



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 35 Number 11

November 2024

HHS Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, November 20th, 7:00PM

Holliday Park Nature Center

Guest Speaker – Jackson Schoettle

**Topic – *Seasonal Vulnerability of Snakes to
Road Traffic in Northern Alabama***

Jackson is a current wildlife biologist working for the Indiana DNR and adjunct lecturer at Franklin College. He completed his bachelor degree at Ball State and Masters of science at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. His research and interests include the conservation and ecology of reptiles and amphibians. As a native Hoosier, he is passionate about conserving and promoting the beautiful herps in our state!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Thank you and welcome to the Hoosier Herpetological Society! Thank you to our returning members!
Without all of you, we wouldn't be the organization that we've grown to be today!

Renewals

Pat Dodge
Neill Jones
Donald Nuetzman
Nancy Tatum
Mike Wood

New Members

Noah Kearns
Eileen Jarp
Kathie Molter
Jonathan Renshaw
John Young

An Overview of Turtle Rehabilitation

By Katie Kulcon

The Indiana Wildlife Rehabilitators Association hosted their 11th annual continuing education workshop on Saturday, November 2nd. They covered a variety of topics, including parasitology, raptor rehabilitation, and compassion fatigue. One particularly interesting topic discussed native turtles and common threats they face in our increasingly urbanized world.



Sarah Maddox of Wild Care, Inc. gave her talk titled Native Turtle Rehab: How to Get Started. She's particularly passionate about box turtles. Turtles are an ancient order of reptiles that first evolved around 260 million years ago. Unfortunately, more than half of the turtle species we share the planet with are now threatened with extinction. Turtles in the state of Indiana face a number of threats in the wild. Some of the most common

reasons a turtle may be admitted to a wildlife rehabilitation facility include vehicle and farm equipment strikes, predation from pets, respiratory illness, illegal possession, and abnormalities in the ears or eyes. These abnormalities are often a result of exposure to organochlorine compounds commonly found in pesticides, which causes vitamin A deficiencies in turtles. Symptoms of Vitamin A deficiencies include swollen ears or eyelids, skin abnormalities, and even infection of the respiratory tract. Box turtles in particular also tend to have very high site fidelity. This means that they become accustomed to their specific territory and will often fail to thrive if moved outside of that territory.

If you encounter a turtle attempting to cross a road and can safely assist, be sure to move it in the direction it was heading. Always check your surroundings and prioritize your safety at all times. If you find an injured turtle in the wild, contact a wildlife rehabilitator. Attempting to treat it yourself is against the law and almost always unsuccessful for the turtle. Be sure to note the location where the turtle was found so it can be returned to its original home range. Thank you to Sarah Maddox for this fascinating presentation, and to the Indiana Wildlife Rehabilitators Association for hosting the workshop!

October Meeting Review

by Holly Carter

The World of Carnivorous Plants by Jim Horton

We are trying to add some diversity to our programs because conservation covers a lot of other things. Some of which tie other programs to herpetology, and some that don't.

What is a carnivorous plant? These plants grow in waterlogged sunny areas with poor soil. The plants attract insects, trap them and digest them to allow them to live and use this niche. Most consume insects but some of the larger species will take small reptiles and small mammals.

Prey versus pollinator. Plants bloom first to send out the attractant for enticing prey, the flowers may be very tiny and seem too fragile to be on the plant.

Next come the traps, some are like the Venus Fly Trap, a sizable hand shape with spikes around the edges, it has a sticky surface and as the fly fumbles around it, the trap closes with the spikes closing like locking fingers to hold the insect inside. When the insect has died and been digested, the trap will open and sometimes be ready to snare another insect. Traps are replaced as needed by the plant.

Some of these plants are living under water and have tiny bladders that suck in insects. Pitcher plants have tiny hairs that keep an insect from being able to crawl back out once they go into the water filled pitcher. Sundews use sticky bubbles that curl over the insect and hold it in place for digestion.

How to keep and display these plants. Keep on southwest side of house in a plastic pot or tub, avoid clay pots as these dry out and have some minerals which are bad for these plants. Use only rain or distilled water and use peat moss and sand to make a bog-like area.

Winter Dormancy. Cut them down, remove dead leaves, keep wet, (can add sphagnum moss to mix) keep containers on a shelf with some light available. There are tropical species that require heat and light and do not use a dormancy period. There is also a proto-carnivorous plants which trap and kill insects but do not digest them.

Herpetology Quiz

By Kimberly Scott

1. Which of the following species of Indiana native salamander do not have lungs?

1. Jeffersons salamander 2. Redback salamander 3. Spotted salamander 4. Marbled salamander

2. True or false? All frogs and toads have tadpole stages.

3. True or false? The toxins of an Eastern Newt are most potent in the larval stage.

4. Which of these turtles can close up their shell completely?

1 – Blanding's turtle 2 - Eastern box turtle 3 - Red eared slider 4 - Stink pot turtles

5. What is the term when a female reptile reproduces without the presence of a male?

1 – Parthenogenesis 2 – Neurogenesis 3 – Herptogenesis 4 – Reptigenesis

The Marbled Salamander's Fall Breeding Ritual in Indiana

Jim Horton

The marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) is a fascinating amphibian native to Indiana, well-known for its unique fall breeding season. Unlike many other salamanders that breed in spring, the marbled salamander begins its reproductive cycle in late autumn, typically from September to early November. This breeding strategy is specially adapted to its woodland habitats in the Midwest, where seasonal rains create temporary pools essential for the survival of its larvae.



During this time, adult marbled salamanders leave their hidden daytime retreats under logs, rocks, or leaf litter to migrate to these shallow, often ephemeral pools. Males and females engage in courtship rituals, with males displaying their contrasting black and white bands to attract a mate. Once paired, the female lays her eggs in depressions at the pool's edge, rather than directly in the water. She then guards her clutch, protecting the eggs from predators and desiccation until rains

fill the pools, submerging the eggs and allowing them to hatch.



This fall breeding strategy gives marbled salamander larvae a significant advantage. By hatching before other species that breed in spring, they grow larger and stronger, increasing their survival rates. However, this strategy is risky: without sufficient fall rains, the eggs might dry out before hatching.

Marbled salamanders are a critical part of Indiana's ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity and indicating healthy wetland habitats. Our local wetlands, including these ephemeral pools, are vital for preserving these unique creatures and their autumnal breeding habits.

Seven new frog species discovered in Madagascar: Sounds like something from Star Trek

October 15, 2024 Source: University of Copenhagen - Faculty of Science

Researchers have discovered seven new species of tree frogs that make otherworldly calls in the rainforests of Madagascar. Their strange, high-pitched whistling calls sound more like sound effects from the sci-fi series *Star Trek*. As a result, the researchers have named the new species after seven of the series' most iconic captains.

HHS at Barrington of Carmel Senior Home

Members of the HHS were invited to present their animals to the residents of Barrington. Our participating members, Roger and Holly Carter, Katie Kolcun, and Jim Horton brought along a variety of herps and enjoyed talking with the guests. Many residents stuck around for more questions a closer look at some of our animals. We had a wonderful time and hope to be back at this facility.



Greenwood Nature Center/HHS

Mike Weaver from the City of Greenwood Nature Center invited the HHS to exhibit live amphibians and reptiles at his facility on Thursday evening in October. Our members enjoyed discussing all things herps with visitors from 7PM-9PM. The evening was warm enough to have the large door open. This allowed visitors to move freely through our displays easily. Mike mentioned another possible live exhibit again soon. Thanks to Katie Kolcun and Roger and Holly Carter for their time.



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Look for the HHS
on social media



Quiz Answers

1 - (Redback Salamander)

2 - (False! There are some species of frogs and toads that lay eggs that bypass the tadpole stage and develop directly into miniature adults)

3 - (False! The toxins are most potent in the Red eft stage, accompanied by bright orange skin!)

4 - (All but the red eared slider can withdraw into their shells and close them up, although, out of these 3 species, the box turtle has the tightest shut)

5 - (Parthenogenesis is the term for reproduction without presence of a male. Many reptiles have been known to be capable of this feat. One famous example is in 2016, a female Asian water dragon hatched from an egg at the Smithsonian National Zoo, despite her mother never being with a male water dragon)

HHS Board of Directors - 2024

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	Dale Schoentrup		eyelashviper@hotmail.com

2024 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

November 20, 2024 – HHS meeting, Guest speaker: Jackson Schoettle (Indiana DNR), Topic – *Seasonal Vulnerability of Snakes to Road Traffic in Northern Alabama*.

Nominations for 2025 elections.

November 3, 2024 - Midwest Reptile Show, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. 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

HHS Holiday Party – Tentative dates Dec 14 or 21st Date and facility TBA

President's message

Jim Horton

Once again, thank you Holly Carter and Katie Kolcun for their contributions to this newsletter.

We will hold elections for new 2024 officer positions this month. Best of luck to all candidates!

We had a wonderful time last month at both the Greenwood Nature Center and the Barrington of Carmel Senior Home. Everyone had great questions, and we even recruited some new members. Mike Weaver from the Greenwood Nature Center, was happy to have us for the live exhibit that night. We hope to have another exhibition there in the future.

The Barrington program featured short presentations from HHS members. The audience of 45 had numerous questions and some curious residents stuck around for more.

I represented the HHS in Danville for the Indiana Master Naturalist Program in September. My PowerPoint of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana was a big hit! Beth Martin, Operations Specialist at Waste Management, was happy to have the HHS that night. We received a \$250 donation for the program.

HHS ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025

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.

Membership Form

new member

renewal

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Email Address _____

Individual/Family Membership \$25.00

Herpetological Interests

Hoosier Herpetological Society
P.O. Box 40544
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0544

Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

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