



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 27 Number 7

July 2016

H.H.S. Monthly Meeting

Wednesday July 20, 7:00 p.m.

Holliday Park Nature Center

Guest Speaker: Todd Pierson, University of Georgia
Topic: Evolution and Diversity of Lungless Salamanders in Appalachia

The Hoosier Herpetological Society welcomes back Todd Pierson as this month's guest speaker.

Todd Pierson is originally from Indianapolis, IN. He received a B. S. in Ecology from the University of Georgia in 2009, and is currently a PhD student in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. His dissertation research focuses on hybridization in plethodontid salamanders.

The Appalachian Mountains of Eastern United States hold the greatest global diversity of salamanders. Most of these salamanders are lungless and belong to the family Plethodontidae. His talk "The Evolution and Diversity of Lungless Salamanders in Appalachia" will present an overview of this group with an emphasis on major evolutionary events and modern ecological diversity. Todd has provided several programs for our society in the past and his presentations are always interesting and informative.



Northern Slimy Salamander (*Plethodon glutinosus*)

The Annual HHS canoe/kayak trip is August 7th



Sunday, August 7th
(9:00 A.M. at Blues Canoes in Edinburgh)

Join fellow HHS members for a canoe/kayak trip down the beautiful Driftwood River. There are many turtles and water snakes along the Driftwood. We will be counting turtle and snake species while on the river.

What to bring – drinks, lunch, waterproof baggies, camera (not your best one), binoculars, sunscreen, bug spray, swimsuit, sunglasses, old shoes.

For more information - www.bluescanoelivery.com 812.526.9851

*****Look for any updates or cancellations on the HHS website or Facebook page*****

HHS SHOW AND TELL MEETING – JUNE

Heather White brought one of her favorites, a Kenyan sand boa.
Holly Carter showed a large and impressive blacktail cribo.



Angela Thomas bought her Sonoran desert toads along with feeding demonstration.



Ed Ferrer showcased his Brazilian rainbow boa and his albino Burmese python.



Robert Tyler had a nice blacktail cribo that he had happily purchased from Holly.



A few members didn't bring any live herps at all. Instead they brought items that are herp-related. Neill Jones had a snapping turtle skull, an old belt buckle, and some artwork from his recent trip to Panama.



Jim Horton shared old herp books and frog call vinyl albums. Pat Hammond shared his 'vintage' price lists from animal dealers in years past

The diamondback water snake

By Jim Horton

In an effort to educate individuals who question the snake species on Indiana's waterways, this is a part in a series of articles featuring Indiana's water snakes or semi-aquatic snakes.

Through social network sites, emails, and just talking to people in the great outdoors, I've found that there are many misconceptions when it comes to indentifying water snakes.

The Diamondback water snake (*Nerodia r. rhombifer*) is an uncommon water snake. This non-venomous species is restricted to several counties in the Southwest corner of our state. It is also our largest water snake.

This robust species has been known to bask over 10 feet in branches over the water.

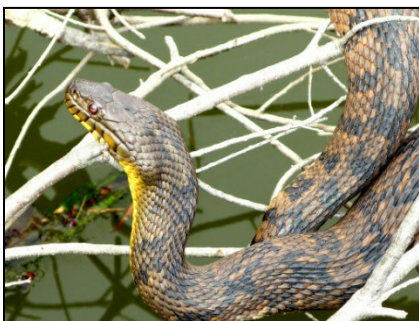


photo – Oakley Originals

The largest Indiana specimen recorded (Minton 2001) was measured at 50.5 inches, but these snakes have been found at

lengths of 5 feet elsewhere in the United States. The Peterson's field guide shows the record being 62 inches.



Photo – animalspot.net

This water snake has a large head that is distinct from the body. The scales, as in other *Nerodia* are keeled.

Coloration is light tan or grayish background with dark bands running down the sides. A dorsal chainlike pattern gives it the *diamond* look. Hence the name, Diamondback water snake.

Habitat includes ponds, lakes, ditches, soughs, or slow moving creeks. This species becomes strongly nocturnal during the heat of summer.

Range in the U.S. is southwestern Indiana, southeastern Iowa, and eastern Kansas, Oklahoma. Western Alabama and eastern Texas in the south.

Diamondback Water Snakes are ovoviviparous. They give birth

to 20 or more live young in the late summer or early fall.

It is said to be a common species in the lower Mississippi valley.

They've been known to feed on frogs, catfish, sunfish, suckers, and other fish. Even small turtles have been recorded as prey.

(Minton 2001) notes that a bite from a large one is painful and they bite without hesitation.

This is a species that I've yet to add to my life-list in Indiana. Hopefully this will change soon!



Photo – fishgame.com

References: [Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana](#), Sherman A. Minton, 2001

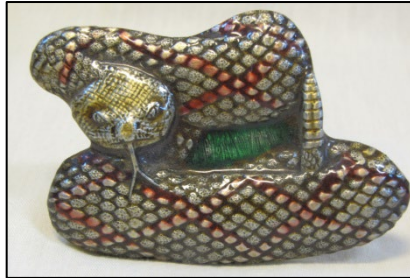
[Peterson Field Guide, Reptiles and Amphibians, Eastern Central North America](#), Conant/Collins, Third Edition, 1998

Collectables

Photos and text by Roger Carter

This is a belt buckle made of brass. Most of the rattlesnake buckles that I have seen before were plain but this one has color and some sort of glaze on it.

There are "labels" engraved in the back of the buckle. One of them says "1976 BERGAMOT BRASS WORKS DARIEN WISCONSIN USA" and the other one says "ARROYO GRANDE LEATHER & BUCKLE CO CA".



ADOPTIONS: Tortoise needs home

Russian tortoise, adult. Comes with cage and supplies. Please contact Jim Horton for information at stardali84@hotmail.com or 317.443.4845

Scorpions in Indiana?

by Ed Ferrer

While I was setting up for my snake program at Adams County Library in Decatur a man came up to me and asked me "Are scorpions found in Indiana?" I was surprised at the question and I told him that I haven't heard of any scorpions to be found in Indiana. The man said a neighbor found one at the edge of a forest near his home. I asked him if he had a photo of it. He said that if his neighbor was home he could show me! So after my presentation, he brought in a Mason jar with the dead animal. Sure enough it was a scorpion, not a mistakenly identified crayfish! It was light tan with long thin pedipalps (pinchers), eight legs, and a up turned tail complete with a telson and stinger at the end. It was about 1 1/2 inches long. I told him that maybe it was a pet that escaped from its enclosure.

When I returned home I did some research on my computer to see if there were any records of scorpions found in Indiana. All the articles I read claimed that there were no scorpions found in Indiana. Then I started searching for neighboring states to see if scorpions were found in them and maybe scorpions found their way into Indiana. I only found one such candidate. That scorpion was *Centruroides vittatus*, commonly called the stripe backed scorpion. It was commonly found in Illinois and a number of other Midwestern states located to the west and south of Illinois. The adult length was about 2 1/2 inches and it was tan with two dark stripes down its back. I figured the two stripes ruled out this scorpion but one of my articles mentioned that some of these scorpions don't always have the two stripes. So it remains a possibility that some of these scorpions might have traveled across our state borders undetected and established a small population. Then again it could just as well have been a member of a person's exotic collection and managed to escape. If anyone has had any experiences with scorpions in our state or have photos please share them with me at pythonpals1@msn.com. Yes, scorpions aren't "herps" but many of us "herpers" have kept arachnids in their collections. These are often as misunderstood and feared as my snakes and most are very beneficial to man.

2016 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

July 20, 2016 - HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Todd Pierson will discuss the evolution and distribution of lungless salamanders in Appalachia.

August 7, 2016 – HHS kayak/canoe float trip. Driftwood River, Edinburg, IN. Meet at Blues Canoes 9:00A.M.

August 28, 2016 - 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 (HHS members only) www.midwestreptile.com Next date: **Oct. 30**

August 17, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Dr. Bob Brodman, St. Joseph College. Topic: TBA.

September 21, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Patrick Ruhl (Purdue University), Subject: Redback Salamanders.

September 30/Oct 2, 2016 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium. Hosted by the Chicago Herpetological Society. Location - Hilton Lisle/Naperville, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle IL 60532, (630) 505-0900

October 15/16, 2016 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference, Tinley Park, IL.

October 30, 2016 – HHS live herp exhibit, Holliday Park Nature Center. All HHS members welcome. More info. to come.

President's message

Jim Horton

Thanks to our members who attended the last meeting with their animals. Our attendance was lower than usual for our Show and Tell meeting. This was due to a large storm that came through earlier in the day that left power outages and other destruction throughout the city and surrounding areas.

Our annual HHS kayak/canoe float is August 7. The Driftwood River is loaded with turtles! Last year we found seven species of Chelonians. We also see also find water snakes to be common on the river. Hope to see you there for fun on the water!

Its almost state fair time. This year we're teaming up with the Indiana Forest Alliance. We will be there to support the IFA campaign to limit excessive logging in our state forests. HHS members will exhibit native Indiana species found in our state forests.

I helped survey for herps at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area last month for a BioBlitz. This event was held by the Indiana Academy of Science. We didn't find too much out of the ordinary but there were a few county records.

This month we have Mr. Todd Pierson as our guest speaker. Todd is a fantastic field herper and world traveler. His talks are always a hit. See you there!

Midwest Herpetological Conference

Chicago Herpetological Society

September 30 – October 2, 2016

The Chicago Herpetological Society is proud to host the Midwest Herpetological Conference for the fourth time. We are especially proud because this year also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CHS.

Speakers will include:

Dr. Jonathan Campbell, chair of the Biology Department at the University of Texas at Arlington; **Dr. Dale Denardo**, environmental physiologist at Arizona State University; **Andrew & Sarah Gilpin**, world travelers and passionate herp photographers; **Dr. Bree Putman**, postdoctoral research fellow at UCLA; **Roger Repp**, independent researcher and columnist for the *CHS Bulletin*; **Dr. David Steen**, wildlife ecologist at Auburn University.

Registration:

The registration fee will include the Friday evening ice-breaker and the Saturday evening banquet / auction. Online registration is not yet ready, but a link will appear soon at www.chicagoherp.org. Please register early; we need to know how many are coming.

Location:

Hilton Lisle/Naperville, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle IL 60532, (630) 505-0900. We have arranged for a special group rate of \$111 per night. **To receive this rate please mention the group code: CCHS.** Reserve by calling 630-505-0900 or online at www.hiltonlisenaperville.com. The last day to book a room, to guarantee group rate and availability is Friday, September 9.

Banquet and auction:

The banquet will take place on Saturday evening, followed by a speaker and an auction of herp-related items (inanimate items only). Attendees are urged to donate items to be auctioned.

Agenda:

A registration table will open at 5:00 P.M. on Friday evening and will continue throughout the ice-breaker, which will begin at 6:00 P.M. The registration table will also be open Saturday morning. The speakers will commence at 8:30 A.M. on Saturday. Sunday morning activities are still in the planning stage; details will be posted online.

If you have any questions, email Mike Dloogatch: mdloogatch@chicagoherp.org

Your HHS Board of Directors for 2016

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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 7:00 p.m. at Holliday Park Nature Center. Membership is open to all interested individuals. **No venomous animals are allowed at the General Meetings.**

Need Rodents?

As a service to our members, HHS member Barbara Filtri is offering to pickup and deliver your order from Hoosier Mouse Supply.

Barbara will deliver frozen rodents to our general meetings. Call Hoosier Mouse Supply (317.831.1219) one to two days before the meeting to make your order. Please give your name and tell them that you are a member and Barbara will pick up your order. Have check or cash ready at the meeting.

The Monitor is printed courtesy of: **Harding Poorman**



Northern fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*)



Five-lined skink (*Eumeces fasciatus*)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

____ **New Member**

____ **Renewal**

____ **Name**

____ **Date**

____ **Address**

____ **City**

____ **State**

____ **Zip Code**

____ **Phone**

____ **Email Address**

____ **Individual/Family Membership \$20.00**

____ **Sustaining Membership \$25.00 or more**

____ **Herpetological Interest(s)**

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



Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

_____ If this area is checked, it's time to renew your membership!