



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 22 Number 3

March 2011

President's Message

Jim Horton

Spring is just weeks away and it is showing! Plants are sprouting, birds are singing, and frogs are starting to chorus!

This spring we have a few activities planned for our membership. The feline Rescue Center trip was this past weekend. Our annual Hoosier Herpout will take place in May. Several H.H.S. opportunities are available for exhibiting your herps if you so desire. Check the Events section of this newsletter for more information.

I would like to thank Richard Reams for his colorful presentation on his past trips to Australia. He found just about every herp imaginable! I heard that he had more pics to share but would be able to fit them in his talk in a timely manner.

It looks like Senate Bill # 17 is dead! Not really sure of the specifics but this one is in the books (or out of the books). This bill needed a lot of tweaking in the first place.

The HHS will continue to monitor Indiana and national legislative changes and keep you up-to-date on anything that we in the herpetological community need to know.

If you're into native amphibian activity, now is the time. March is one of the key months for frog and salamander breeding. As of this printing, the mass of amphibian breeding doesn't seem to have taken place yet. More warm temps followed by warm rains will trigger the amphibian migrations. Be sure to get out and see one of nature's finest events!

Again, keep your eyes on the H.H.S. message board www.hoosierherpsoc.org for a posting on a quick trip down to the ponds in Southern Indiana

Welcome New Members!

Renewals

James Kiser

Ed Ferrer – Sustaining membership

Gene and Ramona Holmes

New Members

Debra and Jenna Domke

Kate Marquam

20th Annual Herpetology weekend

May 6&7 Slade, KY

The weekend includes Saturday full of expert-led field trips to areas in the Red River Gorge and surrounding areas where adults and children alike are welcome to assist in locating as many species of herps as possible. The weekend also includes evening presentations (with pictures!!!) from field herpetologists accentuated by cool t-shirt sales, raffles, door prizes, and lots of other activities unique only to Natural Bridge State Park's Herpetology Weekend. Most Saturday fieldtrips will be offered at 9am and 1:30pm. Collection is prohibited. Friday and Saturday evening presentations will focus on reptile and amphibian natural history and conservation. Some demonstrations will include live venomous snakes! Registration fee upon arrival. \$10/adult, \$3/ages 13-17 and free for ages 12 and under. 7:15 P.M. - 9:30 P.M. For more information, please call the park's Naturalist Office at 606-663-2214 or email tyler.morgan@ky.gov.

H.H.S. Meeting: Wednesday, March 16th, 7:30 p.m.
Topic: "Show and Tell"
Butler University, Pharmacy Building Room#150

This month we will have our annual "Show and Tell" program! It is a chance for our members to show their one, two or three favorite "herps"! This is a good chance to share your knowledge and possibly check out some possible new additions to your collection. This is always a popular event because everyone has a chance to participate and contribute to the club.

There will be videos of field herping as well. Come and join the fun!

2011 YEAR OF THE TURTLE CALENDAR AND NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE

The Turtle Conservation Coalition has just released its latest "Top 25 Turtles in Trouble" report, which they feature in this issue of their newsletter as part of this month's international turtle conservation theme.

View or download the March Year of the Turtle Newsletter. This month, the Year of the Turtle News issue highlights international turtle conservation efforts, and features some great stories about conservation efforts across the globe. In particular, it highlights the Turtle Conservation Coalition's findings from their recent report.

Visit the web site to also find the Newsletter, calendar and photography contest information for upcoming months, a recent press release on the Turtle Conservation Coalition's recent report, the growing USA Turtle Mapping Project and an ever-growing list of partners. www.yearoftheturtle.org

KNIVES AND HERP ART (Part 5)

Photos & text by
Roger Carter



As you can see from figure 1, this knife has some interesting features. The blade is six and one-half inches long with the image of a snake crawling through

the grass in figure 2 (“a snake in the grass”).



The handle is all metal and a little heavy showing the head of a snake with the mouth open and a human skull that is held by the snakes fangs, see figure 3.



The entire knife is eleven and one-half inches long and is razor sharp. On the blade near the handle is engraved “China” and “Stainless”.

Sunbeam Snake

By Holly Carter

Xenopeltis unicolor also called Sunbeam or Iridescent Earth Snake.



This is a species of snake found over a large part of Southeast Asia, often found in rice paddies or swampy areas. Food preferences are mice, birds, lizards, snakes (including venomous ones) as well as amphibians.

The snake is highly iridescent, so that the dull brown snake, when seen in sunlight becomes a dazzling rainbow of color. Size is usually around 3 feet with a few specimens attaining 4 feet. The top of the body has the brown color with the belly being creamy white. Shedding starts with the animal turning a silvery blue color

that is also iridescent. Since they are kept wet, there is usually no problem with retained skin, but finding a nice shed skin in the cage is rare as they are soggy and look like a used Kleenex, but this is normal.

Maintaining this snake in captivity has been a problem for most people. The animal has to be kept wet.

Wet sphagnum moss, I feel is the best conditions for housing, as the somewhat acid PH of the moss helps keep mold from forming. The snake will be burrowed out of sight, so a display animal, it is not.

These snakes are wild- caught and come into the country with a load of parasites that should be the first priority; many of them have a lung worm that does not show up on regular fecal exams. If the snake has been kept dry during shipping from Asia, a bacterial infection can also manifest. Stress, along with these conditions, is often fatal, even if your snake eats right away. Also do not dry the animal out if it gets this bacterial condition, which is the prescribed way to treat most of these infections as this animal cannot cope with the dryness.

Temperatures of 75 to 85 degrees, with a water dish and a tub or aquarium with wet moss (suitable for burrowing) and a secure top (these snakes can compress and escape quite well) in a darkened area will be good for housing.

These snakes hardly if ever bite, but handling should be kept to a minimum as these animals stress out easily.

Breeding has occurred but is not common. Getting these animals acclimated to captivity and cleansing the parasites and skin problems is the first hurdle. Breeding (similar to pythons) is started with the heat being lowered to about 70 degrees during the night, and back up to optimum temperatures during the day. Animals can be cannibalistic, so caution should be used. Males will fight and kill or injure each other, so keeping these separate is advised. Males introduced to breeding females will go thru the usual courtship of head rubbing and moving to align themselves. They can breed at most times of the year if temperatures are regulated. Females will lay 6 to 18 eggs in a dryer part of the cage (eggs will absorb water and split if kept too wet, but should not be too dry also) this part gets a little tricky. Babies are born about 2 months after the eggs are laid and are born with a pink or white ring around the neck that disappears after a few sheds. Babies are fed on tiny newborn mice or some amphibians, (if available). Babies are slow growing and balanced calcium power should be added occasionally, if only newborn mice are fed.

These snakes have a fairly long lifespan if their needs are met and are an interesting animal to work with. But they are not a true pet for the average owner.

Think twice about obtaining these animals as there is an opening cost above the purchase price when deworming is a must. And these are not animals that can be handled a lot so they are not much of a "pet" for the average snake owner.

HHS LIVE ANIMAL DISPLAY GUIDELINES

- Arrive early and provide a neat and clean display
 - Please be professional and courteous
 - Provide hand sanitizer
- Keep all animals with a questionable disposition in secure cages.
 - No protected or endangered species without proper permits.
 - Non-venomous species only please

Herp of the month

Eastern Milk Snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum*)

By Roger Carter (photos by Roger Carter)

The Eastern Milk Snake averages 24 inches to 36 inches long with a record length of 52 inches and is found in most of Indiana. This snake has smooth scales and brown to reddish brown blotches on its back and sides with the ventral surface having a checkerboard like pattern and a Y-shaped or V-shaped mark near the head. The pattern of hatchlings is bright red where the adults have brown blotches. They are constrictors and do well on a diet of small mice but, in the wild, they will eat other reptiles. We find them under natural conditions like the loose bark of logs and under man-made debris like boards and roofing tin. The entire group of milk snakes are called that because of the old mistaken belief that they "drink milk straight from the cow." The snakes are in barns looking for mice to eat, not for a drink of milk. The Eastern Milk Snake is often killed because some people believe it to be a venomous copperhead.



Mark Your Calendars...



**THE MINNESOTA
HERPETOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**

presents the
**27th Annual
Midwest
Herpetological
Symposium**

**October 21-23
2011**

*speakers • videos • photography •
auction • banquet • vendors • more!*

**SPEAKERS
TO INCLUDE:**

- Jeff Ettling, PhD
- Tony Gamble, PhD
- Jeff LeClere
- Paul Moler
- Barney Oldfield, DVM
- Salvatore Santelli
- Chris Tabaka, DVM

The event will be held at:

Best Western Kelly Inn
2705 Annapolis Ln N.
Plymouth, Minnesota, 55441
Phone: 763.553.1600



(discounted room rates, pet-friendly, and just a hop, skip, and jump from downtown Minneapolis)

www.mnherpsoc.org

EVENTS

March 16, 2011 – HHS monthly meeting. Annual *Show and Tell* meeting. Short *herping* videos will also be shown.

March 19, 2011 – HHS live animal exhibit at Garfield Park, 10 AM-2 PM

April 3, 2011 – Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, Admission \$6.00
www.indianareptileexpo.com

April 17, 2011 - Z-Green Fest, Earth day/Arbor Day Celebration. HHS will exhibit live herps. Zionsville, IN

April 29, 2011 – *Save the Frogs Day*

April 20, 2011 – HHS monthly meeting. Guest Speaker: Stacey Summitt, Teacher at University High School, Carmel, IN. Topic: Tropical Frogs of Panama

May 1, 2011 – 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. Other dates: 11/13, 12/18 For info: (317) 861-550, www.midwestreptile.com

May 6 & 7, 2011 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Park, Slade, KY

June 26, 2011 – *Scaly and Slimy Day* at Holiday Park, Indianapolis. Live herp exhibit by HHS members. All current members are welcome to display their amphibians and (or) reptiles. 2:00-3:30PM

August 2011 - 34th International Herpetological Symposium, Fort Worth, Texas

Classifieds

For sale: Decorative Quality Amish built sweater box rack system. Has 28 Clear sweater boxes, heat tape, Helix temperature controller, has rollers, storage space top and bottom, ready to plug in and use - 825.00 (with out Helix heat controller 700.00). Can send pictures or welcome to come and see in person.
Mike Wood 574 269 3441 twobears@embarqmail.com

Wanted: Veterinary Technology student looking for internship, volunteer, or part-time employment opportunity that will provide additional hands-on experience with pets (reptiles, exotic pets, large and/or small animals) while earning my degree. Please contact Amanda Weigand at 317-250-8532 or by email at: riflegiraffe3@yahoo.com if interested or to recommend possible leads. Thank you!

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 7:30 p.m. at Butler University, Gallahue Hall, Room 105 or **108**. Membership is open to all interested individuals. **No venomous animals are allowed at the General Meetings.**

(Note: Meetings are currently held at the Pharmacy building, room# 150)

Don't forget our new web address!
www.hoosierherpsoc.org

Your HHS Board of Directors for 2011

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Got Rodents?

Hoosier Mouse Supply can take your orders for rodents and they will deliver to the monthly meetings. (317) 831-1219

EARPS, Exotic Animal Rescue and Pet Sanctuary (EARPS, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 non-profit rescue group made up of volunteers working together to improve the quality of life for pocket pets, exotic pets, and non-traditional pets through fostering, adopting, and educating, as well as helping control the pet population through spaying and neutering.

The North American Field Herping Association (NAFHA) www.naherp.com