



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

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October 2015

HHS monthly meeting
October 21st 7:00 p.m.
Holiday Park Nature Center

GUEST SPEAKER: MIKE PINGLETON, CAMPAIGN IL.
TOPIC: "HERPING" IN CALIFORNIA & NEVADA"

The Hoosier Herpetological Society welcomes Mike Pingleton as this month's guest speaker. Mike is a veteran herpetologist, field "herper" and excellent wildlife photographer. He has also written many articles about reptiles and amphibians and is the author of a book on red-footed tortoises. He has bred many "herp" species and has traveled worldwide in search of "herps" and documents his travels in interesting and informative presentations for various groups. This month Mike's provides a travelogue of his trip through California and Nevada. **Plan to attend this meeting and see why Mike is one of our favorite speakers!**

HHS members at Master Naturalist Program

HHS members, Jim Horton, Holly Carter, and Roger Carter were invited back to Twin Bridges Park in Danville for a Master Naturalist program. Amphibians and reptiles was the subject for this meeting. Jim Horton presented the *Herps of Indiana* on a PowerPoint. Afterwards, Roger, Holly, and Jim shared native Indiana herps, educational signage, and literature. We're glad to play a part in herpetological education and this wonderful program!

New Venomous Snake Found: Death Adder Hiding in Plain Sight

By Carrie Arnold, National Geographic PUBLISHED September 29, 2015



The newfound species is 20 inches (51 centimeters) long and, like many other death adders, has a light reddish-brown color.

For centuries, a highly venomous snake has managed to slither under the scientific radar in the Australian bush. Now, scientists have finally identified the new species of death adder, *Acanthophis cryptamydros*, which lives in the northwestern corner of the continent.

“It was a huge surprise. We weren’t even looking for a new species. I redid my work to make sure I hadn’t made a mistake,” says study leader Simon Maddock, a Ph.D. student in a joint program at University College London and the Natural History Museum, London.

The newfound species is 20 inches (51 centimeters) long and, like many other death adders, has a light reddish-brown color.

Maddock made his discovery not by trekking through the Australian outback but by studying the DNA of various death adders, a group of snakes native to Australia, New Guinea, and Indonesia that are among the world's most venomous. (Read "What's the Most Toxic Snake?")

Hiding in Plain Sight

Many of the approximately eight species of death adder—there’s some controversy about exactly how many species exist—are hard to tell apart, since individuals of the same species can sport remarkably different colors and patterns.

The newfound death adder "looks a lot like the northern death adder, *A. rugosus*, and that’s probably why no one discovered it until now," Maddock notes.

Using various death adder DNA from museums and some gathered specifically for his work, Maddock and colleagues sequenced certain genes into figure out how and when the reptiles evolved.

"When we looked at our DNA data, we found there was one group of snakes that were really, really different," said Maddock, whose study was published recently in the journal *Zootaxa*. (See National Geographic's snake pictures.)

To show definitively that he had discovered a new species, Maddock requested additional specimens from museums around the world, and his colleagues went into the field to capture more snakes. In total, he analyzed 112 specimens, including 32 of the new death adder species.

“It’s a very thorough and important study,” says Dan Rabosky, an evolutionary biologist and curator of herpetology at the University of Michigan.

“Most of us think of Australia as a First World country that’s been thoroughly explored, and this shows how little we know.”

Last month's meeting

By Jim Horton

The lush, tropical cloud forests of South and Central America was our destination for the evening. **Mr. Dan Madigan** from the Indianapolis Zoo presented: "Tropical Herping": A Photographic Journey".

Dan studied and in the jungles of Peru in South America. He is an avid photographer and he showcased most of his own photos for the evening. Unfortunately, he lost hundreds of pics due to a fogged up camera from humidity. But his second portion of the talk featured his excellent photography skills.

Dan studied tropical poison dart frogs (*Epipedobates hahneli*) during his time in the Peru rainforest. While spending time there, he and fellow students explored the vast dark floors and canopies. Birds, insects, mammals, amphibians and reptilians were almost at every footstep.

A stay in Costa Rica with his wife had turned out to be a great chance to find the herp fauna in the area. They traveled throughout the country with opportunities to see the many species occurring here.

Frogs were the most abundant species found in his talk, probably followed by anoles. *Phyllomedusa* (monkey walking frogs) are among the most spectacular anurans. Of course, the redeye treefrog, one of the most photographed frogs, was also on his colorful presentation. He was more than happy to photograph a Surinam horned frog in the wild.

Helmeted iguanas spend most of their lives in the canopy and are seldom seen near the surface. On one of their hikes through the forest, Dan's wife quickly spotted their first 'lifer'! Their guide told them he hadn't seen one of those in ten years. They were thrilled.

Another icon of the tropics is the emerald basilisk. The almost dragon-like features on its head, back and tail give this species a dramatic look. Several brown basilisks were commonly found on their hikes as well.

One of Dan's biggest highlights during his stay in the tropics was seeing a yellowfoot tortoise in the wild. He photographed the tortoise and released it. He jokingly said that it was difficult to release this animal.

Other species found were an eyelash viper, short nosed vine snake, caimans, 2-toed sloth, crested toads, rainbow boa, and an endangered blue-sided leaf frog.

Another great presentation brought to you by the HHS!



Yellowbelly turtle (non-native)

Submitted by Angela Thomas

Several years ago, a condo complex near my home put this alligator head decoy into their retention pond. I think it's supposed to keep the Canada geese away, but this summer I noticed that the local turtles have found another use for it! These days, if you drive past the pond on a sunny day, the odds are good that there will be at least one turtle basking there... unless of course you actually have a camera with you. I first saw a turtle basking on the alligator in May; it was late August before I actually got this photo.

President's message

Jim Horton

Another great live hands-on animal exhibit by HHS members! Roger and Holly Carter, Neil Jones, Heather and Kara White, Katie Colcun, were on hand with me showcasing our herps at the Handi-Capable Camp in Bradford Woods.

Would you like to show your favorite amphibian or reptilian to the audience for our Herp of the Month? We need members and their animals at our monthly meetings. If you are interested, please contact me or any board member.

This month Mr. Mike Pingleton will be our guest speaker for the evening. Mike is a crowd pleaser with his knowledge of herpetology and his captivating photos.

Don't forget to register for the **30th Midwest Herpetological Symposium** in November. This year it is located in Madison, WI. A group of HHS members will be at this event which runs from November 6-8. This is an excellent event and you won't regret going.

Its election season. Time to start thinking about nominations for 2016 HHS board elections. If you are interested in a board position or would like to see another member on the board, now is the time to keep this in mind.

We have a date for the HHS holiday party – December 12.

We are always in need of articles and other herp related information for this newsletter. If you would like to contribute with an article or submission, please feel free to contact me at stardali84@hotmail.com

My First Snake

By Ed Ferrer

When I taught science at Decatur Middle School, I always started the first day with a brief introduction about the rules and expectations but I also had the students write a little bit about themselves. Such as "Do they have any hobbies?" "Do they play any sports or are active in other school activities or clubs etc?" Then when I knew something about them I would ask them about what they wrote throughout the year. Like if they were on a school team, I would make sure to attend at least one of their games so I could ask them about it. The students always liked to talk about themselves and it made them feel like I was interested in them as a person and not just what they were doing in my class. It gave us something that we had in common. One student, Joey, mentioned that he had a two snakes. One day after school I arranged to visit his home to see his snakes. He had two species, a California King Snake that he called "Killer," named after the title of an early Alice Cooper album, and a small boa constrictor. As we talked about the snakes and how he took care of them we also talked about his grades. He said that he was making "A's" and "B's" in all of his classes but he was flunking Language Arts. I asked him what the problem was in that class and he said that the teacher picked on him and he would smart off to her and that was the main reason for his bad grade. I knew the teacher and we have all seen teachers who probably shouldn't be teaching any more. She was old, just hanging on for her retirement and she didn't like boys. I told him that he would not win in that situation and I made him a deal. If he got his good grades in all his other classes and kept his mouth shut and made a "C" in her class, I would take him and his dad to visit the Serpent exhibit in Nashville during Spring Break. I kept checking with him and sure enough he passed her class along with his other good grades.

When we arrived at the snake exhibit it was closed! So I went to the city's Chamber of Commerce and contacted the owner by phone. I explained my reward for my student and he agreed to meet us and gave us a private tour of his facility. Joey and his dad were amazed at all the snakes that were on display! There was one large area that had all kinds of large pythons and boas and a large assortment of venomous snakes among the impressive collection.

On the way back home Joey's dad asked if I had a snake in my science class room. I told him that I had a tarantula, a scorpion and a school of red-bellied piranhas but I hadn't thought about adding a snake. When we arrived at his

home he asked me to wait while he got something out of his apartment. He came back and gave me a crisp \$100.00 bill as his way of thanking me for encouraging his son. He said, "Mr. Ferrer, add a snake to your collection". Later that week I went to Uncle Bill's in Greenwood and picked out a gorgeous neonate boa constrictor with a beautiful contrasting pattern that included a bright reddish tail and mauve along its side. When school started back after spring break my snake became a sensation! As the word traveled throughout the school, it seemed like every student in the 1,400 student body stopped by to see the new addition to my room!

I named the snake "Vincent" because that was the given first name of rock star Alice Cooper, who was the first rock act to include a snake in his show and he used large boa constrictors.

As the years went on I added more snakes to my room and when I retired I had 18 different species of various sizes and colors. It seemed like most every student wanted to be in my class because of their interest in my snakes. I developed an extracurricular activity called the "Python Pal Club" and we held monthly meetings with guest speakers and activities and sponsored science related field trips to zoos, natural history museums, aquariums and hikes in state parks. I joined the Hoosier Herpetological Society around 1997 and now do educational programs for schools, scout meetings, libraries and even do birthday parties with my snakes. For more information check my website at snakeheaded.net or email me at pythonpals1@msn.com. Now when I see former students they always ask if I still have snakes. It all started with encouraging a student.

Welcome New Members!

Martha Horton - renewal

2016 elections/nominations

This month we will be taking nominations for new officer positions. Please be thinking about who you might want to nominate for the year 2016. You may even nominate yourself.

The following is a list of the elected offices with a brief description of responsibilities of each officer.

President: presides at meetings of the society, is the nominal head of the society, and appoints committees as they are needed for the business of the society.

Vice-president: fulfills the duties of the President if the President is absent and assumes the office of President if that position becomes vacant.

Secretary: maintains the records of the society, such as the minutes of society meetings.

Treasurer: maintains the funds of the society, such as paying the society's bills and depositing funds collected from membership dues, donations, etc.

Sergeant-at-Arms: keeps order at society meetings and other functions sponsored by the Society.

30th Midwest Herpetological Symposium

November 6-8, Madison WI

<http://madisonherps.org/midwest-herp-symposium/>

This is the Schedule of Events. Please check back and see as speakers and events are added to the schedule. We are tying up a few loose ends now and should have this finalized soon.

Friday, November 6th, registration opens with a meet/greet and a cash bar/Hors D'oeuvres.

Opening Remarks – Ryan McVeigh (MAHS President) followed by two 40 minute speaker presentations. Cash bar and Hors D'oeuvres.

Saturday, November 7th, 2015

Live Wisconsin Herps Exhibit, and Silent Auction,

Dr. Michael Wenninger (DVM at Spartan Animal Hospital) – Reptile and Amphibian Pathogens
Erica Mede, CVT (President of Friends of Scale Reptile Rescue) – Running a Successful Reptile Rescue

Logan Huse (WDNR Wildlife Biologist) – “Surveying the Hidden Gem: Tracking the Population of Eastern Massasaugas in WI”

Jeffrey M. Lorch, PhD (Department of Pathobiological Sciences, UW Madison) – “Snake Fungal Disease and Its Implications for Snake Conservation”

Brandon Fowler (Owner of Roaming Reptiles) – Education and the Preservation of our Hobby

Phil Goss (President of USARK) – “USARK Update and The State of Our Hobby”

Sam Fellows (Herpetologist and Naturalist) – “Persuit of Royalty: Searching for Queensnakes in WI”

3:30pm-4:10pm TBD

4:15pm-4:55pm TBD

5:00pm-6:00pm

Socializing – Cash Bar, Silent Auction Items Final Review, Native Herps Exhibit

Dinner Banquet and **Keynote** – **Dave Barker** (Herpetologist, Author, Herpetoculturist) – “The Invisible Ark – In Defense of Captivity. Followed by the Live Auction! and Cash Bar.

Sunday, November 8th, 9:00am-3:00pm

Vans To/From SEWEFest Reptile Show – Wisconsin’s Largest CB Only Reptile Show (Free with Show Badge) Van Cost \$10/person. A private tour of the Henry Vilas Zoo is in the works.

SWORDS AND HERP ART (Part 2)

Photos & text by Roger Carter

This is a very nice sword that shows a cobra hooded up at the end of the handle. The cobra is a brass-like material with red eyes, the scabbard is purple with a snake-like pattern and, at each end of the scabbard, there are metal bands that show cobras hooded up. The sword is forty-one and one-half inches long, the blade is made from 440 stainless steel and is sharp. There aren't any engravings to identify where it was made.



2015 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

October 18, 2015 - 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

October 21, 2015 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker: Mr. Mike Pingleton (world-traveled field herper and photographer), Subject – *Herping in California and Nevada*.

November 1, 2015 - Indiana Reptile Expo in Noblesville, IN on the first Sunday of each month from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Hamilton County Exhibition Center & 4-H Grounds.

November 6 - 8, 2015 – 30th Midwest Herpetological Symposium, hosted by the Madison Area Herp Society. Held at the Monona Terrace, 1 John Nolen Dr, Madison, WI 53703. Hotel accommodations at the Hilton (9 E Wilson St, Madison, WI 53703) ph (608) 255-510

Your HHS Board of Directors for 2015

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Top 10 questions asked at an HHS reptile exhibit:

1. Does it bite?
2. Is it real?
3. Can I hold it?
4. What is it?
5. Does it have teeth?
6. What does it eat?
7. How big does it get?
8. How do you tell male from female?
9. Is it poisonous?
10. How old is it?

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
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Indianapolis, Indiana, 46240-0544



Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

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