



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 24 Number 9

September 2013

Welcome Hoosier Herpetological Society members!

RENEWALS

Robert Bever

Charlotte & Jabob Ray (sustaining membership)

NEW

September HHS Meeting
September 18th 7:00 p.m.
Holliday Park Auditorium

Guest Speaker: Dr. Richard S. Funk MA, DVM
"Treating Parasites in Captive Reptiles"

Our September guest speaker is Dr. Richard S. Funk, a veterinarian from Mesa, Arizona, who specializes in the treatment of reptiles. His topic will be "Treating Parasites in Captive Reptiles".

I am sure that will be a topic of great interest to all members because treating reptiles is sometimes difficult since reptiles often don't show symptoms as readily as other pets. I have just had my Columbian red-tailed boa to the vet several times for treatment. Be sure to attend this interesting and informative meeting.



HHS Brown County "Herping" Field Trip

Saturday October 5th

I am very excited to announce that we will have a field trip to Brown County State Park on Saturday Oct. 5th! We will meet at the **nature center at 9:00 a.m.** HHS member Brittany Davis-Swinford will be our leader. Brittany was the naturalist at Brown County State Park for five years so she knows where all the good places are to look for reptiles and amphibians throughout the park. She will be able to identify and describe anything that we find from "herps" to wild flowers during our trip! Plan to bring a sack lunch including drinks and we will eat around noon.

Coming from north of park I would suggest traveling south on I-65 and the coming west on highway 46 and entering at the north gate. Park admission is \$5.00 per car. Brittany said there will still be plenty of "herps" to see and the fall colors should be peaking at that date so it should be a great time to go herping! Any questions contact Ed Ferrer at (317) 787-7448 or (317) 727-7553 or email me at pythonpals1@msn.com

President's message

Jim Horton

It has been a great summer so far. As promised, we have another HHS herp outing coming up early next month at Brown County State Park on Oct 5. If field herping isn't your thing, maybe exhibiting your herps at one of our educational shows might be? See inside for details on these upcoming events.

Several HHS members and board members had attended the Midwest Herpetological Symposium in Peoria, Illinois last weekend. I have a review of this event inside as well. The HHS will be hosting this annual event next year. Can't wait to get started!

The Monitor is printed courtesy of:

Harding Poorman



www.hoosierherpsoc.org

2013 Midwest Herpetological Symposium- Review

By Jim Horton

The Central Illinois Herpetological Society hosted a fine symposium on Labor Day weekend. This four day event was held in Peoria at the Stoney Creek Inn. The accommodations couldn't have been better, and a great seafood/oyster bar was right next door which made for some tasty dinner.

This four-day weekend featured free admission to the Peoria Zoo, a live animal show, and a trip to Snake Road in southern Illinois.

The Friday night ice-breaker featured all the usual amenities like lots of tasty food, opening remarks, and a guest speaker. **Mr. Scott Ballard** (Illinois Herpetologist) gave an eye opening talk on the status of the alligator snapping turtle in Illinois. He discussed all the recent and historical finds along with his plans to bring their numbers in the wild back to a healthy count.

Afterwards, the hospitality room was open for the remainder of the evening. We had a few beverages, saw some old friends, and called it a night.

Saturday was filled with talks which centered on the conservation theme for this year. **Jessi Krebs** (Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha, NE) trains alligators at the zoo for health and breeding purposes. Zoo trainers utilized stick tapping to

coax the gators up to land for feeding. Over time, they were able to give the gators health examinations and even extract semen from the males. In fact the HDZ is the only institution in the world to do this from unrestrained crocodilians (no anesthesia).

They're plan was to use this technique with alligators as a model for possible extraction from the rare Philippine crocodiles being housed at the zoo. They are happy to report that it has worked successfully!

Dr. Mike Dreslik, Illinois biologist, presented *Massasauga Conservation in Illinois*. The eastern massasauga is critically endangered in Illinois with one known breeding population. Dr. Dreslik is 15 years into his 20-year project of studying these snakes. He is looking at conservation management, life history, disease, and physiology of massasaugas. He and his colleagues continue be thorough by taking data regarding the snakes on a daily basis – 365 days a year. He has found the usual problems for their decline – habitat destruction and fragmentation, human interaction, road mortality, and disease.

In fact, they've recently found a natural born soil fungus, Keritinophilic, is also killing massasaugas.

This is similar to the white-nose syndrome found in bats. He noted that it may not be spreading but is just now being recognized. So far there is no early surveillance for this disease. By the time it is detected, it is too late to save the animal.

Some of his recorded data includes: catastrophic flooding of hibernacula is killing large numbers of these snakes. Food items included shrews, amphibians, and other snakes (garter and brown snakes). Females have been giving birth to mostly males, and appear to be foregoing reproduction to survive. His next project in this study will be a large campaign of public outreach.

CIHS member, **Toren Hill** worked on his masters degree with the American crocodile and Burmese pythons in southern Florida. His talk featured Burmese pythons in the Everglades region. His study included road surveys, live trapping, radio telemetry, and thermal research. Forty traps were baited with live rats and placed on 200 acres of adjacent farmland. Only 3 pythons were found indicating that traps were not affective. From 2000 to 2009, their study alone found over 400 pythons. Many were tagged and released. Others were euthanized and studied for their gut content. Food items found were bobcats, small deer, small mammals, geese, grebes, ibis, coots, alligators and other reptiles.

During a January record cold (25-30degrees F), 9 pythons were found dead. Others found had neurological problems and were euthanized. Some were found to be utilizing refuge below the frost line.

Currently radio tracking is being used. A public python hunt in Jan-Feb of 2013 netted 68 snakes. There were cash prizes for the most caught. It was more to promote awareness and not to eradicate the species.

U.S. Air Force drone testing to locate pythons has no success. These are a cold-blooded species. There has also been little success with using dogs to locate the snakes.

This is an ongoing problem and these snakes are there (S.Florida) to stay. Populations can now only be controlled – not eliminated.

Chawna Schutte (St. Louis Zoo) is working with Ozark Hellbenders. The zoo is currently housing 28 Ozark and 2 eastern hellbenders – most of any zoo. They are currently working to reproduce them in captive conditions and releasing them into the wild. Chawna is in charge of the entire hellbender project. The zoo has recently built a 32 foot indoor natural stream replica with the same temps and water quality of their natural surroundings. Two similar outdoor replicas were built in 2011. Retrieving sperm from the males was no easy task and no one had done it yet. Chawna researched fish reproduction and from there, changed the water composition. This worked with great success!

She found that captive eggs weren't hatching so more research found that adding a constant flow to the water helped to stimulate the eggs. This is another success that had never been done before! So far, 800 young have been released in to the wild so far.

A lunch break at the Burger Barge, featured about 20 gourmet burgers to choose from. This was a fun place that had a sea/costal feel and was nestled at riverside.

Afterwards, the remainder of the afternoon presentations resumed.

Bob Bavirsha's (Chicago Herp society), talk on catching crocodilians in northern Illinois was both funny and eye-opening. He has a place in his heart for these reptilian beasts and has rescued a great number of them in the Chicago area. I believe he noted that they had taken in over 840 in the past 7 or 8 years. He has found, rehabbed,

and relocated crocs, caimans, and gators from lakes, garages, homes, rivers and just about everywhere else. Luckily the St. Augustine Gator Park has taken in many from him. Bob has to do the blood work, tagging, and paperwork before taking each animal to another state. He played a few short videos from local news stations. Bob told of many horror stories where he has taken in animals that had swallowed odd items including rubber dog toys and even illegal drugs. All of this is done on his own dime and his own time. This is a great service!

Dr. Travis Wilcoxon (Millikin University) brought the chytrid fungus to light. He noted that the BD fungus is what causes chytrid and that it also attacks the keratin on an animal.

He studied stress factors and immune systems of chorus frogs and Southern leopard frogs. Cortocosterone (a steroid hormone) was added to ½ of developing tadpoles to test effects. Tadpoles with the cortocosterone developed more significantly than those without. He found that large bodied amphibians such as the mole salamanders, bullfrogs and leopard frogs seem to be more tolerant of chytrid fungus.

Travis also was quick to state that chytrid isn't new, just recently discovered and named.

Field herper, **Justin Michaels** discussed herping the Shawnee National Forest (the area deemed - *Snake Road*). He gave a good description and habitat usage of each herp that he has personally found in the area. He also gave his advice on how his herping methods have yielded certain herps. His description of the Nerodia Genus (water snakes) as the "*blood and poo snakes*" was dead on. This talk was to prepare those conference attendees for the trip on Sunday to the famous *Snake Road*.

After the talks, we had a nice break and a chance to check out the many auction items. The HHS donated several items to the auctions (this is standard). Pat Hammond and I donated a few personal items as well.

After the Banquet, **keynote speaker, Ty Park** showcased his 12 acre breeding facility of lizards in Florida. The title – '*Herpetoculture and Conservation in Coenera, Cyclura, Ctenosaura, and Iguanas*' was very in-depth. His plan is to breed all of the species and introduce them into the pet trade. This in turn, will make profits that will be donated to the conservation of these animals in the wild. One of his goals is to produce 500 Cyclura annually.

His talk introduced us to the many rare forms of species that he works with and others in the near future. He has a plethora of enclosures for babies, juveniles, and adult species. Both summer and winter quarters are utilized in each cage. No water bowls are used, only mist and drip systems. He spends \$700 weekly on produce for feed. A vet visit is essential so all animals are checked on a weekly basis.

Ty has 12 species of spiny tail iguanas and hopes to have all 17 of them.

Oh yeah, the auction. I had spent a bit much on that. More than I needed or had anticipated but it was for a good cause. 50% of the proceeds will go to the CIHS. 25% to USARK and 25% will help fund the Turtle Alliance.

Another fantastic Midwest Herp Symposium and a job well-done by the CIHS!

August Show and Tell meeting – In Pictures

Thanks to all of our members for showing their stuff!

Photos – Jim Horton



Lia and Andy Hicks



Michell Wehrle



Ed Ferrer



Rick Marrs



Jackson Rhoad



Jen Loftus



Erin Wagner



Angela Thomas



Jim Horton



Holly Carter



Jimmy Baugh and brother



Pat Hammond



Nikki Shonk



Charles and Aidan King



Chris young

KNIVES AND HERP ART

PAT'S MACHETE

Photos & text by Roger Carter

This is an intermission in my regular stories of “Knives and Herp Art” to report on Pat Hammond’s machete that has the image of an alligator etched into the blade.

This is a large, heavy machete that seems to be pretty old. Pat knows that one of his uncles owned it but he doesn’t any more than that. It’s a bit dirty (maybe it spent years in someone’s garage) and the edge isn’t sharp. The machete is twenty-seven and three/quarter inches long, the blade is twenty-one and five/eighths inches long, two inches wide at the wooden handle and, where the point curves upward, is four and thirteen/sixteenth inches from the cutting edge. There are three shallow grooves on each side of the blade that run about three/quarters the length of the blade. I have no idea why these grooves are there. Near the handle there is an image of an alligator that is one inch long. To the left of the alligator is the text “MARTINDALE-BIRMINGHAM-MADE IN ENGLAND”, under the ‘gator is the text “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.”, and to the right is “NO. 300B”. I did a Google search for “martindale knife company birmingham england” which led me to the web site www.ralphmartindale.co.uk. They have a wide variety of machetes and other cutting tools. The alligator seems to be part of their logo.

Cleaned up and sharpened, I think this would be awesome.

The following is copied from the web site and number 30-560-01 might be the current equivalent at twenty-two inches long.



2013 EVENTS

September 18, 2013 – HHS meeting, guest speaker – Dr. Richard S. Funk MA, DVM. Topic: *Treating Parasites in Captive Reptiles*. 7:00PM Holliday Park Nature Center

October 5, 2013 – HHS field outing, Brown County State Park. Meet at the nature center – 9:00A.M.

October 6, 2013 - Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, \$6.00 admission www.indianareptileexpo.com HHS has a booth at this event!

October 12/13, 2013 - North American Reptile Breeders Conference - **Tinley Park** Oct. 12th & 13th, **2013** Sat 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Sun 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

October 19, 2013 – HHS live herp display at Garfield Park Conservatory. 10am – 1pm. Volunteers needed. All HHS members are welcome to participate with their animals at this event.

October 20, 2013 - 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: December 8

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Parking at Holliday Park

7:00pm to 9:00pm is our new meeting time at **Holliday Park**.

Holiday Park entrance gates close automatically when it gets dark. **After darkness hours, drive your car up to the gates and they will open.** Also, we need to park behind the hill or knoll. Parking is allowed closer to the center on the other side of the knoll only if the vehicle has a handicap sticker. Park rangers do patrol the lot and will tow vehicles that are parked in the wrong lot.

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 Meeting**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

Email Address _____

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!