



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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President's Message

Ed Ferrer

By the time you read this I will need to thank all the members for participating in the Indiana State Museum's "Reptile Days" on Friday through Sunday, 7/14-16. This was part of the "Pets in America" series of events that showcases different sections of the pet trade from June through the first weekend in August. I am sure things went well and the public was impressed with our live exhibits and good information that we gave the public on these often misunderstood "herps".

A special "thank you" to Dr. Robert Brodman from St. Joseph's College on his excellent presentation on his herping experience in South Africa. "Dr. Bob", as his students affectionately call him, gave us a wonderful tour of South Africa. Even though they went during the winter for the Southern hemisphere they still found a good number of snakes, lizards, amphibians and a few tortoises. He also showed us some of the "mega fauna" such as lions, zebras, and several species of antelopes and birds.

This month our members take center stage as we have our annual "Show and Tell" program. Everyone is encouraged to bring their favorite two or three herps and share their experiences with their "pets".

We have reached an agreement with Butler University to continue meeting at Butler in the Gallahue Science Building as we have in the past. We are all very pleased to be able to continue to meet at Butler. A special "thank you" to Dr. Stephen Perrill and the biology department for their support that made this situation possible.

Special congratulations to HHS member Wendell Zetterberg as he was featured in the science section of the Indy Star's USA Weekend section of this past Sunday's Star newspaper! The article described Wendell's gathering important data regarding frogs and toads the past couple of years while participating in operation Frogwatch. His findings will help the Department of Natural Resources assess the status of amphibians and also provide important information regarding the overall health of our environment. Good job Wendell!

Out in the field

By Wendel Zetterberg

(All photos by Wendell Zetterberg)

This last week has been a bit crazy. My oldest went to Boy Scout Camp at Camp Ransburg, near Bloomington. Trying to get him ready was hectic, but him and my other son left for church camp as Monday, with the oldest getting home Saturday afternoon with a sprained ankle that we needed to have looked at before he could go to church camp. Somehow, we still managed to herp a little in the mean time. Wednesday was a program at [Camp Cullom](#) called "Water, Water, Everywhere". It was a lot of fun. We explored the pond and creek. We found a small painted turtle basking on a log. A few cricket frogs we caught and looked at through a magnifier, a salamander larvae (probably a spotted or tiger by the size), we saw several bullfrogs and green frogs. At the creek, we saw a northern water snake. We saw many macro invertebrates, there were charts to identify them, and it told you if your wetland was healthy. It was! In the afternoon, we went to Lafayette and adopted a Red eared slider that the previous owner no longer could give the attention he needed. I was very impressed at the care this turtle had received. It is great to see that level of care for a herp. In the evening we went the [Hoosier Herpetological Society](#) meeting at Butler University and heard Dr. Bob Brodman speak of his trip to South Africa for the World Congress of Herpetology. He had some great slides and tells an even better story. It was a very enjoyable meeting. Friday was the campfire ceremony for my oldest near Bloomington. We went early to hit a few tin sites we had been to in last month. I was surprised at how much



the areas were overgrown in less than a month. It was a very hot day and our findings were minimal. We found several ring necks at the first site. The next site we found what I believe to be a juvenile copperhead, but it was quick to go under a pile of boards and I only got a glimpse. We did find a black widow at that site under tin. At the next one we found two black racers under the same tin. It was quite strange, the first one we saw just had its head exposed from the dried grass and looked like a turtle. The second displayed a behavior I have only read about, I was looking at a black racer emerging from the dead grass, but I was hearing a rattlesnake!?! As it brought its tail out I saw it was vibrating it and when it hit the dead grass, it sounded like a rattle. We tried to get video and wound up with no pictures or snake. There was three of us and only two snake hooks so we were taking turns and we'd count off to three to pick up a piece of tin together. The next piece we got to three and picked it up and I started yelling "Put it DOWN, Put it DOWN!" We dropped the tin back on to the hiding skunk just as it spayed. Luckily, it was a young one and it only spayed the tin. We headed back toward the car after that. There was a box turtle along the way back out basking. The car was about a half mile away and we could still smell that skunk at the car. That night at the campfire, we even saw a couple of toads hopping around near the stage. The next couple of weeks look to be just as hectic with my daughter going to church camp and my other son to Cub Scout Weblo's camp, but hopefully we'll find some time to.



H.H.S. Member Featured at Zoo

By Dave Mitchell

One of our society members, Janet Panoch, has an exhibit of her excellent artistry in the atrium at White River Gardens. She has on display some fine works of the natural world. If anyone is in the zoo area or just looking a nice diversion, I recommend that you take a look. Because the paintings are in the atrium and there is no charge. Janet - to you - an outstanding job well done. When I saw your name in the Indy Star, I said, "Is that our Janet?" Thank you for sharing your talents.

Editor's Note: I agree. I was able to check out her work during the 4th of July weekend. She has a style all her own with sharp, vivid colors. She has taken on a large number of subjects of mostly animals, which is fitting at this institution. Get to the zoo area and check out one of our fellow H.H.S. member's work.

(P.S. Say hello to our friends at the zoo too!)

Care Tip

By Steve Nard (www.montysreptiles.org)

Most lizards have sharp nails, that continue to grow, these nails if not trimmed can cause severe scratches and even scars. Trimming a lizard's nails can be very difficult because they don't like being restrained. The best way to do it is wrap your lizard in a towel head and all. Secure the animal and only expose one leg at a time to clip their nails. Make sure you only trim the tip of the nail, if you cut too much off the nail you could cut into the lizards toe causing the animal pain and to bleed. This is best done with more than one person; one holding and one trimming.

General Meeting: Wednesday July 19, 7:30 p.m.

Special Event: Annual Show and Tell

Topic: Your Favorite Herps, Their Habits and Care

Butler University, Gallahue Hall, Lecture Room#108

It is time for our annual "Show and Tell" event! It is the time when everyone brings their favorite two or three herps and describe their habits and the care required to successfully keep (and possibly breed). It is a great time for sharing experiences and ideas. Perhaps it will give you an idea to add one or two other species to your collection.

A Visit to Site Three

By Angela Thomas

For several years now I have been a volunteer in Indiana's NAAMP Frog Survey, and I always enjoy driving my route and stopping at each site to listen to the calling frogs and record the species I've heard there. Having the same route for so long has been great, because I've become familiar with all the sites and the species that call there, so that stopping at site nine and hearing the deafening chorus of cricket frogs, interrupted occasionally by the deep call of a bullfrog or a green frog's sudden 'gluck!' is like visiting old friends. It's also made me wonder, though, about what happens after all the calling I'm listening to has ended. Sure, there are frogs there; I heard them. But did all that calling actually equal new baby frogs?

The site I most wondered about was site three. It's always been one of my favorite sites, because it's the one at which I usually hear the most species calling. Also, because the water is very close to the road, it's not unusual to actually see the frogs or toads as they cross the road, and in the past on very wet nights there have actually been gray tree frogs calling from the road surface, and pairs in amplexus crossing the road (and, unfortunately, frogs dead on the road too – run over while trying to get to the water). However, site three is what my site description calls a 'wet field' – basically, a big puddle that forms in the low corner of a plowed field. In drier years, the site was only a small puddle, or even completely dry. On the wettest times we'd been there, the pool was about thirty feet wide and forty feet long, and couldn't have been over a foot deep anywhere. Even then, I always asked myself, if these frogs manage to mate and lay eggs, can the tadpoles make it to metamorphosis? Is there pesticide in the water, or oil and chemicals from runoff from the road? And if the water is safe, will it dry up?

This year, spring peepers and chorus frogs called at site three in March, and in May there were more chorus frogs and American toads. On the third and final survey, in June, both American and Fowler's toads were calling, along with gray tree frogs. Shining my flashlight at the edge of the pool, I saw that there was still quite a bit of water – and there were definitely tadpoles in there. A few days later, I had a day off work, and set out in the morning to look for the tadpoles I'd seen. I was hoping to catch a few and raise them to see what kind of frogs or toads they'd become.

I got to site three around 9 am, which turned out to be a good time because the trees across the road were still shading part of the area. This not only kept me from broiling in the sun, it lessened the glare on the surface of the water. The pool was still about the same size it had been on the night of the survey, maybe fifteen feet across and about twice that wide. The water was only about five inches deep at the center. As soon as I walked to the water's edge, dozens of tadpoles shot off in all directions. Catching then proved tricky, since the ground around the pool was firm in some places and in others, soft enough to lose your shoes in. As I walked carefully around the water's edge, I noticed tiny gray things bouncing away from each step – minute baby toads, barely a quarter of an inch long, were everywhere in the damp area around the water. It was impossible to tell if they were American or Fowler's toads – they were just too tiny. I walked even more slowly, to give them plenty of time to get out of the way. Eventually, I managed to catch several tadpoles, including some with all four legs, some with tiny back legs just starting to form, and a few with no legs yet at all. None of the tadpoles or toadlets I saw had any sort of abnormalities. I also saw an adult Fowler's toad, which hopped off into the grass.

I brought a few of the tadpoles I found home to raise them and see what kind of frogs they are. The ones that had all four legs already when I caught them very quickly completed their metamorphosis, and by the next day were recognizable as tiny gray tree frogs. Interestingly, at this stage, they aren't gray most of the time, but a bright green that blends well with vegetation, and makes me wonder how many tiny tree frogs I missed seeing in the grass around the water's edge. The larger of the other tadpoles have grown their hind legs, and appear to have tiny toe pads on their feet, so they are most likely gray tree frogs as well. The smallest tadpoles are only now beginning to grow hind legs, so it will probably be several weeks before their identity is known. One thing is certain, though: this year the frogs' efforts at site three were a success.

Birthday Present

By Ed Ferrer

Part of my snake education business now that I am retired from teaching science is doing birthday parties with my snakes. These are always fun, using my snakes to teach kids about reptiles and nature in a close, informal hands-on setting. All the kids get a free snake souvenir and the birthday child gets his or her picture taken with their favorite snake during the party as a special memory. Last May I scheduled a birthday party for Hoosier herp member Mitchell Wehrle. He and his dad, Chris, have been coming to our monthly meetings regularly for the past year and he asked his dad about our discussions regarding the upcoming Midwest Herp Symposium. His dad explained to him that it took money to rent the hotel rooms, pay the guest speakers' travel costs, advertising and other expenses. Mitchell, on his own, decided to include in the birthday invitations that instead of bringing presents, he would request that his guests bring donations to the Hoosier Herp Society to be used to help fund the upcoming symposium! When his dad told me about this extraordinary idea I have to admit I got a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye. I know that most 8-year-old boys look on their birthdays as a big event and a chance to cash in on their favorite toys and video games. To think an 10 -year-old boy would pass on such an opportunity and instead donate to our society was simply amazing! I made sure that I brought some special herp related prizes for Mitchell to show my appreciation for his kind act. As it turned out all seventeen of his expected guests arrived and we had a very special birthday party! I got to thinking if an 8 year old child would do this for our society just think what we adults could do!

HERP HAPPENINGS

July 23rd, 2006 – 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. info. table. For info: (317) 861-5550, www.midwestreptile.com

July 19, 2005 – General Meeting, Annual Show and Tell Meeting. Bring in a few of your most prized or interesting herps and tell a little about them. Open to all members.

July 29th 2005 – H.H.S. live amphibian/reptile exhibit. Franklin Library, Franklin, IN 10 A.M. – 2 P.M.

November 3-5, 2006 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Westin Hotel, downtown Indianapolis. In cooperation with the Indy Reptile Expo at the Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

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to be eating and healthy. Mike Wood 574-269-3441 or email at: 2bears@myvine.com

Ride Needed: Bloomington HHS member in need of a ride to the meetings, and possibly the
Midwest Reptile Show. Will chip in \$ for gas. Please tell me I'm not the only HHS member in
the Bloomington/Bedford area! Contact Sheryl at Roseroar1@aol.com

For Sale: '05 rough-scaled sand boas, eating and healthy, \$50.00 '05 Indian Sand Boas,
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Monty's Reptiles, Education and Adoption

A non-profit organization based in Terre Haute, IN dedicated to educating the public about local
and exotic reptiles. We also take in unwanted reptiles, and find new appropriate homes for them.
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Visit the H.H.S. website at:
[www. HoosierHerpSociety.org](http://www.HoosierHerpSociety.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.**

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Suggestions and articles for *The Monitor* are welcome. Submit your typed or legibly hand written articles by the first Wednesday of each month to: PO. Box 40544, Indianapolis, IN 46240-0544 or 7712 Miracle road, Indianapolis, IN, 46237. Articles on IBM or compatible, formatted, 5¼ or 3½ disks are accepted. To have your disk returned, you must provide a self addressed, stamped envelope within your mailing to us. Back issues of *The Monitor* are available. Send requests to our PO. Box, or contact Holly Carter. Quarterly Advertisement Rates for publishing your ad in *The Monitor* are: ¼ Page - \$10.00; ½ Page - \$15.00; and Full Page - \$25.00. Classified Ads are free to all paid H.H.S. members and will be printed for two months. All ads must be submitted in writing to the Editor by the first Wednesday of each month. All artwork is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without written permission from the artist.

22nd Annual Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Nov. 3-5, 2006

We are in the final stages of our preparations for hosting the 22nd Annual Midwest Herpetological Symposium for the weekend of November 3-5, 2006. This symposium will be the same weekend as a huge Indy Reptile Expo at the Indiana Convention Center. All attendees will have access to the expo and its world famous breeders as well as a great schedule of both national and local guest speakers presenting topics for everyone, from rattlesnakes to turtles, and crocodilians to amphibians. Our meetings will be at the Westin of Indianapolis, a four star Hotel offering the finest in accommodations and a covered walkway across the street to the Convention Center and to Circle Center Mall. The Westin is offering the convention rate for three days before and after the symposium to all attendees. Also all attendees will be able to attend the Indianapolis Zoo for **free** on that Sunday! A special "thank you" to HHS member Richard Reams for making this possible. To make your reservation at the Westin Hotel and take advantage of the special symposium room rates, call the Westin Hotel at (317) 262-8100 and mention the midwest herp symposium.

The Friday evening ice breaker for the symposium will include a live reptile demonstration by wild life expert Larry Battson and will feature live musical entertainment by Mark Heinrich who will offer songs of herps and herpin' from his CD Alterna Rush. I have the CD and it is hilarious and offers views to which all us "herpers" can relate.

To get updated information and complete list of speakers on the symposium, check our website at www.hoosierherpsociety.org. Be thinking of herp related items that you may want to donate for our auction following Saturday night's auction. We are still accepting donations and sponsors for this event. The Hoosier Herpetological Society is a 501C non-profit organization, so any financial support is fully tax deductible. Let's all work together to make this symposium the best ever!

An Inconvenient Truth

a movie review

by Ed Ferrer

This past weekend I went to the Art Cinema at the Keystone at the Crossing Complex to view **An Inconvenient Truth presented by Al Gore**. As a retired science teacher and an individual interested in the environment I thought I needed to view this to see just how serious global warming could be. This documentary movie follows the former vice president as he shares his slide shows to various audiences. I was surprised by the sense of humor and easy warmth displayed by the former vice president, not a bit stiff or boring as he is often portrayed. He used charts and graphs to clearly show the causes and effects of global warming. Stunning before and after photos show that there is very little snow remaining on Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro and entire ice shields and glaciers melting drastically affecting the climates around the world. These dwindling ice shields have caused many rivers and lakes to dry up or reduce noticeably causing many droughts. He dramatically showed how industrialization and unchecked emissions have increased the "greenhouse" gases that have caused the oceans around the world to begin reclaiming land and redefining shorelines. Remember the many hurricanes of last year including Katrina? Well there is more water in the oceans and warmer temperatures today so there is more "fuel" for the same or greater damage this year! His charts and diagrams clearly dispute the claims that the Earth is just undergoing "natural" climate changes. The changes are too easily traced to human activity.

I was surprised at how personal he made his appeal. He mentioned how his farm

used to plant tobacco. But when his older sister died of lung cancer brought on by smoking the farm stopped producing tobacco. In a similar situation now that it is clear that human industrial activity and deforestation is adding to the global warming problem it is just as important to find solutions to this problem. It won't be easy because it will take unparalleled cooperation between nations and hard choices. It will mean actually finding alternative sources of energy and decrease our reliance on fossil fuels instead of just giving lip service to the problem. It will mean investing in the Earth's future at the risk of losing quick profits. Will we learn in time to stem the tide of more floods, hurricanes, droughts and other hardships brought on by our greed and short sighted profit taking? Most of us are concerned about the loss of species and others becoming endangered or threatened. Global warming is definitely a factor in many of these animals' declining numbers. Animals can adapt over millions of years to climatic changes but they can't adapt as fast as we are changing the environment in as short of a time span as 50 years. I would encourage everyone to see this movie and then decide for themselves what choices they should make for the future. Because as we watch other species become endangered or extinct it will ultimately effect us.

Indiana places to visit – herps to see

Jim Horton

This is what will hopefully be a series of pieces on different locations within our state to enjoy for a one-tank-trip.

The northeast quadrant of Indiana is known for the amish, classic cars, great fishing in natural lakes, and praries. Other notable features are the marsh/swamp areas, and nature preserves. The upper northern half of the state is home to some of the few undrained swamps. These watersheds are teaming with life and are home to a number of birds, amphibian, reptile and plant life cannot be seen anywhere else in our state.

Among them is the spotted turtle Clemmys guttata, a small aquatic turtle with an average carapace length of 3 ½ -4 inches. The typical spotted's are marked with a black background and one or more small yellow spots on each scute. It's small head is also spotted. It is considered one of our more rare species and is Endangered in Indiana. They are most active in early spring from late March till May.

Another northern Indiana native is Blanding's turtle, Emydoidea blandingi, named after William Blanding, an early Philadelphia naturalist. It is another aquatic turtle that is larger (5-8 in) than the spotted. It can easily be identified by its yellow chin or throat area. The moderately high carapace is usually dark brown or black with patterns of small pale yellow spots. The layman may confuse this species with the eastern box turtle.

Other turtles found in this area and state-wide are the snapping turtle, musk turtle, common map turtle, midland painted turtle, eastern box turtle, and eastern spiny softshell turtle

Copperbelly water snakes Nerodia neglecta

Butler's garter snake Thamnophis butleri,

Four-toed salamander Hemidactylium scutatum is considered a northern species in our state but it has been found in spotty areas of central north. Recent finds have been recorded as far south as Bloomington.