

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 30 Number 4

April 2019

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

Guest Speaker: Taylor West, University Of Illinois

Topic: In Search of Snakes: From the Midwest to the West Indies

The HHS is proud to welcome Taylor West as April's guest speaker. Taylor West is from Northern Illinois and earned her BS degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has a passion for wildlife conservation and enjoys educating others on the importance of our often misunderstood serpents. While she spends most of her time herping in the Midwest, she recently spent several months assisting with herpetofaunal research in Trinidad and Tobago. Taylor's talk will focus on her field trip in the West Indies.

Taylor will be starting her PhD this fall (2019): Her research interests are rooted in evolutionary biology, herpetology, and genetics. (I have followed her adventures on face book and we are in for a highly interesting and informative program!) Be sure to plan on attending this special meeting! Ed

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

President's message

Jim Horton

Spring is in full swing! Peepers, chorus frogs, and American toads are calling in Marion County. I've heard other reports of leopard frogs and crawfish frogs broadcasting their calls as well. I'm busy with entering data for FrogWatchUSA and I hope that some of you are as well.

I'd like to thank Dr. Philip Villani for his presentation last month. He's giving his students a lifetime of great memories through ongoing trips to Panama.

The 2019 survey season has started and we've already been in the field! We'll continue to survey Holliday Park this year along with others. West Park in Carmel will also be doing a one day Bioblitz. More information to come for this event.

Herpetology Weekend (May 10-12) is an annual event that brings people from all over to learn about herps. It includes field herping and presentations. This event starts Friday evening with presentations, herping Saturday, and Sunday with venom extractions at the Kentucky Reptile Zoo. HHS members attend this event every year.

I'd like to welcome our recent members and thank those who have renewed their memberships. We've got great guest speakers at our monthly meetings. Hope to see you there. If field herpetology is your thing, you might want to attend our outing (Herpout) the weekend of April 27th.

If you are interested in herpetology and would like to attend a great event, you won't want to miss the Midwest Herpetological Symposium in St. Louis. This year the date is September 27-29 and they're offering a field trip to snake road in southern Illinois.

Welcome new members!

RENEWALS

NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Ahl
Hollyn Anderson
Colin Breining
Ethan Estabrook
Payton Fischer
Lucas Heffner
Emily Stulik
Courtney & Jeremy

David Millwe
Sheryl Mitchell
Donald Nuetzmon
Tom Raymond
Ian Slabach
Jeff Wines

Taylor Gonzalez
Michael Isaacs
Joseph Liffick
Bailey McDaniels
Thomas Turner
Wayne Winkler

HHS At Eagle Creek Park

The HHS has teamed up with Eagle Creek Park and Indy Parks to help survey a site within the park. This particular site location will remain undisclosed to the public due to the sensitivity of the species there. The HHS is pleased to take part in this important inventory of herps in the particular area.

7th Annual Amphibian Outing!

Article and photos by Jim Horton

The 7th Amphibian Outing was held at McCormick's Creek State Park in mid-March.

It couldn't have been a more beautiful day for a group of eager nature lovers! The weekend started out a bit chilly Friday night but the first hike of the weekend went on. Barbara Filtri, HHS member and naturalist at the park, led the hike which yielded green frogs, spotted salamanders, spring peepers, a smallmouth salamander, and an unexpected snapping turtle.



The temperatures were unseasonably cool (low 30's) for the hike Saturday morning.

Despite the frosty temps, critters were still found by the group. Andrew's Wetland is a seasonal pool in the woodland far from the main trail. This ephemeral pool, is temporary home to a variety of amphibians. Red-spotted newts, Jefferson salamanders, spotted salamanders, spring

peepers, and four-toed salamanders. This year, we found less four-toeds and females had not deposited eggs yet. The timing was right but the cooler temperatures probably prolonged it.

Red backed and zigzag salamanders were abundant in the forest surrounding the wetland. Many color phases and patterns of these tiny Plethodons were observed and photographed.



The kids triathlon was held shortly afterwards. The youngsters ran, crawled, and hopped to the finish line. Winners were awarded with books about (what else?) amphibians!

Nick Burgmeier, Purdue biologist, was the featured guest speaker for the event. His talk involved the natural history and conservation efforts of the Hellbender salamander. The comprehensive presentation left the crowd wanting to know more about this incredible endangered species.



Next on the agenda were two different hikes. One down to the creek near the falls area and the other was new to the weekend event. Cataract Falls was the location for the new hike. The large wetland was an ideal habitat for our breeding activity. Here, a few chorus frogs were calling and some egg masses found. Again, lack of rainfall and lower than normal temperatures kept large numbers of critters at bay.



The unusual species (redback and two-line salamanders) were abundant along the creek area. Turning small stones would easily bring up two-line salamander larvae. Sculpin and darters (fish) are found in this

rocky, fast flowing creek as well. Several female two-lines were gravid (pregnant) and had not deposited eggs yet.



Back at the Canyon Inn, it was time for a break. Crafts, such as colored pencils and homemade bead lizards could be created by the help of instructors.

Dinner was followed at the inn and we had a table full of hungry herpers!

I had to leave early for home but others stuck around for the last hike to a vernal pond.

Kimberly Scott reported that they had found zigzags, redbacks, a smallmouth, and two Jefferson salamanders. Wood frogs and countless amphibian egg masses littered the pond.

New this year is an online photography contest! Our finds were also recorded using iNaturalist, an online data recording software. This is citizen science at work!

Thanks to Barbara Filtri and Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park for orchestrating this great annual event! Thanks to members of the Hoosier Herpetological Society for their part in the weekend as well.

What a weekend! I'm ready for next year!

Review of March Program

By Ed Ferrer

Dr. Philip Villani, of Butler University was the guest speaker of our March H.H.S. meeting. His topic was the rain forest of Panama. He first took us on a brief history lesson of how early scientists navigated around the globe collecting some 30,000 specimens of wildlife and plant species throughout tropical climates. The near constant temperature and high humidity enabled such a wide variety of animal and plant species, a huge diversity not known anywhere else in the world.

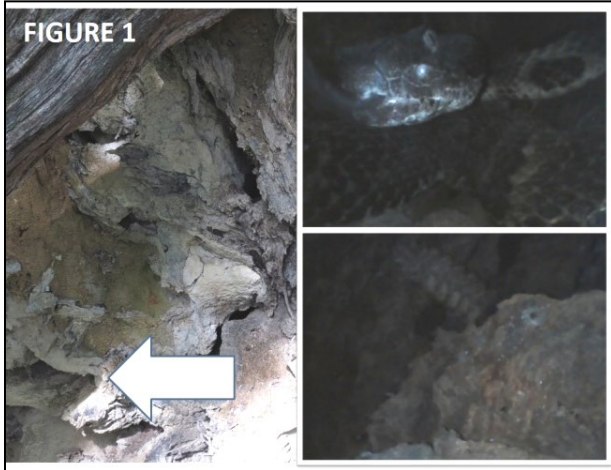
He then discussed the tropical rain forest of Panama and the history of the Panama, from the U.S. control to present day. Although all of Panama would be categorized as a rain forest, the fact that its climate is influenced by the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean this small narrow country is divided into seven different rain forests. This creates such a wide diversity of life forms that research scientists from around the world study everything from plants, bats, birds, amphibians and more. Dr. Villani and Dr. Travis Ryan, both from Butler, lead a small group of students on a two week intensive summer course every other year. This trip is made possible by a partnership with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Students worked from 5:30 in the morning to about 10:30 at night on most days visiting many of the research stations and talking with scientists who described their various projects which included the Amphibian Rescue and Conservation Project. The favorite part of the trip for the students was the night field trip where they found a huge number of frogs and other amphibians. On another favorite trip the students got to scuba drive to study the various marine life along the coast of Northern Panama. The one mountain range of Panama produced a cloud forest that was another unique experience. The students received credit for the course by keeping a detailed journal of each activity. Dr. Villani's presentation offered a unique first hand view of the many wonders of a tropical rain forest and how important rain forests are to the world's climate. We thank Dr. Villani for a wonderful program that made us all want to visit the tropics in the future.

SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN HERPS

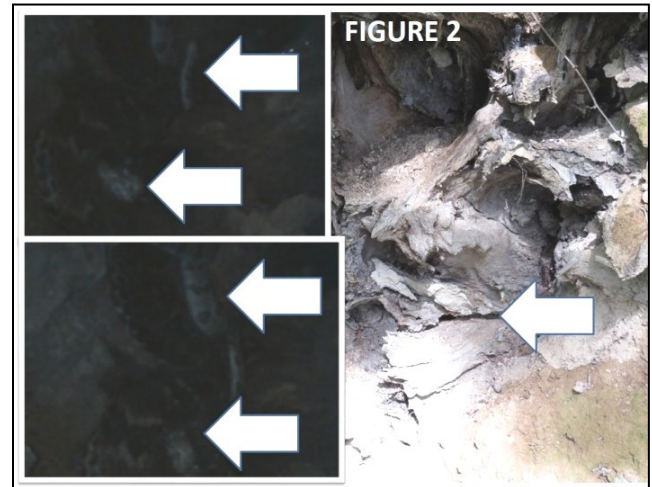
Story and photos by Roger Carter

Late spring 2018, on my first attempt to use my inspection camera this year, I was very surprised to find that the battery was drained. I thought it still had a charge. Mental note: check it before using it.

All last summer while using my inspection camera in southern Indiana, I didn't find any hidden herps until the middle of August when I checked on one of my favorite snake logs. The arrow in Figure 1 shows the hole where I found an adult timber rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus* that I assume is a female because I also found a neonate timber rattlesnake in another hole.



The image in the upper right-hand corner shows the adult looking at the camera lens and the image in the lower right-hand corner shows the snake rattle moving to the right away from the camera lens. In Figure 2 the image in the right side shows an arrow pointing to the hole where I found the adult timber rattlesnake and the neonate timber rattlesnake. The image in the upper left-hand corner shows an arrow at the top pointing to the neonate and the other arrow is pointing to the adult.



The image in the lower left-hand corner shows the arrows pointing to the neonate and the adult. These pictures are a little dark, so I hope they show up in black and white in the newsletter. The cavities in the dirt ball must be connected.

Last October I made two trips to southern Illinois to snake road. The weather was a little colder than at the same time in the last several years and I found very few herps either in hiding or out in the open. Figure 3 shows three green tree frogs, *Hyla cinerea*, hiding in one of the pipes that are part of the southern gate entrance to snake road. This was the first time that I have seen more than one green tree frog in this pipe. At the base of the bluffs there are some small caves, barely big enough for one person to squeeze into, and around these caves there are small pockets in the bluffs where I found several cave salamanders, *Eurycea lucifuga*, see Figure 4. This was the first time that I have seen cave salamanders at snake road. The cave salamanders are a nice shade of orange with black spots. On this trip I found very few cottonmouth water moccasins, *Agkistrodon piscivorus leocostoma*, but Figure 5 shows two of them in a hole at the base of the bluff.

18th Annual Hoosier Herpout

Saturday, April 27 - 9:00 A.M.

Hardin Ridge Recreation Area (Hoosier National Forest),
Monroe Reservoir, Bloomington, IN

Hiking, herping, camping, cookout!

Meet at the shelter house #2 near the boat launch ramp parking lot (follow the signs).
Rain or shine (herping is always good, even in rain)

Schedule:

We will leave to herp the area shortly after 9:00 a.m. and return before 12:00 p.m. for the cookout. We will herp again after lunch. Those who chose to camp may be herping the area on Sunday. Saturday evening the HHS usually presents a PowerPoint presentation of The Herps of the Hardin Ridge Area (still pending as of this printing).

In the event of inclement weather or other possible cancellations,
check the HHS Facebook page or contact Jim Horton.

For more information, call or email Jim Horton (317) 443.4845 email - president@hoosierherpsoc.org



2019 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

April 17, 2019 – HHS meeting. Guest Speaker: Taylor West (University of Illinois). Topic – *In Search of Snakes: From the Midwest to the West Indies*.

April 27, 2019 – Hoosier Herpout, Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, Monroe Lake, Bloomington, IN. Field herping, photography, cookout, camping, etc.

May 10-12, 2019 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Resort Park, Slade, KY. This event has been going for over 20 years. Field trips, presentations, Kentucky Reptile Zoo, and more.

June 2nd, 2019 - 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 Other dates, 8/25, 11/10

September 27-29, 2019 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, St. Louis, MO.

HHS Board of Directors - 2019

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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.**



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