



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 21 Number 8

August 2010

President's Message

Jim Horton

I would like to personally thank Mr. D.J. Moseley (HHS member and promoter of the Evansville Reptile Expo) for his efforts to raise funds for the HHS. Pat Hammond and I traveled to Evansville to attend the Reptile Expo on Sunday, July 25th. D.J. had a free table ready for promoting the HHS. He also sold tickets and held a 'potluck' drawing with half of the winnings going to the HHS!

Another 'Thank You' goes to Mr. John and Marty La Pree of Indiana Turtle Care for their donation of aquariums. The HHS gladly accepted several large and small aquariums with heaters and tops. The aquariums are for sale on the HHS website message board. Proceeds from the sales will fund the HHS.

Dave Mitchell has informed me that we will still be meeting in the current room #150 of the Pharmacy Building through August. We would like to keep our meetings in this room. We'll keep you informed if this changes.

Summer is slowly winding down to a close and the HHS is still having another outdoor experience. Don't miss out on the canoe/kayak trip on the 22nd of this month.

H.H.S. Monthly Meeting August 18th 7:30 p.m.
Guest Speaker: Mike Lannoo, Indiana University
Topic: "Ecology of Crawfish Frogs"
Butler University, Room#150, New Wing of Pharmacy Building

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is proud to present Mike Lannoo as this month's guest speaker. Mike is currently a Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Indiana University School of Medicine. He received his B.Sc. degree in (Biology, with Distinction) from Iowa State in 1979, his M.Sc. in Animal Biology from Iowa State in 1982 and his Ph.D. in Anatomy in 1986 from Dalhousie University School of Medicine, Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has received 10 federal grants, the most recent of which was to study the ecology of the crawfish frog which will be the basis of presentation. The crawfish frog is listed as an Endangered Species in Indiana. Mike has received numerous awards and scholarships and has published many articles in various publications and is the author of five books. His additional professional activities include serving on many national committees and is currently the Co-Chair of the Joint National Steering Committee, Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC).

Be sure to attend to hear the latest information of the status of the endangered crawfish frog!



HHS Canoe/kayak trip

Sunday, August 22

(9:00 A.M. at *Blues Canoes* in Edinburgh)

Join fellow members of the Hoosier Herp Society for a day on the water. We'll float down the Flatrock River searching for herps along the way. We should see an abundance of water snakes, softshell turtles, and map turtles. Other possibilities are queen snakes, red-eared sliders, and snapping turtles.

Please check the HHS message board for any further details or possible cancellations prior to date.

Call or email Jim Horton for information. Stardali84@hotmail.com (317) 865-0464

Welcome New Members!

Renewals

John and Linda Jett

Mitchell Wehrle

New Members

Sarah Davison

Kyle Davison

Nate Spencer

Jeremy Carrell

Kristen Price

Brian Perkev

Cameron Freeman

Going paperless?

You now have the option to go paperless with your membership. The monitor will be sent via pdf/email to your inbox. This will help save money, paper, and time with folding, stapling, labeling, stamping, and sending the "hardcopy" newsletter. It's as easy as visiting the HHS website clicking the "paperless" button.

July Meeting review

By Jim Horton

Before the main presentation, **Rick Marrs** displayed a Prairie king snake and discussed their biology. These lesser known snakes are found in the west and southwestern portion of our state.

Special Guest Speaker - **Andrew Hoffman presented, "Salamanders of Indiana"** which covered basic salamander biology and some really great photos! Below is a listing of a few interesting points that he made during his presentation.

Salamanders are the only vertebrates capable of limb regeneration. They also achieve respiration through the use of gills, lungs, and utilizing the skin. The term Amphibian means "two lives". Salamanders that go through metamorphosis are carnivores, even in the larval stage (frogs are herbivores as larvae).

There are 23 species and six families of salamanders in Indiana. 500 species in ten families occur world-wide.

Only one species of Salamandridae is found in our state. The newt can be found in a variety of habitats. Mostly woodland ponds that remain fishless. The eastern spotted newt *Notophthalmus v. viridescens* will go through two stages throughout its life. Terrestrial (eft) and aquatic (larvae and adult). These salamanders will switch back and forth from terrestrial back to aquatic stages when needed. The *eft* stage is highly toxic!

The Plethodontidae family is the largest family of salamanders. The Plethodon species obtain respiration by means of exchanging gases through the skin. Our most common would be the redback salamander, *Plethodon cinereus*.

Indiana salamanders may be found throughout the year. Most breed in early spring but others such as the streamside salamanders will breed in December. The marbled salamander *Ambystoma opacum* breeds in the Fall.

Most salamanders breed and the female deposits eggs beneath the water.

Some, like the four-toed salamander *Hemidactylium scutatum*, our smallest species, use a different strategy from most when producing young. The female will deposit eggs beneath clumps of moss on the banks of a woodland pond. She will guard them until the rains wash them into the pond. At this point, they quickly develop into the larvae stage,

Others, such as our largest salamander, the Hellbender, will deposit eggs on the underside of large rocks. While adhered to the rocks, they remain safe from predators during development.

Our three aquatic salamanders are the hellbender *Cryptobranchus a. alleganiensis*, the mudpuppy *Necturus maculosus*, and the lesser siren *Siren intermedia*. Most are seldom seen therefore the biology of these salamanders isn't well known.

Mudpuppies are pedomorphic, meaning they retain juvenile characteristics in adulthood. In this case, the *feathery* gills are retained as adults. These salamanders breathe with the use of gills, skin, and lungs. They are found in deep depths of ponds, lakes, streams and rivers.

The hellbender is a primitive species. They are equipped with lungs but also have folds of skin for absorption of oxygen while beneath the surface of water. Their lifespan is over 20 years.

Hellbenders are listed as Endangered Species in Indiana.

The siren is a completely different type of salamander. It is totally aquatic. Sirens are shaped like an eel and have tiny front forelimbs. When alarmed, this species will produce clicking, and sometimes squealing sounds. The preferred habitat is muddy, mucky swamps. An interesting adaptation of the siren is utilized in late summer when the water source has dried. These salamanders will burrow into the soil. Here, they will form a cocoon of mucus which keeps them moist until rains replenish the aquatic habitat.

Common Indiana Herps

Northern Water Snake *Nerodia sipedon*

By Jim Horton

Water snakes are one of the most common snakes in our state. They will frequent almost any water source. Lakes, ponds, streams, ditches, and swamps are preferred sites. Sunny, quiet portions of these waterways are the choice for these ectotherms. They may be easily seen basking by overlooking almost any bridge. Water snakes frequently bask on log jams and low-hanging trees near the water.

Many are killed due to ignorance. There are people who insist that any snake in the water is a water moccasin. In Indiana that is about 99% not true. Cottonmouths (water moccasins) are a southern species. In Indiana, they are only found along the Ohio River and at an isolated habitat in one southern Indiana county.

Northern water snakes may have a similar body structure to a venomous species (especially in a threatening display). When

annoyed, their head will flatten to a point where it may look somewhat triangular. Flattening of the body will also be evident, along with striking, regurgitating, and musking. Water snakes will bite repeatedly when harassed. An anti-coagulant in the saliva may cause the bite wound to bleed profusely.

The common northern or banded water snake is beneficial. They will consume dead fish along the shorelines of a water source. In my earlier years as a boy scout, I encountered a large water snake attempting to eat one of several large fish (bluegill) from my stringer.

Lifting flat rocks just at the shore or edge of a water source is an easy way to find young water snakes.

Keep your eyes out for one of our most common Indiana species – the Northern water snake.



Northern Water Snake *Nerodia sipedon* (Photo – Amy Baird)

QUICK REFERENCE

Activity: day (diurnal) and night (nocturnal)

Diet: mostly fish, will consume amphibians. Known to consume birds, and small mammals.

Young born: live birth, up to 60 young are born from mid-August to late September

Age at maturity: males, about 2 years. Females, about 3 years.

Size for reproduction: 1 ½ - 2 feet in total length

Gestation period: about 2 months, depending on temperature.

Lifespan of adults – estimated be at least seven years to 12 years

The Eastern Hognose Snake

(*Heterodon platirhinos*)

by Roger Carter

The Eastern Hognose Snake is an interesting snake that is found in most of Indiana. They have keeled scales and an upturned snout (hognose) that they can use to dig in sand for toads that they eat, although they do eat frogs and they seem to have a preference for Fowler's toads. They average 20 inches long to 33 inches long with a record length of 45 1/2 inches. The pattern is quite variable which includes yellow, brown, tan, grey, orange, or red (I have seen pictures of Eastern Hognose with red in their pattern and they are very pretty.) There are even melanistic (black) specimens. Their behavior is interesting because, when they feel threatened, they will act ferocious, hissing and spreading their neck like a cobra. This behavior gives them mis-leading names like "spreading adder" or "hissing adder" which makes people believe that these snakes are very dangerous, which they are not dangerous. This is all bluff. When this bluff doesn't work they resort to plan "B". They thrash around like they are in great pain, sometime regurgitating any food in their stomach, defecating and/or musking from their anal glands, and, eventually lay on their back with their mouth open and their tongue hanging out. They are playing dead. If you pick them up, they are completely limp, like a dead snake, but, if you place them on their ventral surface (their belly) they will flip over on their back to continue playing dead.

We were very fortunate this year to see two Eastern Hognose Snakes during the "Hoosier Herp Out" (the Hoosier Herpetological Society's picnic/field trip/camping trip near Lake Monroe in May). We found one adult snake and one of last year's young. In the middle of June, I found a melanistic Eastern Hognose Snake crossing a gravel road near Martinsville. This one was close to three feet long. Before the herp out in May, it had been three years since I last saw one of these snakes.



Eastern Hognose *Heterodon platirhinos*



Hognose *playing dead* (photos - Jim Horton)

Got Rodents?

Hoosier Mouse Supply can take your orders for rodents and they will deliver to the monthly meetings. (317) 831-1219

The Monitor is printed courtesy
The Harding Poorman Group

NEW HERP SPECIES

Forest Sharptail Snake

***Contia longicaudae* Feldman & Hoyer, 2010**

- 5/20/2010

Feldman & Hoyer. 2010. A new species of snake in the genus *Contia* (Squamata: Colubridae) from California and Oregon. *Copeia* 2010(2): 254-267.

Known only from California and Oregon.

A color image of this new snake may be viewed at - <http://www.cnah.org/detail.asp?id=1407>

Pearl River Map Turtle

***Graptemys pearlensis* Ennen, Lovich, Kreiser, Selman & Qualls, 2010**

- 6/30/2010

Joshua R. Ennen, Jeffrey E. Lovich, Brian R. Kreiser, W. Selman & Carl P. Qualls. 2010. Genetic and Morphological Variation Between Populations of the Pascagoula Map Turtle (*Graptemys gibbonsi*) in the Pearl and Pascagoula Rivers with Description of a New Species (Chelonian Conservation and Biology 9(1): 98-113).

Restricted to the Pearl and Pascagoula rivers of Mississippi and eastern Louisiana. A jewel of a turtle.

A color image of this new chelonian may be viewed at - <http://www.cnah.org/detail.asp?id=1408>

Classifieds/adoptions

Wanted: Veterinary Technology student looking for internship, volunteer, or part-time employment opportunity that will provide additional hands-on experience with pets (reptiles, exotic pets, large and/or small animals) while earning my degree. Please contact Amanda Weigand at 317-250-8532 or by email at: riflegiraffe3@yahoo.com if interested or to recommend possible leads. Thank you!

For Sale: Red blood pythons 125.00 each, Full striped Red blood pythons 200.00 each, Savu pythons 85.00 each, Biak green tree pythons 350.00 each, Grayband kingsnakes high red 100.00 each, Jungle carpet paythons high yellow 150.00, All babies are captive born, feeding and properly sexed, except baby green trees sold unsexed. contact Mike Wood - 574 269 3441 twobears@embarqmail.com

For Sale: c.b. Western hognose snakes, feeding well on frozen/thawed pinks. \$60.00 each (HHS members \$50.00), c.b. Argentine Boa Constrictors, 100.00 (HHS members 90.00) Jim Horton (317)865-0464 email - stardali84@hotmail.com

EVENTS

August 13-15, 2010 - Midwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation's (MWPARC) annual meeting: Blanding's Turtle Biology, Conservation, and Management. Lorado Taft Field Campus of Northern Illinois University (1414 N. River Road, Oregon, Illinois)
<http://mwparc.org/meetings/2010/>

August 18, 2010 – HHS Meeting, Guest Speaker, Mike Lannoo, Ph,D Topic – *Crawfish frogs*

August 28, 2010 – 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. Other dates:, 7/10, 8/28. For info: (317) 861-5550, www.midwestreptile.com

September 5, 2010 – Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, Admission \$6.00 www.indianareptileexpo.com

October 9&10, 2010 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference and Trade Show. Tinley Park, Illinois. Saturday 10am – 5pm, Sunday 11am – 4pm, Adults \$15, kids under 13, \$8.00

October 22-24, 2010 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, St. Louis, MO. Hosted by the St. Louis herp society. Location: Drury Inn & Suites, near Forest Park (2111 Sulphur Ave, St. Louis, MO. 63139 Website - www.stlherpsociety.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.**

Your HHS Board of Directors for 2010

PRESIDENT	Jim Horton	(317) 865-0464	stardali84@hotmail.com
VICE-PRESIDENT	Pat Hammond	(317) 241-2793	gnawbone92@yahoo.com
SECRETARY	Holly Carter	(317) 873-6561	drymarchonzz@hotmail.com
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SERGEANT AT ARMS	Ed Ferrer	(317) 787-7448	pythonpals1@msn.com

Appointees for 2010

EDITOR	Jim Horton	(317) 865-0464	Stardali84@hotmail.com
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	Ed Ferrer	(317) 787-7448 Cell - 727-7553	pythonpals1@msn.com
WAYS AND MEANS	Angela Thomas	(317) 882-5266	necali@comcast.net

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Dave and Elliot Stahl	(317) 842-2648	copperhead210@sbcglobal.net
Roger Carter	(317) 873-6561	drymarchonzz@hotmail.com
Rick Marrs	(317) 549-3673	
Mike Wood		twobears@embarqmail.com
Brittany Davis		bluemoosey8@yahoo.com
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www.hoosierherpsociety.org

United States Association of Reptile Keepers - www.usark.org

Hoosier Herpetological Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

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Corresponding Membership \$12.00

Individual/Family Membership \$15.00

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!