



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 7

July 2008

President's Message

Jim Horton

I would like to thank the folks Garfield Park Conservancy for a recent donation to the HHS! Garfield park staffers Amy and Elizabeth were quick to assist exhibitors in their every need. We appreciate it guys!

I would like to also thank the Zion Nature Center for their donation of \$50 to the HHS. I helped with an evening frog hike June 20 and Naturalist, Therese Burkhard wanted to donate to a good cause.

There is a Genus change in the fox snake family. The fox snakes, formerly (Elaphe), then (Pantherophis), are now (Mintonius)! I wouldn't normally be excited about any change in nomenclature but this is named after the late Sherman A. Minton Jr. What a great tribute! Read more in this issue.

Another Reptile Invasion is in the books! Several of our members donated their time and expertise at the Wesselman Woods Nature Center for a weekend of Amphibians and Reptiles. As always, Scott Kramer and the rest of the staff were always on hand to help and answer any questions we had. They donated \$350 to the HHS along with the purchase of local memberships and free t-shirts to all participants. We look forward to next year!

I'd like to welcome our new and renewed memberships! To our members in the far Southern part of the state, I welcome any articles that you may want to contribute pertaining to herps in the Evansville area and (or) your success with keeping and breeding them.

We'll be looking for all the familiar faces coming up for the **Reptile Days** at the Indiana State Museum, Saturday, July 26 (11am-4pm) and Sunday the 27th (12pm-4pm).

Don't forget that our meetings for the next two months will be in room #108.

July Meeting: Wednesday July 16th 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Jarrett Manek, Park Naturalist, O'Bannon Woods State Park

Topic: "Snakes of Indiana"

Butler University, Gallahue Hall, Room#108

Our guest speaker, C, is the park naturalist of O'Bannon Woods State Park in Corydon Indiana. His topic will be "Snakes of Indiana" in a combination power point and live snakes presentation. You probably remember him from his live snake exhibit during our 2006 Herp Symposium and the past two "Reptile Days" at the Indiana State Museum. See you there!

WELCOME NEW AND RE-SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS!

New Members

Daniel Shahan, TN
Mike Daugherty, Evansville, IN
John Mitchell, Evansville, IN
Scott and Diane Kramer, Evansville, IN

Renewals

Jeff Herman, Evansville, IN
Steve Nard (Monty's Reptiles), Terre Haute, IN
Shawn Miller, Evansville, IN
Junius Sneed, Evansville, IN
D.J. Mosley, Evansville, IN
Josh Ezell, Hermitage, TN
John Wright – Elwood, IN
Dave and Laurie Mitchell, Fishers, IN
Todd and Lisa Harmon, Dale, TN
Clint Bartley, Evansville, IN
Brandon Osborne, Evansville, IN
Heather Kalb, Evansville, IN

REPTILE INVASION 2008



The Reptile Invasion at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve in Evansville was a huge success! WWNP had a near record number of visitors for the two-day event. A large number of exhibitors had treated them to live animal programs and a variety of amphibians and reptiles on hand.

NEWS RELEASE

The Center for North American Herpetology, Lawrence, KS. <http://www.cnah.org> 19 June 2008

AN ALTERNATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF THE NEW WORLD RAT SNAKES (GENUS *PANTHEROPHIS* [REPTILIA: SQUAMATA: COLUBRIDAE])

Joseph T. Collins and Travis W. Taggart *Sternberg Museum of Natural History Fort Hays State University
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Abstract: *Mintonius*, gen. nov, is erected for two species of large snakes (100-140 cm) from the north-central United States and adjacent Canada, principally around the Great Lakes region. The genus contains *M. vulpinus* and *M. gloydi*, and is distinguishable from its closest relatives, *Pantherophis*, *Pituophis*, and *Scotophis*, by aspects of its scutellation, color pattern, and gross morphology, as well biochemically, genetically, and phylogenetically. Key Words: evolutionary history, phylogeny, taxonomy, Fox Snake.

Introduction

Burbrink and Lawson (2007) hypothesized a relationship for the New World Rat Snakes (*Pantherophis* sensu Utiger 2002) in which their hierarchical arrangement differed from the taxonomic conventions in current use (Crother et al. 2000; Collins and Taggart 2002). Of particular note, they discovered a sister group relationship between *Pantherophis vulpinus* (Baird and Girard) and *Pituophis melanoleucus* (Daudin) rendering *Pantherophis* paraphyletic. Accordingly, Burbrink and Lawson (2007: 186) suggested that *Pantherophis* (Fitzinger 1843) be synonymized into *Pituophis* (Holbrook 1842), thereby reconciling the taxonomy of the group with their phylogeny. The taxonomic suggestions of Burbrink and Lawson (2007) are consistent with the recovered phylogenetic history of the group and are therefore valid. However, we feel that combining these taxa into a single genus containing fourteen well-differentiated species minimizes the information content of the group, especially when one takes into consideration the morphology, behavior, ecology, and evolutionary history of these taxa.

An alternative classification is proposed below (and see Figure 1) which, like the Burbrink and Lawson (2007) classification, is consistent with the recovered phylogenetic relationships of the group, and is thus equally logical and comprehensive. We feel this arrangement is superior in its restriction and retention of *Pituophis* to its previous and widespread usage (containing only the species *catenifer*, *deppei*, *lineaticollis*, *melanoleucus*, and *ruthveni*), and the resurrection of one genus and description of another, increasing the information content inherent in the classification.

Systematic Account

***Mintonius* gen. nov.**

Type species: *Scotophis vulpinus* Baird & Girard, 1853: 75. Neotype: Designation by Conant (1940: 10): USNM 9969, (a 1242 mm female collected by P. R. Hoy from Racine, Racine County, Wisconsin). The holotype (USNM 7269 [Racine, Wisconsin. P. R. Hoy, collector]) and paratype (USNM 1570 [Gross Island, Michigan]) are not known to currently exist.

Description: As given for the type species in Baird and Girard (1853: 75-76), but also defined phylogenetically by Burbrink and Lawson (2007). Additionally, *Mintonius* differs from its most closely related *Journal of Kansas Herpetology Number 26 (June 2008)* 17 genera (*Pantherophis*, *Pituophis*, and *Scotophis*) by aspects of its scutellation (smooth laterally and keeled on the back [juveniles smooth throughout]), 2 postoculars, 1 preocular, 8 supralabials [rarely 7 or 9, and with the 4th and 5th touching the eye], 10-12 infralabials, 23-25 dorsal scale rows at mid body [rarely 27]), and color pattern (reddish-brown to dark brown blotches over a yellowish-grey to yellowish-brown ground color along the body. The head is conspicuously off-colored from the body, ranging from copper-red to light brown. The belly is yellowish overall with well-defined dark (black to brown) rectangular blotches. *Mintonius* differs further by morphology in having a large stout body, a short tail (15% of total length), a head slightly set off from the body, and a snout that is rounded. These characters and others pertaining to behavioral, structural, and biochemical differences between *Mintonius* and those species allied to it are summarized in Table 1. Content: *Mintonius gloydi* (Conant 1940) and *Mintonius vulpinus* (Baird and Girard 1853).

Range: Found over much of the glaciated upper midwest of North America in two currently recognized species. The first, *Mintonius vulpinus*, is bounded on the north and east by Lake Superior and Lake Michigan respectively and terminates to the west in Nebraska and central Illinois in the south. The second, *Mintonius gloydi*, is found along the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Erie in Michigan and Ohio, and in Canada in the region bounded by Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario.

Etymology: We take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of the late Sherman A. Minton and Madge Rutherford Minton of Indiana, both of whom made their mark in herpetology worldwide and also in Indiana, where the type species of this new genus occur.



Wesselman Nature Society

Saving a place for wildlife

7-3-08

The 2008 Reptile Invasion was great! Thanks to you, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve had an abundance of reptiles and amphibians on-hand for our show! A special thanks goes out to all of the exhibitors and volunteers who helped to us conduct the show this year. Your time, patience, expertise and willingness to exhibit and volunteer your time here at the Nature Preserve during the Reptile Invasion is greatly appreciated!

All of the visitors and participants seemed to have a great time while checking out the various displays of Burmese pythons, boas, all the other colorful varieties of snakes, lizards, and alligators.

Total attendance of visitors to Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve for the weekend was over 1,700 people, and more than \$7,500 was raised to support the Wesselman Nature Society! It's wonderful to know that all of the people who attended took advantage of an opportunity to learn more about reptiles and possibly walked away with a better understanding of these fascinating creatures.

A special thanks to Jim Horton, Jim Harrison, Steve Nard and Ed Ferrer for their presentations during the weekend! Another special thanks to Todd and Lisa Harmon, and Josh Ezell and their family/friends for helping with the souvenir Python and Boa photographs throughout the weekend! This helps to raise extra money for the Nature Preserve during the show.

Thank you for supporting the Wesselman Nature Society, and assisting with the Reptile Invasion this year! Next years' show is once again scheduled for the second full weekend in June- - June 13-14, 2009 . Please keep us in mind!

Sincerely,

Scott Kramer
Reptile Invasion Coordinator

HHS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

Name – Jim Horton

Town or city - Southport

Age you found interest in herpetology? Childhood (five or six)

What (amphibians/reptiles) do you like? Mostly North American herps but I have an interest in everything. Salamanders, sandboas, and most lizards.

What (amphibians/reptiles) do you keep? – A wide variety of herps. Several species of sand boas, argentine boas, rainbow boas, several other colubrids, Native Indiana salamanders and tree frogs.

Do you exhibit your animals at HHS shows? - Yes. I try to focus on Indiana herps but always find a way to bring some of my other favorites as well.

What do you like most about the HHS? – It is a great organization of well seasoned herpers who have a wide variety of interests. Our exhibits, and field trips, the photo contest, and other activities that bring herp enthusiasts together.

When did you join the HHS? I joined in 1989, shortly after the formation of the club.

Other hobbies? I enjoy photography, art, music, camping and most outdoor activities.

Do you field herp? – I try and field herp every chance I get. I herp all over Indiana and try to get out to neighboring states as well. I've field herped South Carolina on several occasions. My favorite herping was in Costa Rica. Even on vacations I try and get into the field with my camera(s).

Where do you get your herps? – I breed some, buy some, and capture some.

Have you ever bred any herp species? (if so, what kind) – I've bred several species of sand boas, Argentine boas, corn snakes, and Green basilisks. This year, I'm expecting some rainbow boas!

Anything else you would like to add? Yes. I'm glad to have joined the herp society and found an excellent group of herp enthusiasts to share my interest. I feel the HHS is an ideal organization to get the gears rolling for younger members who may be interested in pursuing a career in herpetology or a related field. It is also a great organization to gain information and share it as well.

SHOW AND TELL

HHS Participants at the Show and Tell meeting (June 18)

Elliot Stahl - Yellow anaconda, Chinese beauty snake, spotted python.

Mitchell Wehrle – corn snake and ball python

Carter Ball – Ball python

Holly Carter – Indigo snake

Roger Carter – Amythistine python

Jim Horton – Indian sand boa, javalen sand boa, rough-scaled sand boa, and Kenyan sand boa.

Ed Ferrer – Mexican black kingsnake, Brazilian rainbow boa, and (neonate) rainbow boa.

Angela Thomas – sandfish and blue-tongued skink

Pat Hammond – Eastern box turtle and black rat snake

BOOK COLLECTING

By Pat Hammond

I bought my first herp book back in 1997 at the thirteenth annual Midwest Herpetological symposium in Minnesota. The book was Sherman A. Minton's *Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana 1972*. I took this book home and studied all about the animals I had wished to find in my home state. I then decided I needed to get a copy of the Illinois guide since I had herped southern Illinois and had planned on returning there in the future. I soon purchased a copy of the *Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois* by Philip Smith 1961. Sometime after that I found a copy of Conant's guide to the *Reptiles of Ohio 1951*. I was now hooked on field guides. I wanted to get all the surrounding states. It took me a while since money was in short supply back then.

In my quest to acquire guides to all the states surrounding Indiana I came across several other guides to states which were nowhere near Indiana but I bought them anyway. I had now fallen in love with field guides. It didn't take me long to decide to try and build a collection of guides to every state in the US. I spoke to Bob Ashley of ECO and Eric Thiss of Zoo Book Sales and they told me that there were either books or some sort of publication on each of the fifty states covering their herpetofauna. Eric told me that he knew a few others who were also collecting field guides to all our states. I now had to try to acquire a book on each state. I did not know then just how hard, expensive, and enjoyable this obsession would become.

Through the years I continued to go to each of the Midwest Herpetological Symposiums which turned out to be a great place to purchase books. Zoo book sales and Eco were always in attendance at the symposiums. I would thoroughly inspect the books they had for sale hoping to find another title to cross off my list. The symposiums also have an auction where I am usually able to find books to fill the gaps in my list. I have also been able to meet several authors who have most graciously signed my books. I have met Tom Johnson, Joseph Collins, Sherman Minton, Whit Gibbons, and several others.

One of the aspects of collecting books I really enjoy is the history of herping. The oldest "field guide" I own is James Dekay's *Zoology of New York, part III: Reptiles and amphibians 1842*. This book is so cool on so many levels. This book survived the civil war! I can't even imagine what it must have been like to try to collect herps back in the early 1800's. Things must have been very difficult back then. There were no cars, paved roads, or quicky marts back then. Traveling to herp rich areas must have been a huge task. You would have had to do your traveling by horse and buggy. There were have been no motels in the remote areas you were headed to so you would have had to have packed your tent, sheets, food, cooking items, and whatever else you would have needed to spend a few days in the field. There were no modern tents in those days. A tent would have been made of heavy canvas which probably smelled of mildew. Cooking utensils would not have been made of light aluminum, instead they were probably heavy iron. There were no sleeping bags then instead you would have had to take along sheets to keep warm at night. Forget about flashlights. If you wanted light you would have had to carry around an oil lamp which would break easily if dropped.

Now that you made your way into the field there probably wasn't roofing tin spread out in convenient places in which snakes could have easily been found. Instead you would have spent the day lifting heavy rocks and logs. At the end of the day you would have had to return to camp to light a fire (without a lighter), and cook your meal which you somehow kept cold all day without a cooler. Sound like fun? I don't think so. My hat goes off to those early day herpers for all their hard work and success in locating herps. I am glad several of them have species named in their honor.

In conclusion I have been trying for the last eleven years to obtain literature on the herps of each of our fifty states. I have nearly completed my collection. All I need now is info on Rhode Island. The most recent publication covering the herps of Rhode Island was printed in 1905 and seems to be very scarce. In my quest to obtain field guides to each of our fifty states I have recently expanded my collection to the world. I have one shelf of my bookcase full of exotic locations including Brazil, Australia, Costa Rica, Japan and several other far away locations. I figure I have about forty years left here on earth to complete my collection. I just hope someday after I am gone my collection will stay in the family for others to enjoy.

NEWS RELEASE

The Center for North American Herpetology

Lawrence, Kansas <http://www.cnah.org>

24 June 2008

Pre-publication Announcement

New Book

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF THE SOUTHERN PINE WOODS

Author: Steven B. Reichling

Publisher: University Press of Florida, Gainesville

320 pages, 6x9 inches, paperbound

ISBN 13: 978-0-8130-3250-4

ISBN 10: 0-8130-3250-4

Price: \$29.95

Sponsored by The Center for North American Herpetology

Publication date: 5 October 2008

Please note that while you may order this book at any time, it will not be available for shipment until shortly before the publication date. To order, see the information at the end of this announcement.

This book reveals the interconnections among all reptile, turtle, and amphibian species living in the pine forests from Texas to North Carolina. Moving beyond mere species identification, this innovative guide to the reptiles, turtles, and amphibians of the southeastern pine forests emphasizes their interdependent ecologies and the conservation issues facing all pine woods herpetofauna. Written for a spectrum of reptile, turtle, and amphibian enthusiasts, the book is organized by habitat from eastern Texas to North Carolina and south to the Gulf of Mexico and Florida. Included are detailed accounts, range maps, and color photos of the twenty-six native species or subspecies of frogs, salamanders, snakes, lizards, and turtles in the southern pine woods. After describing the habitat from the perspective of each individual species, Steven Reichling demonstrates the various ways in which these reptiles, turtles, and amphibians have become intertwined for mutual survival in what is frequently an environment threatened by development and lumbering. He focuses on shared adaptations, ecological interactions, and dependency on a very distinctive habitat. Many of the threats throughout the southern pine woods require urgent action to ensure the survival of some species. This guide will be of value to southeastern ecologists, herpetologists, state and federal wildlife biologists and park managers, lumber company and pine plantation personnel, as well as herpetology enthusiasts.

Steven B. Reichling is curator at the Memphis Zoo and adjunct professor of biology at the University of Memphis.

"This book should be read by all who care about the earth's diversity, conservation, and natural history. It is a pleasant must-read for those with interests in the southeastern United States and especially the herpetologically inclined." --Max A. Nickerson, curator of herpetology, Florida Museum of Natural History "A compelling and absorbing read, filled with information but written in a style that makes normally stale data fresh."

--Joseph T. Collins, co-author of the Peterson Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America, director of The Center for North American Herpetology, and curator of herpetology, Sternberg Museum of Natural history, Hays, Kansas

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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

HERP HAPPENINGS

June 29, 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, August 24.)

July 16, 2008 – HHS General Meeting, Guest Speaker – Jarrett Manek (O'banon Woods Naturalist) Topic – "Snakes of Indiana"(Powerpoint) and live animals.

July 26 & 27, 2008 – Reptile Days at the Indiana State Museum. One of the largest displays of herps in central Indiana. 11-4 (Sat.) & 12-4 (Sun.)

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Herpetological Definitions

Acrodont – having teeth fused to the top of the upper jaw margin.

Gastrolith – any of the stones occurring in the stomachs of crocodilians, deliberately swallowed to grind up food in the absence of the ability to chew.

Scute – any one of the enlarged scales on a reptile and alternatively termed a *shield* or *plate*.

Sincipital – The collective name for any frontal or parietal scale on the heads of reptiles.

Viviparity – A kind of reproduction in animals in which the embryo develops within the body of the mother and receives its nourishment directly via some form of placenta, resulting in the eventual birth of live young.

Brille – The transparent scale that covers the eye in all snakes and some burrowing lizards.

Oviparity – Reproduction involving the production of undeveloped eggs, within membranes or shells that are laid or spawned by the female. The entire development of the embryos occurs outside of the mother's body utilizing egg yolk.

Ophiology – The branch of zoology dealing with the study of snakes.

Melanin – Pigment granules of the skin responsible for dark brown to black coloration in animals.

Lentic – Inhabiting, or relating to, still waters.

Subcaudal – Any one of the scales situated on the underside, or ventral surface, of the tail from the vent to the tail tip.

Pheromone – A substance that is produced and secreted by an animal that stimulates a response in others of the same species. Many animals use pheromones to mark territories or attract mates.

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www.HoosierHerpSociety.org

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.**

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