



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 25 Number 1

January 2014

November HHS meeting – January 15

Annual Photo 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.

Entries must pertain to herpetology.

Enter as many times as you wish.

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

Prizes

Adult winners in each category

1st place \$30.00, 2nd place \$20.00, 3rd place free (1 year HHS membership).

Kids category

1st place \$15.00, 2nd place 10.00, 3rd place \$5.00

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

No prizes to be awarded for this presentation.

Happy 25th HHS!

Welcome Hoosier Herpetological Society members!

RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Tanya Beck

Janice Kucera

Bob and Ellie Hammond – Sustaining membership

President's message

Jim Horton

This year marks our 25th year as an organization! I'm proud to have been here for most of that time! We have a lot of great people that have helped keep the HHS going through the years. There are too many people to mention each one individually. Thank you to everyone who has taken their personal time to do something extra for the HHS!

Later this year, the HHS will highlight an important herpetological event. The **Midwest Herpetological Symposium** (MHS) will be held right here in Indy this year and we will host this event! Mark your calendars for October 17-19. Of course putting on an event like this requires a lot of help and we're hoping that you might be interested in helping out. We are already in gear planning the MHS and we have some great speakers lined up.

For those of you who might not know, the HHS is on Facebook. This is becoming one of the best ways to post instant notifications other information among membership. If you aren't on Facebook, don't worry, we'll keep you updated in other ways. We'll always post what we can on our website hoosierherpsoc.org

2014 has been dedicated *Year of the Salamander* by (PARC) Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and other conservation groups. The HHS will also take part in this celebration by bringing these magnificent creatures into focus. Look for more salamander articles, talks, and field trips this year.

Citizen science is gaining popularity with the public. We can do our part by monitoring amphibian and reptile populations in your area. Another way to help wildlife is to participate in an organized effort such as Frogwatch USA. Indiana has frog monitoring routes open throughout the state.

Our photo contest is this month. Be sure to get your best shots from the past season for the outdoor category. We hope to see a few of your creative indoor shots for this category as well.

Please remember with the winter weather we've been having, there are always chances for closings or cancellations. Watch the HHS webpage or Facebook page for any changes in events.

Congratulations to your 2014 elected officers

President – Jim Horton
Vice-President – Ed Ferrer
Treasurer – David Mitchell
Secretary – Holly Carter
Sergeant At Arms – Will Brown



Homeless herps

There are currently a small number of reptiles in need of a permanent home.

If you have an interest in re-homing any of these animals, contact Jim Horton

Will and Ed's Excellent Adventure

The Brookfield Zoo

By Ed Ferrer

When Will Brown and I planned our trip to the Tinley Park this past October 11-12, we decided to spend some time at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo before attending the show on Saturday. Unlike many zoos that exhibit reptiles (our primary interest) in one Reptile House" this zoo offered exhibits according to various biomes and continents. We found a variety of frogs, turtles, tortoises, lizards, crocodilians and snakes in many different locations throughout the zoo. It was like going on a "scavenger hunt" wandering throughout the zoo searching for "herps".

The first building we entered was titled Feathers and Scales where we found beautiful birds among reptiles. Along with the birds of paradise we found jungle carpet pythons, green tree pythons, a woma python, shingleback skinks and a green tree monitor among many others.

Other exhibits were listed as Reptiles and Birds, Habitat Africa, Australia House, The Swamp, The Fragile Rain Forest, The Tropic World, and The Forest. My favorite reptile was a huge, beautiful 16 ft. reticulated python while Will's favorite was the Gila monster. The huge anteater was Will's favorite "non herp" while my favorite warm blooded animal was the family of gorillas in a large grotto exhibit which we walked around.

Since we had skipped lunch we got pretty hungry in mid afternoon so we stopped at the Bison Prairie Grill for a late lunch break. Now normally we don't expect much from any cafe at a zoo but we were pleasantly surprised about how good the food was. Will had a portabella mushroom sandwich and I had a barbeque chicken sandwich that both were delicious! Also the french fries were very tasty.

We saw several tortoises including a huge Galapagos tortoise, a red-footed tortoise and an Egyptian tortoise. Our favorites among turtles were the mata mata and the spotted turtles. Chuckwallas, giant geckos and desert horned lizard were the most memorable lizards. There were a variety of boids including the D'Alberty python, African rock python and a Jamaican boa. Other snakes included a beautiful indigo snake, bull snake, fox snake and a Chicago garter snake. The most memorable frogs included a beautiful display of poison dart frogs and milky frogs. We also found alligators and crocodiles.

For families there were excellent attractions for the children. There was a stingray bay where children are invited to touch the stingrays, a year round dolphin show and animatronics dinosaurs, featuring over 20 species of dinosaurs, including new this year feathered dinosaurs! There is the Hamill Family Play zoo, a large carousel and discovery center the kids would certainly enjoy. Of course there are big cats, pachyderms and hooved herbivores. (Will was amazed at how large the bison and rhinos were.) Bears and wolves and butterflies added to the variety.

Will said he was going to come back with his family later during the spring. This account is only a "snap shot" of all the attractions at the Brookfield Zoo. If you are planning to visit Chicago in the future Will and I would highly recommend setting aside some time to explore this awesome zoo.

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

Indiana salamanders – The Winter Breeders

Family Ambystomatidae - Streamside, Jefferson's, spotted, smallmouth, blue-spotted, and tigers

By Jim Horton

(All photos by Jim Horton unless otherwise noted)



Blue-spotted salamander



Jefferson's salamander



Spotted salamander



Smallmouth salamander

The mole salamanders, family Ambystomatidae, are a large fossorial species that mostly breed in the early spring. Some are even active when ponds are still covered with snow and ice. Most are active from the rains during late February to early March.

One of the first salamanders to become active is the Jefferson's (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*). It is slate bluish-gray and slim in body shape. Jefferson's can be found in breeding ponds as early as January. We sometimes find them in icy ponds with snow on the ground.

Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) is large dark or black, with yellow spots dorsally, head, and tail. It breeds alongside the Jefferson's in the woodland pools. This species arrives a bit later than other mole species. Spotted are probably the most recognizable of the *Ambystoma* family.

Smallmouth Salamanders (*Ambystoma texanum*) may be beautifully marked with gray or brown background with lichen-like patterns on the sides. Some individuals are completely black. As the name states, the head is small with a short snout. These can be common throughout Indiana wherever temporary pools form. They are even found near human dwellings and cultivated areas.

Blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) is our smallest mole species rarely exceeding five inches. This handsome species is found in the far northern region of our state. Blue to light blue speckles over a black background mark this amphibian beautifully.

Tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) is our largest terrestrial species. This robust species is found throughout Indiana, burrowing beneath the soil in fields, meadows, and forests. Lengths have been recorded over eight inches. Coloration varies from greenish, yellow, black, or brown to tan with black broken patterns. Some may resemble spotted salamanders.

Of the five species in this article, the streamside salamander (*Ambystoma barbouri*) is the only one that differs in habitat and breeding. It occurs in southeast Indiana rocky streams. Favored dwellings for streamside include damp logs and flat rocks along creeks. Breeding is from late fall into winter. Females of this species lay eggs on the underside of large flat rocks usually in water. Most other Ambystomid species lay eggs in a globular jelly-like mass in fishless pools.

Look for an impromptu field trip in the coming months to feature some of these incredible salamander species.



Streamside salamander (photo-L.S.Meade)



Spotted salamander egg mass



Tiger salamanders

African Side-necked Turtle

Dr. Anndrea Hatcher – Olive Branch Parke Veterinary Clinic, olivebranchvet.com



Adult shell length:	6-9 inches
Enclosure temperature range:	72-90 F (cool side-warm side), water temperature 75 F, 90-95 F basking spot
Humidity:	70%
Activity:	Diurnal
Lifespan:	25 years+
Aquarium size:	60-100 gallon tank
Equipment needed:	Submersible water heater, aquarium water filter, water testing kit, UVB light source, two above water thermometers, humidity gauge, gravel, unchlorinated water, rocks

African side-necked turtles are omnivorous, aquatic turtles. The aquarium setup should have gravel substrate with a gentle sloped up area to a basking spot with rocks. The cool side of the enclosure should be 72 F and the basking spot should be 90 F. African side-necked turtles can be fed every other day. 15-30 minutes after feeding, remove the uneaten food from the aquarium. Feed a wide variety of foods including aquatic turtle food, dark leafy greens (such as kale, collard greens, and mustard greens), freeze dried shrimp, crickets, mealworms, and waxworms. Dust the food with a calcium supplement. Water changes with unchlorinated water should be frequent enough to maintain as low ammonia levels as possible and a pH of 6-6.2. The UVB light bulb should be replaced every 6-12 months. New turtles should be examined by a veterinarian and have a fecal sample checked for intestinal parasites. They should have yearly physical exams and intestinal parasite exams after that.

Are Turtles Good Pets?

By Dr. Anndrea Hatcher

“Then the Queen left off, quite out of breath, and said to Alice, “Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?”

‘No,’ said Alice. ‘I don’t even know what a Mock Turtle is.’”

‘It’s the same thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from,’ said the Queen” Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

The word “turtle” is often used to refer to both turtles and tortoises. Tortoises live on land and most of them are plant eaters. Turtles spend part or all of their time in water and often eat both plants and animals. They are both reptiles which means that, in captivity, they need to be provided with a temperature gradient so they can maintain their body temperature. They also need a source of UV light to stay healthy.

Common types of turtles kept as pets include box turtles, sliders, mud turtles and painted turtles. In Indiana it is illegal to sell turtle species that are native to our state, which includes red-eared sliders, painted turtles, map turtles and common snapping turtles. It is also illegal to capture and keep a wild turtle as a pet unless you have the appropriate hunting or fishing permit and the species isn’t endangered. Additionally, the FDA prohibits the

sale of turtles that are smaller than four inches long. This is to prevent young children from putting them into their mouths and exposing themselves to the Salmonella bacteria that many reptiles carry.

Another factor to consider is that turtles live 30 to 50 years, so getting one as a pet may be a life long commitment. Turtles don't like to be handled and they aren't famous for their speed - qualities that may lead a child to become bored with his pet before the 30 to 50 year time period is up. If you decide that you don't want your turtle anymore, you can't release (or even re-release) it into the wild. Not only is it illegal to do so, but captive turtles don't know how to fend for themselves in the wild, they may expose other wild turtles to disease, and if it is a non-native species to Indiana it could cause damage to local plant and animal populations.

If you make an educated decision to keep a legal species of turtle as a pet, learn about that specific type of turtle before you buy so you know what type of habitat it needs, the heat and UV lights that it needs and what kind of food it should eat. Pet turtles should have a yearly physical examination by a veterinarian and have an intestinal parasite exam to check for parasites, some of which can cause disease in people.

After reading the sad comments made by the Mock Turtle in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, I had to look up what mock turtle soup was. I've never had turtle soup, mock or otherwise. It is made from parts of the calf that aren't otherwise used, like the head, tail and hooves. Hmm....sounds like hot dogs

2014 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

January 15, 2014 – HHS meeting, 7:00PM Holliday Park Nature Center, Indianapolis. Topic: *HHS Photo Contest*. *Captive* and *Wild* categories will be offered with prizes to the winners. All current HHS members are encouraged to participate.

January 19, 2014 - 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 (future dates: Feb 23, April 6, June 1, Aug. 31)

March 15&16, 2014 – North American Reptile Breeders Conference (NARBC), Tinley Park, IL. Sat 10:00AM-5:00PM, Sun 11:00AM-4:00PM Tickets - \$15.00 adults, kids under 13-\$8.00, under 5-free

March 22, 2014 – *An Amphibian Outing*, HHS will be participating in this event. Features presentations, a *kids* amphibian triathlon, and hiking field trips to find salamanders. 2:00PM till dark, McCormick's Creek State Park, Spencer IN.

May 9 &10, 2014 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Park, KY Field trips all day Saturday. Herpetology professionals will be speaking on Friday and Saturday evening in the Woodland Center. For more information, contact Brian Gasdorf at brian.gasdorf@ky.gov or call 1-800-325-1710.

June 4-7, 2014 – Biology of the Pit Vipers 2 Symposium, Tulsa, OK. biologyofthepitvipers.com

October 17-19, 2014 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Indianapolis, IN. Hosted by the HHS.

Mostly Reptiles

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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 Meeting**

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 Interest(s)

Hoosier Herpetological Society
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