT
VICE-PRESIDENT
SECRETARY
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP

Jim Horton
Katie Kolcun
Holly Carter
Brenten Reust

(317) 443-4845

(317) 873-6561

president@hoosierherpsoc.org
k.a.kolcun@gmail.com
drymarchonzz@hotmail.com
treasurer@hoosierherpsoc.org

EDUCATION/OUTREACH
EDITOR
WEBSITE COORDINATOR
MEMBERS AT LARGE

Appointed Board Members for 2026

Steve Striedinger
Jim Horton
Ethan Estabrook
Pat Hammond
Ethan Estabrook
Kimberly Scott
Dale Schoentrup

(317) 443-4845

(317) 656-9496

(317) 650-7650

(317) 306-1597

Steve.striedinger@gmail.com
stardali84@hotmail.com

gnavbone92@yahoo.com
kestabrook@gmail.com
silverskydragon@att.net
eyelashvipr@hotmail.com

2026 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

August 19, 2026 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker: John Burris. Topic – “Field Herping China”

September 16, 2026 – HHS meeting, Topic – Show and Tell meeting. Members are encouraged to bring their favorite live herps, artwork, field guides, or other herpetology related items.

September 20, 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

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

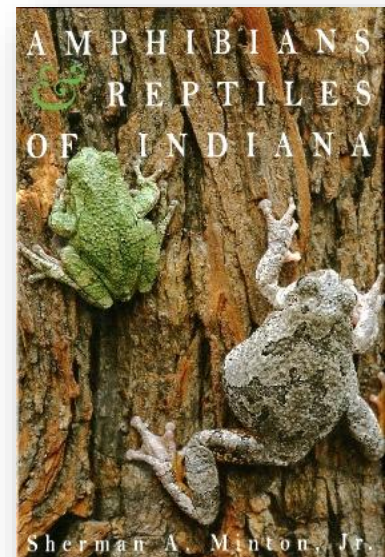
WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE TO THE HHS MIDWEST SYMPOSIUM AUCTION?

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.

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

Now you can have your personal 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



Membership Form

☐ new member

☐ renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Email Address _____

Individual/Family Membership \$25.00

Herpetological Interests

Hoosier Herpetological Society
P.O. Box 40544
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0544

Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

☐ If this box is checked, it's time to renew your membership