



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 10

October 2010

President's Message

Jim Horton

The HHS website was temporarily down for a few weeks last month. The website is now up and running.

We have a new address: www.hoosierherpsoc.org

Please make a note of this new address and pass it along if you would. Thank you.

We would also like your suggestions about the HHS website. Is there anything that you would change about it? Do you have any ideas to add to it? If so, we'd like to hear ideas. You may contact me or our website designer, Barbara Filtri.

Dave Mitchell has informed me that we will be meeting at Butler University in the Pharmacy building (room #150) through November.

It is with great displeasure that I must announce the canceling of the 2010 Midwest Herpetological Symposium. This decision was said to be due to lack of registrations. This fine event has been a fixture in the Midwest for over 25 years! It is very upsetting and we can only hope that it will continue in the coming years.

This month we will take final HHS Board of Directors nominations for the year 2011. Voting will take place during the November meeting.

The meeting last month featured a presentation on "Snake Road" in Southern Illinois. This issue features an article by Pat Hammond summarizing our trip to the area earlier this month.

Thanks to Roger Carter and Pat Hammond for their contributions in the newsletter this month.

Welcome New Members!

Renewals

Robert Hansen

Becky Edginton

New Members

Donald Nuetzman

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

October HHS Meeting
Wednesday, Oct. 20th, 7:30 p.m.
Guest Speaker: Daryl Karns, Hanover College
Topic: BioBlitz!: Rapid Assessment of Indiana's Biodiversity
(with an emphasis on reptiles & amphibians)
Butler University, Room#150, Pharmacy Building new wing

The Hoosier Herpetological Society welcomes Dr. Daryl Karns as October's guest speaker. Dr. Karns is a professor in the Biology Department at Hanover College. He is a vertebrate biologist with a special interest in the ecology, evolution and conservation of amphibians and reptiles. He has been involved with a variety of research projects throughout the world. He will discuss the BioBlitz events held throughout Indiana since 2000. These events document the different plant and animal species found over a short period of time, typically a weekend or 24 hours. Although limited in duration, these events can provide valuable scientific information, increase public appreciation of local biodiversity, and promote awareness of conservation issues. He will discuss the scientific and educational value of the BioBlitz concept with special emphasis on amphibians and reptiles.

It's almost time to vote for 2011 HHS Executive Board Officers
(Voting will take place at the November meeting)

President - Jim Horton, Rick Marrs

vice - president Ed Ferrer, Pat Hammond, Angela Thomas

secretary - Holly Carter

Treasurer - Dave Mitchell

Sgt At Arms - Will Brown, Roger Carter

New field herping magazine

***HerpNation Magazine* - The magazine for advanced field herpers and keepers.**

\$42.00/year (6 issues) *Save \$6.00! FREE SHIPPING!*

\$72.00/2 years (12 issues) *Save \$14.00! FREE SHIPPING!*

To subscribe, go to - www.herpnation.com

Payment online by credit card or by mail

Check or Money Order

Herp Nation

1017 L Street, #505

Sacramento, CA 95814-3805

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

Meeting review

By Jim Horton

HHS member were treated to a program featuring the famed – Snake Road (La Rue/Pine Hills). HHS members, Roger Carter and Jim Horton presented the PowerPoint program with a few glitches. A few photos failed to show on the screen and later the all the screens went black. Luckily one of our guests was able to help get us back up and running.

Despite these mishaps, we were able to entertain the audience with the creatures of this unique habitat. I opened with a brief description of the surrounding habitat. A small history of our past travels there was also covered. I discussed the common amphibians – frogs, salamanders found in the area. I also showed a few less commonly seen aquatics such as the siren and the amphiuma. I then mentioned the lizards and turtles that occur in the area.

Roger described the snakes that inhabit this are of the Shawnee National Forest. He gave a brief synopsis and his own encounters with them. There are a few snakes in the area that have eluded us over the years. The mud snake is one of them. The diamondback water snake is another less commonly seen snake in the area.

The particular road in mention is about 3-miles long (round trip). It is the only road in the U.S. that is closed in the spring and fall to allow for snake migration.

The area of Southern Illinois is rich in fauna diversity. Many reptiles and amphibians known more as southern species are found here, at their most northern point. In fact, eastern, western, northern, and southern species area found there.

If you get the chance to visit this area, you won't be disappointed.

Southern Illinois October 2010

By Pat Hammond (photos – Jim Horton)

On October 3 Jim Horton, Roger Carter and I took a trip to beautiful southern Illinois to see the annual fall migration at snake road. We arrived to cooler temperatures than we had hoped to encounter. Overnight temps were in the high 30's and daytime highs were in the mid 60's. Not ideal weather to look for herps but we were there so we made the best of it.

Our first stop was a railroad track which heads through some prime swamp habitat. Upon arriving at the parking lot we noticed we were not alone. There were four cars in the parking lot representing four different states. So we gathered our gear and headed down the tracks in search of snakes, turtles, and lizards. Southern Illinois has been enduring the same drought as we have here in Indiana. Most of the swamp was dry. We did see some areas where there was still water but for the most part we encountered very dry conditions. Our first sighting was a cottonmouth that Jim spotted. The snake was sunning itself

and didn't waste any time disappearing down a hole. Our next find was a couple of fence lizards. As we made our way around a curve we saw other herpers ahead. When we caught up to them we were pleasantly surprised to see Mike Pingleton in the group. We run into Mike all the time while in southern Illinois. Mike and his group had not seen much either. I think they saw a couple young cottons and not much more. The swamp was as dry as I have ever seen it. We did end up finding several cricket and leopard frogs and a few newts. I also found an empty snapping turtle shell. That was about all we saw at the railroad tracks. After leaving the tracks we headed to a favorite spot for lunch where we ran into Mike and his group.

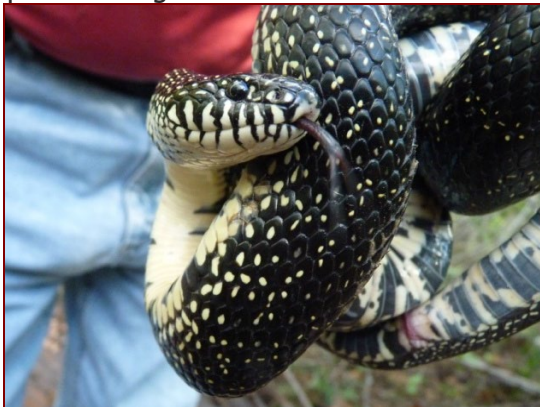
After lunch Jim, Roger and I headed to a nearby bluff for some late afternoon herping.

We knew of a tin pile which has produced some magnificent animals in the past. This year the tin pile did not disappoint. Our

first find there was a large black rat snake. This snake was cold and not in a good mood.



We had fun watching him try to bite the camera in slow motion. After taking several pictures we placed him back under his lair. Under another piece of tin I discovered a gorgeous Shawnee king. Kings in that part of the state are intergrades between the beautiful black king and the stunning speckled king.



After flipping the rest of the tin we headed back down to the other end of the trail which ends at a rocky hillside which snakes use as hibernacula. The hillside overlooks a swamp so several species including cottonmouths, plain belly water snakes, kings, racers, and others can be found under these rocks. Jim and Roger found several fence lizards and one cottonmouth. Afterwards we headed to our hotel and called it a night.

The next morning we met up with Rick Marrs for breakfast. Jim and I wanted to check out a new area we had heard good things about over in Missouri. But we had a damaged tire we had to tend to since Roger hit a rough hole in the parking lot of the restaurant. So we decided to go there some other time since we now had to go buy a new tire and the spot in Missouri was nearly two hours away. After we got done

at the tire shop we tried to find a fish and wildlife area along the Mississippi river to look for herps. Jim and I wanted to find a diamondback water snake to add to our life lists. We were unsuccessful in trying to locate a road that led into the wildlife area. The only road we found heading there was under water from the recent floods up river.

We then decided to try our luck at snake road. Snake road was looking good. The parking lot was empty except for our cars. The temperature was now 66 and the sun was shining. I think I spotted the first snake of the day which was a young cottonmouth.



Roger found a baby rough green snake which was threatening us with an open mouth.



I have read about this behavior but this was my first time witnessing it. After several pictures we headed further down the road. We didn't see much other than a couple more cottons.

On the drive to our next destination we saw a bald eagle perched high in a dead tree along the big muddy river. I tried to photograph the bird but it was just too far away. Later we saw another on the ground in a field. We were able to get a few pictures of it before it flew away but it again was too far away to get any good shots. At our final destination of the day we flipped some cover boards and tin but only

uncovered one adult female five lined skink.



But by now the air was getting chilly and most herps were probably deep underground.

Our final day greeted us with warmer temps and a sunny sky. Since we wanted to head home near noon we decided to head back over to the bluff where the tin pile was

since Rick hadn't been there in several years. We first headed back to the tin pile but found nothing. We then flipped rocks on a nearby hillside looking for the elusive red milk but came up empty handed. At the bottom of the hill is a nice swamp which was now mainly a mud flat. We did find a few salamanders and frogs hiding under cover but no additional snakes were discovered there so we made our way back up to the base of the bluff where we again came up with nothing. So we headed back to the far end of the trail where we searched the hillside for snakes. Rick found a nice large cottonmouth under a rock. He was able to get the snake out from under the rock for a few pictures. Not a bad way to end the trip.

KNIVES AND HERP ART (Part 1)

By Roger Carter

Several years ago I started collecting knives and swords. My criteria for buying any was Hollywood replicas (I have copies of the knives from the Rambo movies and other movies and television shows) and knives with herp art.

The knife pictured here I found in a flea market on the east side of Indianapolis and



has an alligator engraved into the blade. This knife is thirteen inches long with the blade being seven and a half inches long. The printing on the blade near the handle says "surgical Japan" surgical meaning surgical stainless steel. This knife is razor sharp. Some of my decorator knives are just for show and do not have any sharp edges. They couldn't cut through a wet napkin.



The Monitor is printed courtesy
The Harding Poorman Group

Got Rodents?

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

Common Indiana Herps

Midland Brown Snake *Storeria dekayi wrightorum*

By Jim Horton (photos – Jim Horton)

The brown snake is one of Indiana's smaller species. These snakes are terrestrial and usually not much larger than 12-14 inches. The record length is 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. It is sometimes referred to as the DeKay's snake which was named after *James Edward DeKay* an early naturalist.

Brown snakes are quite common in central Indiana and throughout the state.

When alarmed, brown snakes will flatten their head and body. When handled, this snake will produce a slight foul smelling musk. Brown snakes are common in cities and may be found in parks and abandon lots beneath debris.

The young are marked with a light-colored collar around the neck. Adults may be gray or tan in color. A distinct light stripe appears dorsally. This stripe is bordered by dark spots running dorsally. Adults are marked with a dark spot below the eye and behind the head. Brown snakes have a small head, blunt snout and large eyes. The scales are keeled. It is often mistakenly labeled as a garter snake.

The preferred habitat is open grassy areas that hold moisture. It is most active during the daylight hours but has been seen moving at night. A brood of 6 to 14 young are born between June and September. Food consists of worms, slugs, and soft bodied arthropods.



EVENTS

October 20, 2010 – HHS Meeting, Guest Speaker – Daryl Karns, Hanover College, Topic: *BioBlitz! Rapid Assessment of Indiana's Biodiversity (with an emphasis on reptiles and amphibians)*.

October 23, 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: 11/13, 12/18 For info: (317) 861-550, www.midwestreptile.com

November 7, 2010 – Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, Admission \$6.00 www.indianareptileexpo.com

November 17, 2010 – HHS Meeting, Guest Speaker – Robert Brodman, St. Joseph College.

Classifieds

For sale: Tarantulas for sale. P. ornata 1-inch babies- 30.00 each. A. versicolor 1 inch babies 25.00 each. Captive born and well established. Mike Wood 574-269-3441
twobears@embarqmail.com

For Sale: c.b. Brazilian rainbow boas, parents are beautiful! \$100.00 (HHS members \$90.00), 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

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!

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
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Dave Mitchell	(317) 570-9643	turtlelovin@att.net
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
WEBSITE COORDINATOR	Barbara Filtri		barbara.filtri@hughes.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
Amy Baird		pjbacm@aol.com

The North American Field Herping Association (NAFHA) www.naherp.com

Hoosier Herpetological Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

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!