



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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**SPECIAL MEETING NIGHT
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26**

**HHS monthly meeting
October 26 at 7:00PM
Holliday Park Nature Center**

Guest Speaker: Jim Horton (HHS)

Topic: *Four days in Florida*

Jim Horton is the current President of the Hoosier Herpetological Society. Jim has been active in the HHS and has served on the board of directors for years. He's an avid field herper and photographer. Jim and Pat Hammond recently visited the Florida Panhandle region in search of amphibians and reptiles. Come see what they found in the wilds of the Sunshine State.

Bathing a Rattlesnake

by Ed Ferrer

A few years ago Pat Hammond and I decided to go to Brown County State Park to do a little field "herping". I called and told Brittany Davis, one of the park's naturalists, to tell her our plans and she said, "Oh good, you can help me give a rattlesnake a bath". I was surprised at her comment but I trusted Brittany so I said, "Sure, glad to help."

We met Brittany at the park's nature center and she explained that they had collected three timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus*) earlier that weekend that were reported too close to a camp site. Park visitors are always told to contact the nature center whenever a venomous snake or other problem animal is close to the site and a member of the park's staff will remove it instead of having a camper deal with it. That weekend they collected three timber rattlesnakes and kept them in plastic tubs throughout the busy weekend. One tub had one rattler, the other had a male and female rattler. One of the snakes defecated in the tub with the two snakes and since it was close to mating season for them she wanted to clean them before releasing back into the park close to their den sight. She took the containers outside behind the nature center and with a snake hook took one of the snakes out and put it on the ground. My job was to walk along beside it as it slithered and spray it with a hose. I did that with both snakes from the "dirty" tub. I was surprised that neither serpent reacted to being sprayed with the water. They just continued on their way as if nothing had happened. When Brittany was convinced that they were clean she put them in a new container and we went with her as she released them back in the vicinity of their known ranges. Pat took a few photos of them as they slithered back into the brush.



Timber rattlesnake Photo by Jim Horton

After a little "herping", we attended a live snake presentation that afternoon by Brittany in the classroom using the four snakes that were displayed in the nature center. The first two snakes were an Eastern hognose snake, *Heterodon platirhinos*, and a black rat snake, *Elepha obsoleta obsoleta*. For the next two snakes, a Northern copperhead, *Agkistrodon contortrix mokason*, and timber rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus*, she had everyone come outside and stand in a broad circle. She then put the copperhead on the ground and talked about its features and habits. Then did the same with the timber. Some of the group were a little concerned about having them on the ground but Brittany explained that the two snakes viewed the human circle as a barrier that could not be penetrated so they wouldn't leave the center of the circle. She also explained that three of the snakes were captured in early spring for the exhibit and would be released in the fall so they could go back to their dens to hibernate. The one exception was the timber rattlesnake because it was confiscated from a visitor that appeared to be trying to take it out of the park. Since they didn't know the original range of this snake it was a year round resident of the center. If a snake is released in an area that is not its home range it often wanders trying to find its way back and ends up as a road kill as it wanders around disoriented. We left the park with a much better understanding and respect for these snakes that are so often misunderstood and feared by members of the public.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

NEW MEMBERS

Jake Alliss
Amy I. Fredericksen
Carissa Miller

Joe Quigley
Melissa & Derek Shrout
Alexandra N. Smith

RENEWAL

Caroline Anderson

President's message

Next month we will hold elections for 2017 officer positions. We will open the floor for nominations this month. Please be thinking of someone in the club who might be a good fit for your HHS board. If you would like to nominate yourself, please feel free to do so.

Just another reminder that our next meeting will be **October 26**, which is the 4th Wednesday of the month. Our normal meeting time was rescheduled due to an event at Holliday Park. Thanks for your understanding.

At the next meeting, I'll be presenting a PowerPoint, discussing a herping trip to the Panhandle area of Florida. Pat Hammond and I drove down earlier this year. Come see what we found in Florida!

The HHS is looking for live herp exhibitors at the annual Holliday Park Fall Festival **October 30**. I apologize for the mistake in my last message regarding the date for this event. If you are interested in displaying your herps, please see or contact Ed Ferrer.

We will also be at the Midwest Reptile Show that same day (October 30). Come by and see us!

HHS TO HELP WITH MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

The HHS will be special guest at the Indiana Master Naturalist Program in Danville. The November 2nd evening will feature a PowerPoint presentation, signage/posters, and live native Indiana herps.

This is the third year for the HHS to lead this subject for Danville Parks Department.

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



Midwest Herpetological Symposium – A review

By Jim Horton

The 30th Midwest Herpetological Symposium (MHS) was held Sept.30/Oct.2 in Chicago. This event was put on with class and far exceeded our expectations!

Upon our arrival during registration, we were greeted by hotel catering with delicious hors d'oeuvres. A free drink ticket from the bar helped out after a long drive.

It was great seeing all those familiar faces and meeting new folks with similar interests. The Friday evening icebreaker social included a great talk by Andrew and Sarah Gilpin. Their photography from a recent trip to South America was astonishing! They brought us along on their photo safari of birds, snakes, lizards, bugs, frogs, spiders, lizards, and plants of Bolivia and the Amazon basin.

Afterward, we all met in the hospitality room for food and refreshments. The room was eight floors up in one of the penthouses. The display of food was incredible! In fact, it was the best I've seen in my years attending this annual event. They didn't skimp on the beverages. A nice array of ice-cold craft beer and other drinks was iced down in the bathtub (a regular at the MHS).



Roger and Holly Carter, Pat Hammond, Neill Jones, Jim Horton

The next day of presentations was also filled with excellent guest speakers. Michelle Schoenbeck gave us a look at a conservation program for the federally endangered Eastern Indigo snake. She showed a video of two males in combat. One male covered the other's head in saliva and then overpowered it by pushing its head into the sand. This was a show of dominance that has not been documented. She and her team breed and rear eggs to be released as youngsters. 175 Indigos have been released into protected areas. The Orianna Society has distributed 26 Indigos at different institutions for more study and breeding projects.

Roger Repp is an Arizona resident who knows the Herps inside and out. He has a great sense of humor and it was evident throughout his talk called "A Herpetological Popourii". He stated his ten reasons to never leave home – rattlesnakes! He helped radio track 19 Gila monsters around the Tucson area. One of his big moments was when they found what he called "The holiest of holes!" – 13 Gilas in one hole! He also comically brought up the phrase – *Snake Weiners*. Through years of monitoring, he found that female *Atrax* (western diamondback rattlesnake) stay with their young in the birthing area.

Dr. Johnathan Cambell is one of the "old timers" in the

herpetological community. He has done research in Guatemala for over 40 years. He even has a few herps named after his efforts. He has seen this country grow and unfortunately, huge tracts of the natural ecosystem has disappeared over the years.

Dr. Bree Putman's talk centered around her work with squirrels and rattlesnakes, or the communication between the two. She found that when squirrels are tail flagging and dodging in front of a snake, it is telling the snake – "I'm ready to take you on". Through the use of video monitoring in the field, she learned that tail flagging even coaxed the snakes to relocate. She theorizes that tail flagging combined with heat that is created from it, may act as a counter defense.

Dale DeNardo discussed his research with parental care in pythons. He noted that brooding female pythons raised the egg temperature by 7 degrees by coil twitching. Some pythons produce heat for the eggs and some do not. His conclusion is that it is not feasible for smaller species of pythons to produce heat.

Dr. Mike Lannoo (IU School of Medicine) gave testimony of his work with the state endangered crawfish frog. He lamented that it takes 5,000 eggs to produce one adult crawfish frog. And these specialized feeders utilize crawfish burrows exclusively. These burrows are safe havens from predators are used for hibernation. At the burrow

surface these frogs sit and wait in ambush. It is known as a feeding platform. Here, they catch and devour unsuspecting prey. His extensive work in southwest Indiana has been met negatively with DNR property management. Many of his study sites were burned and plowed over. Mr. Lannoo was disturbed by these tactics and he plans to keep fighting for these delicate species.

David Steen has worked with Indigo snakes in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle in an effort to sustain their numbers in the wild. He and his students reared young Indigo snakes into juveniles. They introduce them into the wild through hard and soft release methods. From 2010 to 2015, 107 snakes have been released – all with radio transmitters for tracking their natural habits. He concluded

that most dine on copperheads because these snakes tend to sit (unlike a racer) which makes for easy prey. The final goal is to release 300 Indigos.

After a delicious banquet, we were treated to the keynote speaker. Jeff Ettling worked with Armenian vipers for a decade. Unfortunately, I missed a good portion of this talk. But I can say that it was incredibly informative and well done.

The auction soon followed with a room full of herp related items such as art, books, supplies, posters, and anything you could imagine. ZooMed provided many of the items for this auction. We came home with some great one of a kind treasures.



The next morning, we all met up at the Brookfield Zoo for a behind the scenes tour. This is one of the really great zoos and I wish we could have seen the rest of it. They have fantastic herp displays in two separate buildings. I highly recommend a trip the Windy City for this one.

Bravo to the Chicago Herpetological Society for an excellent production!!!

Next year the Minnesota Herp society will take the reins. Hope to see you there!

2016 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

October 15/16, 2016 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference (NARBC), Tinley Park, IL. One of the largest shows in the U.S. with guest speakers and a benefit auction. Admission - \$15.00 adults, Kids – 6-12 \$8.00, kids under 5 – free. 10-5pm Saturday and 11-4pm Sunday.

October 26, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – **Jim Horton (HHS)**, Topic: *Four Days in Florida*.

October 30, 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

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

November 16, 2016 – HHS meeting, Topic: TBA

December 10, 2016 – HHS Holiday Party, Location – MCL (south) from 6:00 to 8:30 PM. More details to come.

The Rabbs' Tree Frog Just Went Extinct

The last known member of his species has died at Atlanta Botanical Garden

Source - scientificamerican.com

The world's last known Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog (*Ecnomiohyla rabborum*) has died.

Known as "Toughie," the tiny male frog, originally from Panama, spent the past few years living by himself at Atlanta Botanical Garden. The species has not been observed in the wild since 2007, just two years after it was first discovered by scientists.



Toughie's death follows four and a half years after another Rabbs' tree frog died at Zoo Atlanta. That frog was euthanized in 2012 after its health began to decline.

Both of these Rabbs' tree frogs were collected in Panama while scientists were there investigating the deadly chytrid fungus, which has devastated amphibian populations in that country and around the world.

Although no signs of wild Rabbs' tree frogs have shown up in the past nine years, at least one scientist still held out hope they might one day be found again. "The habits of this genus can make them extremely difficult to find if they remain high up in the trees," says Jonathan Kolby, director of the Honduras Amphibian Rescue and Conservation Center. "Being that this species breeds in tree cavities up in the canopy, I would hope that this behavior offers some protection from exposure to chytrid fungus, although the species was reported to have become much less common after the arrival of chytrid in the region."

Still, the likelihood remains that the Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog is now truly gone. That's notable, not just for the extinction, but for the circumstances around Toughie's life. Extinctions, you see, are very rarely witnessed by humans. Instead, they tend to be discovered years or even decades after the last member of a species gave up the fight. The Rabbs' tree frog was a rare exception. For the past four and a half years, Toughie has been a very public ambassador for his lost species, and for all of the frog species going extinct around the world during the current amphibian extinction crisis. How many thousands of people who walked by his enclosure at Atlanta Botanical Garden felt the pull and gravity of his inevitable extinction? As the organization posted today on Facebook, "He will be missed by Garden staff and visitors alike."

H.H.S. T-Shirts are IN!

The new t-shirts are finally here! The shirts are in two vibrant colors and feature a beautiful photo of an Eastern Box Turtle. They will be available at both the Midwest Reptile Show and the Noblesville Reptile Expo.

Anyone wanting to purchase a new t-shirt should call or text me the size and color of the shirt they want. I will bring them to the meeting. (I will bring a few extras in common sizes for those who forgot and want to decide in the last minute.) My cell phone is (317) 727-7553 (Text that one) or my home phone is (317) 787-7448.

Be sure to plan on getting yours while we have all the sizes available! - Ed

Your HHS Board of Directors for 2016

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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?

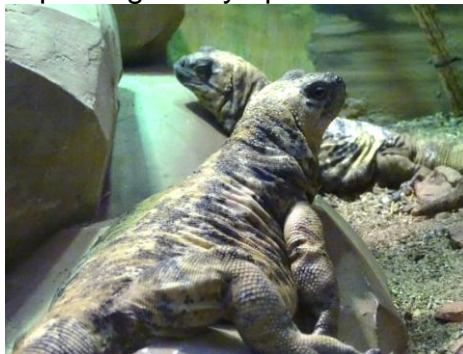
As a service to our members, HHS member Barbara Filtri is offering to pickup and deliver your order from Hoosier Mouse Supply.

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

30th Midwest Herpetological Symposium - Brookfield Zoo tour



MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____

Zip Code _____

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Email Address _____

Individual/Family Membership \$20.00

Sustaining Membership \$25.00 or more

Herpetological Interest(s) _____

Hoosier Herpetological Society
P.O. Box 40544
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Address Correction Requested

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