



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 27 Number 8

August 2016

H. H. S. Monthly Meeting
Wednesday August 17th, 7:00 p.m.
Holliday Park Nature Center

Guest Speaker: Dr. Robert Brodman, St. Joseph's College
Topic: "The Lake Erie Water Snake Recovery Project"

Dr. Robert Brodman and some of his biology/ecology students from St. Joseph's College participated in the Lake Erie Water snake Recovery Project. This project was recognized as one of the six most successful endangered species projects. This project headed by Kristin Stanford, "The Island Snake Lady" was documented on one of the "Dirty Jobs" T.V. segments. Be sure to plan on attending this interesting and informative presentation.



www.hoosierherpsoc.org

A Great Float!

Jim Horton

The HHS river float trip on August 7 was a great time. This year as in the past few years, we chose Blues Canoes Livery on the Driftwood River. This river had proved itself in the past with abundant wildlife.



Plastron of an Ouachita map turtle

The weather couldn't have been better – sun and low humidity.



HHS paddlers taking a lunch break.

We didn't get on the water until almost 11:00 AM due to schedule discrepancies but it all turned out well.



Ouachita map turtle

Our turtle count was down from the last few years. We counted somewhere near 40 turtles and 5 different species. This number was down from 70 last year. The river was busy with other kayak/canoe paddlers so we think that might be the case. Water snakes weren't abundant either. We probably saw about 8 to 10 total (all northern water snakes). HHS members in attendance were: Mary Hylton, Holly Carter, Rick Marrs, Laura Broadwater, Neill Jones, Jim Horton, and Jack Bennett.



Large red-eared slider



The species found were: Smooth softshell (*Apalone mutica*), spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*), Midland painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*), red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), common map turtles (*Graptemys geographica*), and Ouachita map turtle (*Graptemys ouachitensis*).

President's message

Jim Horton

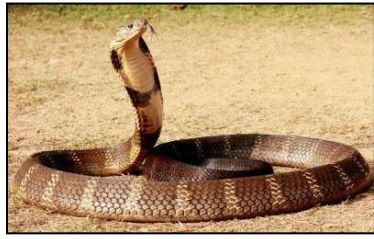
Great news! Our new T-shirts have been ordered. I hope to have them by the next meeting. If not, we should have them available at the Midwest Reptile Show, August 28. The shirt will feature in Eastern box turtle.

Our kayak/canoe trip went on without problems. We had a great bunch of members and the day turned out wonderful! About 10 members showed up for a day of wildlife and paddling. We realize schedules don't always work out so I hope you can attend the next one.

We are looking for exhibitors at the annual Holliday Park Fall Festival on August 28. If you are interested in displaying your herps, please see or contact Ed Ferrer.

Hail to the "King"

by Ed Ferrer



Cobras have fascinated people for hundreds of years. They are members of the family Elapidae which also includes mambas, kraits, sea snakes many others.,

Cobras figure in special parts of many cultures such as Egyptian, Indian to site only a couple. Nearly everyone regardless of their knowledge of animals easily recognizes a cobra. Its habit of raising its head and spreading its hood when threatened is a "dead giveaway" (Excuse the pun.). But I have always been particularly interested in the king cobra, *Ophiopagus hannah*, because it is so unique. Instead of belonging to the genus *Naja* like other cobras, it resides in its own genus, *Ophiophagus*. The name is derived from the Greek words which literally means "snake eater" because its favorite prey items are other snakes. Captive king cobras often have a difficult time to change their diet to more traditional snake food such as mice or rats. Also it is by far the largest venomous snake in the world. Although they typically range from nine to 13 feet in length, the record king belonging to the London Zoo measured over 18 feet long! Besides the obvious difference in size the king has two large plate scales at the back of the top of the head called occipitals that make it easy to tell from other cobras. Its head is quite massive compared to other cobras and its hood is more narrow than the typical cobra.

Its venom like most other Elapids is a mixture of potent neurotoxins that attack the victim's nervous system. Although its venom may not be quite as potent as some other Elapids drop for drop, its danger is in the venom yield of a bite. The average venom yield from a typical king cobra bite is between 200-500 mg while the estimated lethal dose to a human is 12 mg! If not treated with anti venom quickly a person could die within 30 minutes of being struck. Actually a king cobra bite to the trunk has been known to kill an elephant in three hours! In spite of this impressive payload of venom king cobra bites are actually quite rare. Its normal habitat is dense forest far from civilization so encounters are not very likely to happen. Even if someone was to come upon a king cobra its most common reaction is to try escape and

avoid any confrontation. Whenever I have seen videos of people putting on a show with a king cobra it will always try to move away from the person. Only after it was unsuccessful after several attempts will it hood up and provide a "show". Most people who are bit are either snake "charmers" or someone trying to kill the snake.

Another unique trait about the "king" is its hiss. Unlike the high pitch hiss of other snakes its sound has a much lower frequency. The actual sound is more like a pretty intimidating "growl"!

Unlike most snakes, it has excellent eyesight. It can see moving animals up to 330 feet away! Female king cobras make excellent mothers as they are the only snake in the world that makes a nest! They will then ferociously guard the nest from any and all intruders for the 60-90 day incubation period until hatching occurs. The young emerge black and white banded about 18-22 inches long complete with venom as potent as the adults. Most herpetologists consider the king cobra the most intelligent of all snakes. Mark O'Shea, the noted English herp expert, told me at the Tinley Park Show of his experience with a king cobra during his trip to India. He told me that he captured one and while he was working with it he was convinced that the snake knew him as the one who caught it. It stared at him constantly during the time and then it started to sway slowly. When Mark swayed back, its eyes fixed on his eyes as if to ask "Why did you catch me?" He was convinced that it was trying to communicate with him. He said, "It was the most spiritual experience in my life" He felt guilty and made sure he was quick to set it free as soon as possible. Science is beginning to find medical uses for the ingredients in its venom.

Because of habitat destruction or human killing them out of ignorance the once wide range of the king cobra, from India to China, and Southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines is being fragmented. In some places countries are beginning to provide legal protection for these most regal of all snakes. Hopefully it will still survive in the dense forests in the Far East.

references:

Reptiles, "Iconic Snakes", Sean m. Perry DVM, p.52- 59, September, 2016
Venomous Snakes of the World, Mark O'Shea, p. 96-97
Conversation with Mark O'Shea at Tinley Park Reptile Show, II.
Photos - reptilepark.com.au and timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Talamancan Palm-Pitviper: Cryptic New Species of Venomous Snake Identified in Costa Rica

July 19, 2016 by Enrico de Lazaro



Talamancan palm-pitvipers (*Bothriechis nubestris*) are found in trees where their green and black pattern provides excellent camouflage. Image credit: University of Central Florida.

An international team of researchers led by University of Central Florida biologist Chris Parkinson has announced the discovery of a new species of venomous pitviper from Costa Rica.

Prof. Parkinson and co-authors chose the scientific name *Bothriechis nubestris* for the new species. It also will be known as the Talamancan palm-pitviper.

The new species is a small to medium sized pitviper, measuring 24 inches (61 cm) on average.

It inhabits a limited area in the north of the Talamancan Cordillera, Costa Rica.

“The newly discovered Talamancan palm-pitviper is a striking green-and-black snake living in some of the most remote regions of Costa Rica,” Prof. Parkinson said.

The coloring is a characteristic the Talamancan palm-pitviper shares with its close relative, the black-speckled palm-pitviper (*Bothriechis nigroviridis*).

“In fact, these two species look so similar that the Talamancan palm-pitviper went unrecognized for more than a century,” the scientists explained.

“It is a case of cryptic speciation, where two species look almost identical, but are genetically different.”

Research describing the new species is published online in the journal *Zootaxa*.

“The discovery of this new cryptic species shows the advantages of using modern molecular techniques and phylogenetic reconstructions in the catalog of the planet’s biodiversity,” said co-author Prof. Mahmood Sasa, from the Instituto Clodomiro Picado.

“This research is a good example of the synergies that result from collaborative studies between institutions and countries, each party contributing with their own expertise to achieve common goals.”

Source: www.sci-news.com

KNIVES AND HERP ART

Article & pictures by Roger Carter

I have a new herp knife!

This is made by a company called Kissing Crane whose logo shows the image of two cranes facing each other with their beaks almost touching. This folding knife has two blades. The blade shown in line with the handle is three and five/sixteenths inches long with the image of a snake on a shield with the words "PIT VIPER" at each end of the snake. The other text says "KISSING CRANE COLLECTOR SERIES ONE OF 600." At the end of the handle is the Kissing Crane logo with the text "KISSING CRANE SINCE 1834."



The blade shown at ninety degrees is also three and five/sixteenths inches long with the image of a snake that has its mouth open showing the fangs and forked tongue. The Kissing Crane logo can be seen in front of the snake with the text "SPECIAL KISSING CRANE LIMITED EDITION."

The handle itself is an even four inches long. There is a black band with a silver colored shield that has the Kissing

Crane logo shown in red. Each end of the handle is silver colored with the rest of the handle being a green pattern of what could be pebbles. On the back side of the handle is a tag that says "MADE IN TAIWAN."



There is a Certificate of Authenticity in the box that, in part, says...."Each knife offers mirror polished 440 stainless steel blades honed to a razor's edge..." "Polished nickel silver bolsters and pins accent the world renowned nickel silver Kissing Crane shield that appears on the handle of each and every Kissing Crane knife."

2016 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

August 28, 2016 - 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: **Oct. 30**

August 17, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Dr. Bob Brodman, St. Joseph College. Topic: "The Lake Erie Water Snake Recovery Project"

September 21, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Patrick Ruhl (Purdue University), Subject: Redback Salamanders.

September 30/Oct 2, 2016 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium. Hosted by the Chicago Herpetological Society. Location - Hilton Lisle/Naperville, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle IL 60532, (630) 505-0900

October 15/16, 2016 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference, Tinley Park, IL.

October 30, 2016 – HHS live herp exhibit, Holliday Park Nature Center. All HHS members welcome. More info. to come.

July meeting

By Jim Horton

Todd Pierson was our guest speaker last month. His talk, as expected, exceeded our expectations. Todd comes from Zionsville, IN. After studying at the University of Georgia, he is now working on his PhD at the University of Tennessee.

Todd's talk began with the distribution of amphibians around the world. From this, he worked his way to salamanders – his personal favorites.

He was happy to inform us that Indiana is distinguished in having the most Ambystomids in the U.S. His passion in the salamander world is the Plethodonts (lungless salamanders). He noted that 66% of all salamanders in the world are Plethodonts. There are roughly 450 species world-wide.

Most of all Plethodont species are found right here in the United States. 146 species are found here and most occur in the Appalachian Mountains. Mexico and Guatemala are next with 172 species. Europe has 8 species, and South Korea, one.

Plethodonts reproduce by internal fertilization and there is no larva stage. Plethodonts are a direct developmental species. The young hatch out as tiny versions of the adults.

The patch-nose salamander is the species that Todd has the most academic work with. He studied this species both in the lab and out in the field while attending the University of Georgia. Patch-nose salamanders are the smallest species in the U.S.

He dedicated some of this talk to the taxa of Plethodonts, looking at possible relations between the species.

Many share the same characteristics but may not be from the same lineage.

The photography was excellent as usual. We look forward to his next presentation!

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



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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 Meetings.**

Need Rodents?

As a service to our members, HHS member Barbara Filtri is offering to pickup and deliver your order from Hoosier Mouse Supply.

Barbara will deliver frozen rodents to our general meetings. Call Hoosier Mouse Supply (317.831.1219) one to two days before the meeting to make your order. Please give your name and tell them that you are a member and Barbara will pick up your order. Have check or cash ready.

ADOPTIONS:

Red-ear slider, adult. Comes with cage and supplies. **Green iguana**, adult

Please contact Jim Horton for information at stardali84@hotmail.com or 317.443.4845

Midwest Herpetological Conference

September 30 – October 2, 2016

The Chicago Herpetological Society is proud to host the Midwest Herpetological Conference for the fourth time. We are especially proud because this year also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CHS.

Speakers will include:

Dr. Jonathan Campbell, chair of the Biology Department at the University of Texas at Arlington; **Dr. Dale Denardo**, environmental physiologist at Arizona State University; **Andrew & Sarah Gilpin**, world travelers and passionate herp photographers; **Dr. Bree Putman**, postdoctoral research fellow at UCLA; **Roger Repp**, independent researcher and columnist for the *CHS Bulletin*; **Dr. David Steen**, wildlife ecologist at Auburn University.

Registration:

The registration fee will include the Friday evening ice-breaker and the Saturday evening banquet / auction. Online registration is not yet ready, but a link will appear soon at www.chicagoherp.org. Please register early; we need to know how many are coming.

Location:

Hilton Lisle/Naperville, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle IL 60532, (630) 505-0900. We have arranged for a special group rate of \$111 per night. **To receive this rate please mention the group code: CCHS.** Reserve by calling 630-505-0900 or online at www.hiltonlisenaperville.com. The last day to book a room, to guarantee group rate and availability is Friday, September 9.

Banquet and auction:

The banquet will take place on Saturday evening, followed by a speaker and an auction of herp-related items (inanimate items only). Attendees are urged to donate items to be auctioned.

Agenda:

A registration table will open at 5:00 P.M. on Friday evening and will continue throughout the ice-breaker, which will begin at 6:00 P.M. The registration table will also be open Saturday morning. The speakers will commence at 8:30 A.M. on Saturday. Sunday morning activities are still in the planning stage; details will be posted online.

***If you have any questions, email Mike Dloogatch: mdloogatch@chicagoherp.org

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