



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 25 Number 8

August 2014

Welcome new and returning members!

Renewing memberships

Charles, Jeanine, & Aiden King (Sustaining membership)

Chris young

Stacy Mann

Dave Miller

Tanya Beck

New members

Max Pfeffer

August HHS meeting

Wednesday Aug. 20th 7:00 p.m.

Holliday Park Auditorium

Guest Speaker: Greg Ammon, KY. Herp Society

Topic: "Herping the Yucatan Peninsula"

Greg Ammon, an active member of the Kentucky Herpetological Society, will be this month's guest speaker. He is a veteran field "herper" and has traveled extensively around the world searching for reptiles and amphibians and documenting his finds. His topic is "Herping the Yucatan Peninsula" of Mexico. Now that schools are back in session and everyone is back into their normal routine, it is a perfect time to view a "herp" related travelogue. Be sure to attend this meeting and see what reptiles, amphibians and other flora and fauna Greg found.

HOOSIER HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Celebrating 25 years!

HHS canoe/kayak trip - review

By Jim Horton

It was supposed to be a day of isolated showers.

Instead the sky was blue and sunny! 15 avid canoeists and kayakers showed up for a day on the water. This year we were back at the Driftwood River at Blues Canoes in Edinburgh Indiana for the 7 mile trip. We decided on this outfitter because the herps were plentiful in the past. We weren't disappointed this year. As soon as we launched our vessels, three large northern water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) were found just across the river on a downed tree.



Neil Jones shows a water snake for photos.

This river is quite clean and evidence was easy to see. Spring fed, and a rocky bottom of shale and limestone. Sculpins and darters were commonly seen. Another good indicator of good water quality is fresh water mussels. I saw more than a few of them.



Spiny soft shell turtles basking.

A stop for lunch at a rock/sand shoreline provided excellent rocks for skipping. Here, many species of fish are easily seen in the shallows.



Live fresh water mussel.

Turtles were basking everywhere! Most were common maps (*Graptemys geographica*) and spiny softshells (*Apalone spinifera*) but others were midland painted (*Chrysemys picta marginata*) and red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). Tiny yearlings of each of the above species were easily caught for photos.



Common map turtle

Northern water snakes were by far the most abundant of the snakes found on this trip. I found only one queen snake (*Regina septemvittata*). Our younger members stopped to swim on more than one occasion. And why not, the water temperature was excellent! The activity on the river by other boaters probably lessened our chances to see even more semi-aquatic herps. But it is quite difficult to plan an outing on a weekday. We'll do it again next year!

Indiana Herp of the Month

Eastern Hognose Snake

by Ed Ferrer

The Eastern hognose snake, *Heterodon platirhinos*, is a unique serpent found throughout Indiana except for the northeast corner of our state. It is a medium size snake with lengths normally being 20 to 33 inches, although the record is 45 1/2 inches. Its coloring is quite variable, normally a spotted pattern with colors including yellow, brown, gray, olive, orange, red or black. In some areas a jet black or almost plain gray color morph may appear. A good field mark is its upturned snout from which its common name of hognose snake is derived. This snout is used for digging up toads, its favorite meal. Sandy areas are its favorite habitat. Its scales are keeled and divided.



Eastern hognose *Heterodon platirhinos* (Photo - Jim Horton)

It is most famous for its defensive actions. When discovered it will often put on quite a show. Usually when it feels threatened it will flatten its head and neck much like a cobra to make it look larger and more menacing. Then it will hiss loudly and act like it is going to strike. If that doesn't work it will often roll on its back and play dead, opening its mouth with its tongue hanging out with a few convulsive movements. If a person turns the snake right side up it will often promptly roll over again. Because of this threatening act it is often called by locals as "hissing adder", "spreading adder", "blow viper" and "puff adder" among others. Sometimes because

of this threatening act it is killed by people who don't know what it is. Actually a few years ago it was found to be mildly venomous, its rear fangs used mostly to kill toads. When I was visiting the Louisville Zoo years ago the zoo keepers were just changing the cards on the back of the cages indicating that it was venomous. Although toads are its preferred prey item it will also take frogs. Young hognose snakes may take crickets or other small insects.



Eastern hognose *Heterodon platirhinos* (Photo - Jim Horton)

During last years "Herp Out" field trip at Hardin Ridge, Holly Carter found a beautiful large orange and black gravid female hognose by the road. As it was handled to be photographed it spread its hood and tried to look menacing but it didn't play dead. On another field trip in Brown County State Park led by Brittany Davis we caught a toad and brought it back to the nature center to feed its display hognose snake. We turned to another side of the tank to get a better view for the photo. By that time we got into the best position the snake had already devoured the toad before we could get a good shot.

These very colorful and often entertaining snakes make a great find during any field trip

Reference: Peterson Field Guide, Reptiles and Amphibians, Eastern/Central North America, Roger Conant/Joseph T. Collins

President's message

Jim Horton

Again, don't forget to Register for the **Midwest Herpetological Symposium** (October 17-19). You can save money by registering early. Save ten bucks until **September 1st**. Also by registering early, you'll get the discount on the T-shirt. Please attend this event. It is full of education and fun. We need your support!

Had a great time at the National Amphibian Expo at Butler University. The HHS had a booth promoting our organization and the Midwest Herpetological Symposium. All of the funds raised at this bi-annual event are donated to amphibian conservation. Thanks to our HHS members who spent the day at the HHS booth.

I'll be out of town next month so Ed Ferrer will take the helm. I'll see you at the September meeting.

This month, Kentucky Herp Society member, Greg Ammon will be our guest speaker. Greg is a great field herper and his excursions in the field are full of great stories.

We'll be looking for a few HHS members to help out at some of our upcoming exhibits. One is the Handy Capable Camp at Bradford Woods near Martinsville (**September 13**). The other is **November 1st** at Garfield Park. If you are interested in bringing some of your herps for display, please contact me. My contact information is inside the back page of this issue.



La Quinta Inns and Suites

5120 Victory Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46203

List of confirmed guest speakers:

Jeff Holmes – Executive Director of the Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Dr. Christopher Jenkins – CEO of the Orianna Society

Lee Casebere – DNR Division of Nature Preserves

Mike Pingleton – Field herpetologist, author, and herpetoculturist

Frank Paladino Ph.D. – Professor/Biologist, IUPUI Fort Wayne

Jim Harrison – Kentucky Reptile Zoo

P. David Polly Ph.D. – Indiana University

Carl J. Franklin - University of Texas at Arlington Dept. of Biology

ADOPTIONS

Several tortoises, snakes and lizards are in need of re-homing.

Contact Jim Horton for information relating to these animals.

National Amphibian Expo

Jim Horton

The National Amphibian Expo (NAE) was August 9 at the Butler University campus. This event featured anything and everything amphibian.



Expo show

Talks were featured throughout the day on breeding and conservation. The main portion of the event was the sale. Guest speakers, a photo contest, and of course, live animals kept attendees busy during the event. This featured all captive bred amphibians. Poison dart frogs (Dendrobatidae) were by far the most popular species offered. Many vendors sold terrariums, tropical plants, and other supplies for keeping those cold-blooded critters healthy and thriving.

One vendor had an unusual axolotl that had a split of two colors – a white (albino) half and a natural half. This aquatic salamander was not for sale, no matter how much you would ask the guy.



An 'oddball' Axolotl

A silent auction and live auction drew much needed funds for amphibian conservation. All proceeds will benefit Amphibian Ark (an amphibian conservation organization). Some proceeds will fund a study right here in Indiana. Crawfish frogs (*Rana Areolata*) are currently being studied by Mike Lannoo Ph.D. at Indiana State University. Mike and some of his students were on hand with a display of this project. A portion of the funds from the (NAE) will support the research of this Indiana State-Endangered Species.



Waxy monkey tree frog (*Phyllomedusa sauvagii*)

HHS members manned a booth at this event to promote our organization and the upcoming herp symposium. Angela Thomas and I displayed some native Indiana amphibians at the table. Special thanks to Dale Schoentrup, Roger and Holly Carter, and Angela Thomas for spending their day to help the HHS!



The HHS booth

2014 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

August 20, 2014 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker: Greg Ammon, KY herp Society. Topic – *Herping the Yucatan Peninsula*”.

August 31, 2014 - 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 show - October 19)

September 7, 2014 - Indiana Reptile Expo in Noblesville, IN on the first Sunday of the month from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Hamilton County Exhibition Center & 4-H Grounds.

September 13, 2014 – HHS live animal exhibit for the Handi-Capable Camp at Bradford Woods, Martinsville, IN. Volunteers needed.

October 17-19, 2014 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Indianapolis, IN. Hosted by the HHS.

November 1, 2014 – HHS live animal exhibit at Garfield Park Conservatory, 10am-1pm. Volunteers needed for this event. Please contact Jim Horton for more information.

Mostly Reptiles

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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**

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

The Monitor is printed courtesy of: **Harding Poorman**



More finds from the 2014 HHS canoe/kayak trip



Midland painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*)



Spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

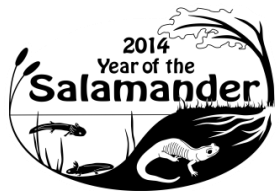
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Individual/Family Membership \$15.00

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Herpetological Interest(s)

**Hoosier Herpetological Society
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Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

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