



# 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 26 Number 1

January 2015

## President's message

Jim Horton

Happy New Year! Thank you to all of you who have supported us last year and throughout your memberships. I hope to have you as HHS members for years to come.

We have an exciting year ahead with our outings, exhibits, and meetings. Our donations to conservation organizations is another step in the right direction for us (see inside for more).

A great big, huge THANK YOU is in order for Barbara Filtri. Barbara has worked hard to create a beautiful new website for us. Please thank Barbara for her efforts when you see her next. Check it out at [www.hoosierherpsoc.org](http://www.hoosierherpsoc.org)

It is with heavy hearts that we must announce that The HHS has lost one of our long time board members. David Mitchell passed away last month from a long illness. Dave was our dedicated treasure for many years and a great asset to our organization. We will all miss Dave and the wonderful work he had done for the HHS.

We haven't raised our dues in several years. Unfortunately, paper prices, stamps, internet pricing and all the rest go up in price annually. We will be changing our membership dues to **\$20 in March** of this year. We are giving our current members a reminder so that you can save **\$5.00** by renewing now.

If you really think about it, \$20 is just a drop in the bucket compared to what we pay for our cell phone or cable bills on a monthly basis - \$50, \$60, even \$80 a month in some cases.

## NEW HHS WEBSITE

Our webmaster, Barbara Filtri has revamped the website. It is now cleaner looking and easier to navigate through the pages and links. The site also sports a new color theme.

You are now able to renew your membership online. We also plan to add new features and more updated information.

## WELCOME RETURNING MEMBERS!

Wanda Horner and Juan Horner, Will Brown, Friends of Garfield Park, Neil Jones

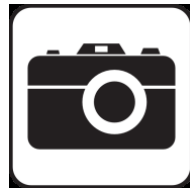
# David Mitchell 1948-2014

In early December the HHS lost one of its long time members.

Mr. David Mitchell was a board member serving as Treasurer for many years.

If you knew David or "Dave" as we knew him, you knew he was an avid turtle/tortoise fan. In fact, he was our turtle/tortoise expert. We will all truly miss Dave.

## Hoosier Herpetological Society Annual Photography Contest



**Two adult categories: *Wild and Captive***

***Kids Category: kids ages 5-16***

All entries must be 8x10 formats. (Framed work is welcome but not necessary)

Entry fees are \$1.00 per entry. Enter as many times as you wish.

Entries must pertain to herpetology.

Must be a current HHS member(s) to enter contest.

Judging will be from your peers (the audience).

### **Prizes**

**Adult winners in each category**

**1st place \$25.00, 2nd place \$20.00, 3rd place \$15.00**

***Kids category***

**Grand prize - \$10.00**

Afterwards members are welcome to show short video clips of herping in the field.

(No prizes to be awarded for this presentation)



**The HHS now has online subscription!**

**You can now join or renew your membership at the click of a mouse.**

[www.hoosierherpsoc.org](http://www.hoosierherpsoc.org)

[www.hoosierherpsoc.org](http://www.hoosierherpsoc.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 7:00 p.m. at Holliday Park Nature Center. Membership is open to all interested individuals. **No venomous animals are allowed at the General Meetings.**

# Have you ever seen...A long-necked turtle?

By Mary Hylton

It all began about two months ago during our behind-the-scenes tour at the Indianapolis Zoo during the Midwest Herpetological Symposium. There, for the first time ever, I came face-to-face with my first long-necked turtle. It was so interesting looking and had the most beguiling—for lack of a better term—smile on its face! Needless to say—s/he had me at “hello.”

**Taxonomy: Order: Chelonia Family Chelidae Genus/species: Chelodina longicollis**

Who can resist this little face?



The eastern long-necked turtle is very common in eastern Australia. The other long-necked species occur in northern and western Australia. Eastern snake-necked turtles usually inhabit marshy and sluggish aquatic settings -- think swamps. They also inhabit nearly any type of slow moving body of water from dams to major rivers and lakes.

The eastern long-necked turtle is also called the Australian Snake-Necked Turtle, or Common Long-necked Turtle. Thirteen Reimann's (RYE-man's) Snake-Necked Turtles hatched at the Denver Zoo recently. This almost fully-aquatic, freshwater species can only be found in Papua New Guinea. As their name indicates, they are known for their long necks, so long that they aren't able to fully pull their heads into their shells. Instead they wrap their necks around the front and sides of their shell to provide predators less of a target. Though adults can grow to more than 10 inches long, the hatchlings are all about the size of a quarter. The eastern long-neck's shell will eventually grow to approximately 25 cm in length and its neck nearly the same length. The upper carapace's color ranges from light reddish-brown to nearly black. The plastron (lower shell--for us turtle novices) is usually a creamy yellow and occasionally has dark brown markings. Their webbed feet have strong claws. Their jaws consist of a hard, horn-like material and can deliver a painful bite if/when they are poked at more than they can bear.

The Common Long-necked Turtle can live up to 50 years. One of their means of survival can be attributed to their ability to emit a foul smell from their glands which they can spray more than three feet. They sometimes bear the nickname, “stinkers” because of this trait. Predators understandably may be inclined to “steer

clear.” During drought-like periods these turtles can bury themselves in mud or soil in lakes or other bodies of water. Burying themselves protects them from extended dry periods. It is not uncommon for them to travel great distances in search of a new home.

The Common Long-necked Turtle is carnivorous and commonly feeds on fish, insects, tadpoles, frogs, and other crustaceans.

Females lay between 4-20 hard-shelled eggs during spring and early summer in the bank of a swamp or stream. Hatchlings emerge after three to eight months. Some females may produce two or three clutches in one season.

## Eastern Snake-Necked Turtles as Pets

Not only do these reptiles exist in the wild, they also are sometimes kept as household pets. Although they tend to possess meek temperaments, they generally work well in captive environments after a little time. Many of them even willingly take food directly out of their owners' hands.

Well, that's it in a nutshell—or turtle shell in this case!

Hopefully you have enjoyed learning about this interesting species. If there is an amphibian or reptile that you would like to see featured in future newsletters just let us know!

## Sources:

- [www.reptilepark.com](http://www.reptilepark.com) (Australian Reptile Park)
- Smithsonian National Zoological Park

- <http://animals.pawnation.com/eastern-snakenecked-turtle-4973.html>

- <http://www.arkive.org/brazilian-snake-necked-turtle/hydromedusa-maximiliani/>

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



## North American Amphibian Monitoring Program Patuxent Wildlife Research Center



Do you have an interest in Citizen Science? Do you want to help our frog populations?

Then the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program (NAAMP) might just be your calling. Our amphibian populations are declining and they need your help! The NAAMP is part of a global effort to study and conserve amphibians. As HHS members, we should do our part to aid in the conservation of Indiana frogs and toads.

This survey is only 3 times a season. You must volunteer for a route, pass the frog/toad call quiz, and monitor frogs/toad calls when suitable conditions are right.

Why not go to their website and take a look? [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/naamp/](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/naamp/)

## Please welcome your elected officers for 2015

**President:** Jim Horton

**Vice-president:** Mary Hylton

**Secretary:** Holly Carter

**Treasurer:** Roger Carter

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Will Brown

## HHS CONSERVATION DONATIONS

In late 2014, the Hoosier Herpetological Society board decided to donate a portion of proceeds from the 29<sup>th</sup> Midwest Herpetological Symposium toward local conservation efforts. A total of \$700 was set aside for funding. The donations are as follows:

\$300 will go to the Purdue University Hellbender research project.

\$300 will help fund Indiana Turtle Care

\$100 to Indiana Forest Alliance



# Copperheads! Copperheads?

By Ed Ferrer

Of all Indiana's snakes my favorite is the Northern copperhead, *Agkistrodon conortrix mokasen*.



Northern Copperhead photo-Jim Horton

My favorite time of year is the fall with its earth tone colors of tan, rust, red and gold. These colors also match the colors of the copperhead and it is probably why it is my favorite Hoosier serpent.

I occasionally get calls concerned about a "copperhead" in or around their home or yard. I always am quick to answer their calls with a visit. (Hopefully that will save the snake from being on the wrong end of a hoe, rake, ax or some other tool that happens to be handy.)

One concerned older man told me he had a copperhead on his property. When I arrived he told me he scooped it up with a shovel and put it in a trash barrel. When I peeked into the barrel it turned out to be a corn snake, *elapha guttata guttata*, similar colors but different patterns among other features. It had probably escaped from its owner or maybe it was released. I showed the photo of a copperhead in the Peterson Field Guide and pointed the different features between the two snakes. The man was relieved and thanked me for coming out. I was able to find a new home for the snake.



Northern Copperhead photo-Jim Horton

Another man called me about a copperhead that lived under his deck. His house was in Martinsville which could be at the northern most range of a copperhead so I headed down to investigate with my snake hook, gloves

and secure container. It was a Friday evening and after waiting and looking around for about 90 minutes I suggested that I come back earlier and we might have better luck, thinking it would come out to bask in the sunlight to warm up. I showed him the photos of a copperhead in the Peterson's Field Guide and he said he was sure that was what he had seen. I was busy Saturday so on Sunday morning Holly Carter and I returned about 8:30 a.m. and started looking around the base of the deck. After about 40 minutes the man yelled "Here it is!" When we looked at what he had found it was a black rat snake, *Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta* ! (Which of course looks nothing like a copperhead.) He asked "What should I do?" As I looked around his yard and saw mole trails. I said that since his children were high school age and knew to leave it alone, I suggested that they leave it alone and it might get rid of his mole problem. Which is what he did.

Another man called me from the east side of Bloomington saying that he had a copperhead that rests under his evergreen trees. We searched under his several pine trees and didn't find anything. I told him that if it ever occurred again to keep an eye on it and I would return. About one week later he called again saying that he saw it slither under one of his trees would keep an eye on it until I arrived. So I gathered all my snake handling equipment and a container and arrived about one hour and fifteen minutes later. The man was excited and said it must still be under the tree because he had watched it continually and it did not leave. The tree branches were low to the ground so we tried to lift the branches up but we couldn't see anything. He started raking some of the mulch out from under to get a better look but we still had no luck. He finally took the hose and started spraying the tree thinking that might drive it out from under the tree. Finally as we were circling the tree on opposite sides, he yelled "It is coming out!" As I raced around I saw a lightly colored Northern water snake, *Nerodia sipedon, sipedon*, slithering toward the pond that was on the side of his property. It did have some rust colors but no triangle-shaped head, facial pits or elliptical eye pupils or other features associated with a copperhead. When I showed him the Peterson's Field Guide he was convinced that his snake wasn't a copperhead.

I think when people who aren't familiar with snakes encounter one they automatically think it is a venomous snake because those species are more often written about or shown on television. I always try to investigate any "snake problem" because hopefully it will save a snake from being killed and offer little education about the true nature of snakes and explain how beneficial they usually are for humans and the environment.

My last "case" was actually a copperhead! The woman on the west side of Bloomington had emailed me a few photos of her copperhead. There was no doubt that her snake was indeed a real copperhead! When I arrived at her house she showed me where she had last seen it. It was in front of her garage/shed where she kept her lawn mower and other tools that she used in her garden. I saw several concentric circles of laid down grass (similar to the crop circles seen on UFO programs) where it would lay in the sun. She had about 5 acres on her property and she first thought I could take it to the back of her land. I told her that if I did that it would just come back to her

shed because it had found a home in the cracked foundation and that was probably where it would hibernate in the winter months. If I took it to another location it has been reported that snakes often become disoriented and get run over as it crossed a road or other problems as it tried to find its original "home area".

Since she lived alone and the shed was about 500 feet from her house she decided it would be best to leave it alone. She would just learn to be careful when working around that area. It seemed like a win - win situation for both parties involved. Now she looks forward to seeing her reptilian neighbor.

## KNIVES AND HERP ART (part 36)

Photos & text by Roger Carter



So far, this is the only knife that I have seen that has turtle art and is only the second knife that came with any kind of literature, like an owner's manual.

This folding knife is nine and three/eighths inches long fully extended and the blade is four and one/eighths inches long. On one side of the handle is the image of a turtle etched into the plastic and two turtles on the other side of the handle. This was manufactured by Schrade Cutlery of Ellenville, New York. On the blade you can see engraved "SCHRADER U.S.A. I.T.". The serial number on the handle says "8587". The following excerpt was in the literature that was in the box with the knife: "Our knife handles are made of Schrade Staglon®. This special material is chip-proof, flame-retardant and virtually indestructible, giving you a comfortable sure grip for the life of the knife. Schrade knives are made with one of two different types of blade steel: HIGH CARBON TOOL STEEL. Chosen for its strength and ability to take and hold an edge." "SCHRADER+ STEEL. A specially developed, super-hard blade steel with unsurpassed, edge holding ability. Blades are resistant to rust, stain and corrosion." This blade is razor sharp.



The sheath has the image of a snapping turtle engraved into the flap and the body of the sheath has multi-colored beads that, in the center, shows the image of a turtle. The literature that describes the sheath says "The unique beaded sheath included with your limited edition knife combines utility as well as attractive design. Each bead is hand sewn to a fabric backing that is then bonded, using the best adhesive available, to the genuine leather beneath."

## 2015 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

**January 21, 2015** – HHS Meeting, topic – Photo Contest. Open to all members. Two categories - *In the wild* and *Captive*. Kids category – prize \$10.00.

**January 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](http://www.midwestreptile.com) other dates: March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**February 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. Dates – 3/1/15

**February 18, 2015** – HHS Meeting, Guest Speaker - TBD

**March 7, 2015** – HHS exhibit at Eagle Library. Live herp displays by HHS members. All current members are encouraged to help exhibit their herps. Contact Mary Hylton for more information.

**March 18, 2015** – HHS Meeting, Holliday Park Nature Center, Guest Speaker – Sarabeth Klueh-Mundy (Indiana State Herpetologist), Topic - TBD

**March 21, 2015** – *Amphibian Outing*, McCormick’s Creek State Park, free with park admission. Herpetological presentations, field trips. Sponsored by the HHS and Friends of McCormick’s Creek State Park

**April 17-18, 2015** – Herpetology Weekend, (Red River Gorge), Slade, KY. Herpetology presentations (fri/sat nights), field trips all day Saturday.

### ***Your HHS Board of Directors for 2015***

PRESIDENT	Jim Horton	(317) 443-4845	<a href="mailto:stardali84@hotmail.com">stardali84@hotmail.com</a>
VICE-PRESIDENT	Mary Hylton	(317) 966-4591	<a href="mailto:liblady81@hotmail.com">liblady81@hotmail.com</a>
SECRETARY	Holly Carter	(317) 873-6561	<a href="mailto:drymarchonzz@hotmail.com">drymarchonzz@hotmail.com</a>
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Roger Carter	(317) 873-6561	<a href="mailto:drymarchonzz@hotmail.com">drymarchonzz@hotmail.com</a>
SERGEANT AT ARMS	Will Brown	(765) 278-1480	<a href="mailto:wrbrown15@aol.com">wrbrown15@aol.com</a>
EDITOR	Jim Horton	(317) 443.4845	<a href="mailto:Stardali84@hotmail.com">Stardali84@hotmail.com</a>
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	Ed Ferrer	(317) 787-7448	<a href="mailto:pythonpals1@msn.com">pythonpals1@msn.com</a>
WAYS AND MEANS CHAIR	Angela Thomas	(317) 882-5266	<a href="mailto:necali@comcast.net">necali@comcast.net</a>
WEBSITE COORDINATOR	Barbara Filtri		<a href="mailto:webmaster@hoosierherpsoc.org">webmaster@hoosierherpsoc.org</a>
MEMBERS AT LARGE	Pat Hammond	(317) 656-9496	<a href="mailto:gnawbone92@yahoo.com">gnawbone92@yahoo.com</a>
	Rick Marrs		<a href="mailto:rickmarrs@ymail.com">rickmarrs@ymail.com</a>



# 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 Interests

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ If this area is checked, it is time to renew your membership

Address Correction Requested

Dated Material Enclosed

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