



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 24 Number 4

April 2013

Welcome back members!

RENEWAL

John and Linda Jett

Mark and Suzanne Henderson (sustaining membership)

NEW MEMBERS

Hallie and Jena Imrie

Stacy Summit Mann

Sara Hawkins

Dr. Angela Lennox (sustaining membership)

Jimmie Jucek

Kerry Whyde

Joe Nerding

Philip Goss

April HHS General Meeting

Wednesday April 24th, 7:00PM

Guest Speaker: Mike Pingleton

Topic: "Amazon Adventures: A Field Herper In Peru"

Holliday Park Auditorium

The Hoosier Herpetological Society is proud to welcome Mike Pingleton as our guest speaker for April. Mike has been involved with herpetoculture and field herping for nearly forty years. His field activities have taken him to many places, and Mike documents his field trips in his web journals at www.pingleton.com. Over the years Mike has raised and bred many species of reptiles and amphibians. He is the author of a book on Redfoot Tortoises, a children's book about snakes, and a field herping book is in-progress. Our veteran herpers have seen many of his adventures and know that his presentations are always informative and entertaining. Be sure to plan on attending this special evening! Remember this month's meeting is the **fourth** Wednesday of the month instead of the third!

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

Our next meeting will be on the 4th Wednesday – **April 24**

HHS trains Master Naturalist Program students

Members of the HHS were on hand March 14 at Fort Harrison State Park Nature Center for a training program. The Indiana Master Naturalist Program has different monthly topics. The study topic for the month of March featured amphibians and reptiles. HHS members, Ed Ferrer, Rick Marrs, Roger and Holly Carter and Jim Horton attended.



Jim Horton presented a PowerPoint program, The Herps of Indiana. Our members displayed live local herps for this event. The HHS was also on hand for a question and answer session. Many students stayed afterwards to learn even more about our local herps.

President's message

Jim Horton

Happy Spring – finally!

I'd like to thank Barbara Filtri, the staff and the Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park for their hospitality during our *Amphibian Outing* March 23rd. This may be an annual event for the park, and we hope to be involved in the coming years.

Thanks to the staff at Fort Harrison State Park for their kindness and efforts during the Indiana Master Naturalist program last month. Both this and the above mentioned program included donations to the HHS!

Don't forget our next meeting will be held - **April 24**. Please mark this special meeting date on your calendars.

Dave Mitchell, HHS treasurer, has informed me that we had a nice donation from Uncle Bill's Pet Stores.

Our annual *Hoosier Herpout* is Saturday, June 1st at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area in Bloomington. If you are into field herping and camping, this is the weekend for you! See the website message board for up-to-date information. Hope to see you there!



15 species of live geckos on display at the Indianapolis Children's Museum

HHS leads salamander outing

By Jim Horton

McCormick's Creek State Park held an interactive event March 23rd titled - *Amphibian Outing*

This day-long event featured live local salamanders, frogs and toads on exhibit.

The HHS started the day off with a PowerPoint of *Amphibians of Indiana*.

Two hikes were offered for attendees to see amphibians in natural surroundings. Two-lined, red back, and zigzag salamanders were found by lifting rocks near the creek. The cooler weather may have been the reason more species were not found along the creek edges.



HHS exhibit of live herps and other herp related information.



Rick Marrs (right) helps to identify a salamander.

An amphibian triathlon was available for the younger herpers. This activity gave kids a chance to crawl like a salamander, hop like a toad, and leap like a frog. The winners were awarded with prizes.

After dinner a few attendees were treated to a vernal pond walk. Dip nets revealed wood frogs and spring peepers. Frog and salamander egg masses were abundant in this pond.

The Staff at McCormick's Creek State Park hope to have this as an annual event.

Thanks to Barbara Filtri, Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park, Jim Horton, Rick Marrs, and Wendell Zetterberg

HHS members participate in video shoot



Jim Horton describes the characteristics of a salamander



Live video shot with HHS members in background

Saturday night, April 6, several HHS members met a PBS crew from Bloomington, Indiana. This video shoot is going to be part of a kids' series called *The Friday Zone*. The producer wanted to see what we might do on a typical amphibian outing. This segment will be available to view soon. We'll keep you posted.

"Red and Yellow, Kill a Fellow"

by Ed Ferrer

Most people who have studied snakes for any length of time have read about certain milk snakes and king snakes mimicking the color pattern of the venomous coral snake as a means of defense from predators. The often repeated rhyme is "Red and Yellow, Kill a Fellow, Red and Black Venom Lack" as a way of telling the difference between venomous coral snakes and nonvenomous milk snakes and king snakes. So is this rhyme fact or only a coincidence? Some scientists state since the coral snakes is a member of the elapid family (which includes cobras and mambas) its venom is a very deadly neurotoxin which attacks the nervous system of the victim. This is typically more deadly and faster acting than the hemotoxin based venom used by rattlesnakes and copperheads. In such a neurotoxic attack the prey would not likely survive the bite, thus not being able to remember the encounter to avoid a similar colored snake. However, bright colors probably work to the snakes defensive advantage in several ways. First, bright colored coral snakes (and their mimics) are not always easy to see because of the light and dark combination of sunlight and shadows of a forest or bush. Also a predator rummaging through the leaf litter may be startled by a sudden appearance of a bright color and may hesitate before attacking it, giving the snake additional time to escape. Other animals have applied this "shock technique". For example many frogs have bright colors along the sides of their bodies that show suddenly when trying to escape. The ringneck snake, *Diadophis punctatus*, when it feels threatened will often coil itself and reveal its bright red underside of its tail as a warning. Several butterflies and moths have large circles or rings on its wings which seem to appear to be eyes that may prevent a potential predator from attacking it. The monarch butterfly, *danis plexippus*, both the lava and adult stages, feed on milkweed that makes them poisonous to birds. Therefore, birds don't eat them. The viceroy butterfly, *limenitis archippus*, which mimics the monarch's orange and black pattern is also avoided by birds even though it is not poisonous.

Another consideration is that the banding pattern of many snakes serve to break up the shape of the snake, particularly when viewed from the air by a hawk or owl, making it harder to see by a predator. Also, if the predator does recognize the shape of the snake as the snake moves throughout grass, leaves and rocks the pattern acts as sort of a "strobe light" affect. Therefore the predator may hesitate as it figures out which way the snake is actually moving again giving the snake a better chance of escaping. In a series of tests in the 1970's a researcher named Susan Smith demonstrated that captive bred birds avoided landing on wooden rods that were painted black, red, and yellow rings. But the birds did land on rods painted in other color patterns. Regardless of taking the rhyme as fact or coincidence, the fact remains that it is a true way to tell the difference between the coral snake and its nonvenomous "mimic" milk and king snakes in North America. However, in South America that doesn't work because coral snakes down there appear in many different patterns. The theory of mimicry among animals is certainly an interesting topic and will probably be discussed pro and con for many years to come.

References:

Encyclopedia of North American Reptiles and Amphibians, Chris Mattison, 2005

Simon and Schuster's Guide to Insects, Dr. Ross H. Arnett, Jr. and DR. Richard L. Jacques, Jr. 1981

Parking at Holliday Park

7:00pm to 9:00pm is our new meeting time at **Holliday Park**.

Holiday Park entrance gates close automatically when it gets dark. After darkness hours, drive your car up to the gates and they **will** open. Also, we need to park behind the hill or knoll. Parking is allowed closer to the center on the other side of the knoll only if the vehicle has a handicap sticker. Park rangers do patrol the lot and will tow vehicles that are parked in the wrong lot.

www.hoosierherpsoc.org

www.yearofthesnake.org



GOING PAPERLESS?

HHS members have now the option of receiving *The Monitor* newsletter directly on their own computer. In this case we will send you the link to a PDF file by e-mail, instead of the printed copy. Besides saving paper and postage, this will allow you to enjoy great pictures in color and high definition. To select the *paperless* option please send an e-mail to the [Webmaster](#), with "HHS PAPERLESS" in the subject line.

13th Annual Hoosier Herpout

Saturday, June 1st - 9:30 A.M.

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

HERPING CAMPING PICNICING HIKING



The Herpout is our largest field gathering of the year!
Join fellow HHS members for a day or weekend of outdoor fun.

This event offers a chance for field identification, photography, camping, hiking, and a cookout!

The HHS will present a live and PowerPoint presentation at the amphitheater at 8:30pm

For more information, call or email Jim Horton (317) 865.0464 email stardali84@hotmail.com

Indianaturtlecare.com

The Monitor is printed courtesy of:

The Harding Poorman Group



KNIVES AND HERP ART (Part 26)

Photos & text by Roger Carter

As you can see this knife is called "CROCODILE KNIFE". It is twelve and a half inches long with the blade seven and a half inches long. This is stainless steel made in China and has the image of a crocodile etched into the blade which is razor sharp. The image of the crocodile in the handle is a brass or copper like color. I don't know what material it is.



2013 EVENTS

April 21, 2013 – Z Green Fest, Green festival in Zionsville, IN (HHS will have a live herp display). Volunteers needed. 2-5pm – Zionsville Nature Center (rain location, Zionsville Town Hall 1100 W. Oak St.)

May 5, 2013 - Indiana Reptile Expo, Hamilton County Fairgrounds, 10am-4pm, \$6.00 admission
www.indianareptileexpo.com HHS has a booth at this event!

May 10-12, 2013 – Herpetology Weekend, Natural Bridge State Resort Park, Slade, KY. A weekend filled with field trips, presentations, and free admission to the Kentucky Reptile Zoo

June 1, 2013 – Hoosier Herpout, Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, Monroe Reservoir, Bloomington, IN

June 2nd, 2013 - 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: August 25, October 20, December 8

July 31-August 3 - International Herpetological Symposium will be held in New Orleans, LA

August 31-September 3 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, Peoria, Illinois. A four day event featuring guest speakers, field trips, dinner, auction, and live animal sale. Register now at - <http://centralillinoisherp.com/>.

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**

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Your HHS Board of Directors for 2013

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Herp of the Month **American Toad *Bufo Americanus***

Text and photos by Jim Horton

The mellow trilling calls of the American toad are one of the welcoming sounds of spring. Look and listen for these toads now. April is key breeding season in Indiana for American toads. They will breed in lakes, ponds, creeks, marshes, standing water, or most any water source. Males will call in daylight hours during the height of the breeding season. But a warm evening after a rainstorm is a sure bet to hear them.

American toads look similar to the Fowler's toad *Bufo fowleri* but there are differences. The call of American toads are completely different. They emerge from hibernation earlier than the Fowler's toads.

The color is another distinguishing factor. A. toads are usually darker brown or red in color.

Warts cover a good portion of their skin usually with little or sometimes no pattern. Only one or two warts are typical inside a blotch or pattern.

These toads will sometimes hybridize with Fowler's toads, making them difficult to identify.

Males are usually smaller ranging from 2-3 inches with a dark throat. Males will chirp (a release call) when handled. Females are larger - up to four inches and a lighter colored throat.

These toads are found almost state-wide in Indiana. They may be found in most natural terrain but prefer sparse wooded areas and grasslands. During warm summer evenings they may take refuge under a porch or streetlight in search of insects. Other prey items include earthworms and slugs. Toads hunt in a stalking motion. They are interesting to watch while on the crawl after a food item.

During amplexus, female toads lay strings of eggs and the male soon fertilizes them. These strings may be 2-3 feet and contain thousands of eggs. Eggs hatch in 1-2 weeks. The dark, tiny tadpoles transform into toadlets about 3 weeks later.



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
P.O. Box 40544
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46240-0544**



Dated Material Enclosed

Address Correction Requested

****Special meeting date – April 24****

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