



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 27 Number 3

March 2016

H.H.S. Monthly Meeting Wednesday March 16th 7:00 p.m. Holliday Park Nature Center

Speaker: Andrew Hoffman, Hanover College, Missouri St. University
Topic: "Helping Hoosiers Care About Herps"

The Hoosier Herpetological Society welcomes back Andrew Hoffman as this month's guest speaker. Andrew has been a herper and herp enthusiast for over twenty years in Indiana and has been involved in several research projects ranging from copperhead and rattlesnake movement and ecology to remote video monitoring of crawfish frogs. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Hanover College and a Master of Science in Biology from Missouri State University. For the last year, he has worked as a naturalist at Turkey Run State Park and Dobbs Park. He will be starting a Ph.D. program working with timber rattlesnakes in Ohio in June.

"Reptiles and amphibians are often feared or misunderstood and some Hoosiers view them in a negative light. He will share his experiences working as an interpretive naturalist and explain why he thinks interpretation needs to come before education. He suggests a little passion and compassion can go a long way in helping people understand and care about our native herps"

The timing of his talk couldn't come at a better time since this is the time we herpers can start getting out in the field exploring for our state's "herps"

The spring announcement has begun!

By Jim Horton

Frogs and salamanders are moving to their annual temporary water sources for the breeding season to begin. Chorus frogs (*Pseudacris triseriata*) and spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) are in full swing. These two species are common in Indiana and in the Indianapolis area. If you know of an area where water stands, you might just be able to hear them. Parks, fields, woodlands, and even back yards can harbor these interesting little creatures.

Some of my favorite frogging spots are around Marion County and surrounding areas. On the south side, University Park is a good one for peepers, chorus frogs, treefrogs, and toads. This park and nature preserve is located in a housing edition in Greenwood, south of I/65 and Main St. (200 Legacy Blvd)

Another south side destination is Southwestway Park. I've heard both chorus frogs and spring peepers here. The main trail overlooks a small wetland. This is teeming with chorus frogs when the time is right. I've also found breeding smallmouth salamanders here. This park is just off of Southport and Mann roads.

Eagle Creek Park is a great location on the west side for peepers and chorus frogs. Both can be heard near the 56th street entrance. Adjacent to the old ice-skating pond is a great spot for chorus frogs.

Starkey Park in Zionsville is a good spot for peepers and chorus frogs. Follow the trail down the steep steps and it leads you to a wetland. This is also a good place to find fairy shrimp (*Eubranchipus*).

West Park in Carmel is another favorite of mine for amphibian activity. The paved trail will pass the sledding hill on the right. Just after that is a wetland. The trails are designed so that you can walk right through it. I've heard chorus, peepers, leopard, pickerel frogs, and American toads here.

Please be courteous and obey all park rules while visiting and listening to those wonderful anuarns!

February Guest Speaker: Matt Most:

Jim Horton

Last month we learned about snake locomotion. Mr. Matt Most has studied many species of herps and this talk featured his past work with serpents. He recorded different species and their movements on a variety of substrates. He looked at File snakes (*Acrochordus arafurae*) and how they move about on land and in water. Sea snakes were also observed during the course of the study. He found that when these snakes were alarmed, their bodies would flatten vertically and create a rudder-like effect. A channel formed on the sides near the back half of the body.

This would serve to move the animal quickly through water.

Brahminy blind snakes (*Ramphotyphlops braminus*) presented another question. Since most snakes utilize the flat scales on their ventral side for movement, what do blind snakes do? Blind snakes don't really have a ventral side with different scalation. All of their scales are the same and run on all sides of the body. Matt looked at movements on sandpaper and other textured surfaces. He utilized magnetic field sensors, high speed cameras, and other forms of measurements. His conclusions indicated that their movements were similar to most other species of snakes.

Afterwards, he discussed the many other species of reptilians that he has worked with in the past. The giant water monitors that had a room all their own, Gaboon vipers, cobras, and a host of other herps. He had some great stories on these subjects. He noted that he could do another program or two on those studies. We welcome him back anytime for another presentation.

Special meeting/may 18

We welcome a very special guest at our May meeting. Mr. Ted Levin (journalist/author) will discuss his new book – *“America’s Snake: The Rise and Fall of the Timber Rattlesnake”*.

Mr. Levin happened to be coming through Indiana during the month of May and we were lucky enough to secure a spot for his presentation.

The book will be available for purchase at the meeting. Mr. Levin will also personally sign your copy.

“I’m not sure I would have believed in advance that someone could write 500 fascinating pages about a single species of rattlesnake, but Ted Levin has done just that. *America’s Snake* is so engaging the reading borders on effortless; the writing is masterful, inspiring non-stop interest and confidence in Levin’s scholarship. The book will be of interest to herpetologists and conservationists, as well as to everyone concerned with how we can live with dangerous animals.”—Harry Greene, author of *Snakes: The Evolution of Mystery in Nature*

The Nina Mason Pulliam Ecolab - Marian University-

If you live in Indy or the surrounding area you may be acquainted with Marian University.

Did you know about the cool nature preserve that exists on the grounds of the institution?

If you have heard about it do you know all that it has to offer? If so, you may skip to the next article in this newsletter. If not, then you may proceed. (The description of the EcoLab has is excerpted from Marian’s web page.)



What is the EcoLab and why is it important?

The EcoLab is a 55-acre natural area located on the Marian University campus. Its purpose is to educate the community (most of whom are students—K-12 and university students) about the environment through providing opportunities for individuals to interact with the environment.

Environmental restoration in this area began 100 years ago with prominent landscape architect, Jens Hensen. It continues today with the involvement of Marian University students, K-12 school groups and the general public.

The EcoLab is used by faculty to provide their classes with hands-on experience in a natural environment. It also is a great venue that helps support undergraduate research as well as internships in ecological restoration and environmental education.

The NMP EcoLab hosts science programs for all ages and a comprehensive collection of environmental resources for Pre K-12 students and their teachers. During the summer they can take advantage of STEM summer camps. Information about these opportunities can be located on the website.

When you experience the NMP EcoLab for yourself—either onsite or via interactive videoconferencing—you will be able to increase your knowledge and appreciation of the environment in which you live. Not only will you gain a greater appreciation for your surroundings but also the inspiration to learn and to do more to help preserve our precious natural resources.

What are you waiting for?

No time like the present to schedule a visit! For a list of engaging opportunities check out the list below. (Descriptions are courtesy of Marian University Website).

- **Programs**

The Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab offers a wide range of educational experiences to meet the need of your classroom, school program, church, or other organization. Professional educators lead our programs and content is aligned with Indiana Academic Standards and National Science Education Standards. Our programs emphasize collaborative group work and science process skills. Check out the following program formats to see what works best for your group or download our program guide.

- **Assemblies**

These interactive science demonstrations are held at your location and designed for groups of 35 or more. Assemblies are 60 minutes in length and can accommodate multiple classrooms and grade levels.

- **Workshops**

These dynamic workshops provide age appropriate opportunities for hands-on exploration of science. Participants will observe, question, research, predict, and experiment to find answers. Workshops are 60 or 90 minutes in length and can accommodate a single classroom of 35 or fewer students.

- **Interactive Video Conferences (IVC)**

Interactive video conferencing programs, also called distance learning, allow the Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab to bring interactive life science programs to your location without you ever having to leave your building! Programs are 45 minutes in length. Program times are set to work with your classroom schedule.

- **Environmental Experiences**

These outdoor workshops include educational experiences and hands-on environmental stewardship activities that emphasize service in an outdoor lab setting with a focus on the environment. Programs can be at the NMP EcoLab or an outdoor location near you. Programs can be one hour to four hours in length, with the ideal maximum group size being 25 students. Larger groups will require special staffing arrangements.

- **Science Festivals**

Transform a large room into a “festival” of hands-on learning stations. The NMP EcoLab will fill tables with science equipment, experiences, and challenges that provide participants of all ages with problem-solving fun. Programs are up to two hours in length and can accommodate over 100 participants.

- **After school Programs**

After-school science programs are designed to make life science topics come alive for students. Each series of six to nine sessions relates to a specific focus area; individual sessions are 30 to 60 minutes in length.

- **Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts**

Join the NMP EcoLab for some science fun and earn your badge at the same time. These programs were designed especially for Girl Scout or Boy Scout troops. Programs fulfill the requirements necessary to earn the appropriate badge.

- **Summer Camps**

Science and math summer camps provide in-depth experiences for students. Campers will participate in classroom, lab, and outdoor activities including experiments, team projects, field trips, and more. Camps are age and grade specific and are aligned to Indiana Academic Standards.

- **Professional Development**

Marian University offers mathematics and science professional development programs for K - 12 teachers.

- **Adult Programs**

Adult education outreach programs provide opportunities to continue your personal growth and encourage life-long learning. We offer informative and interesting classes for adults. We can visit your site or connect through interactive video conferencing.

---Mary Hylton

Welcome New Members!

New Members

Zachary G. Wesner and Caiden R.D. Wetherald

Returning Members

Jeff Wines and Neill Jones

President's message

Jim Horton

We have a date for the HerpOut. Saturday, May 7 is our field-herping extravaganza. The Herpout features, herp identification, photography, cookout, camping, and more. Make plans now for this herp-filled weekend.

There are some good opportunities coming up for our members to get involved. Two field herping activities are the Salamander Outing at McCormick's Creek State Park (March 26) and Herpetology Weekend in Slade KY, (April 15/16). These are just a few of the club related functions coming up this spring.

I'm very excited to announce that we are partnering with Eagle Creek Park on our latest conservation project! This will involve you, our members and a survey of some of the local salamanders in the park. Anyone who is interested in participating in this project should contact me at: stardali84@hotmail.com

Now is the time to become active in Frog Watch U.S.A. Frog Watch is a nationwide effort by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to monitor frogs and toads each year. Citizen Scientists can make a difference in amphibian conservation.

Find more information about your being a volunteer here in Indiana at: <https://www.aza.org/frogwatch/>

Yet another great conservation-related citizen science opportunity is **Herpmapper**. This is an online cooperative project, designed to gather and share information about reptile and amphibian observations across the planet. Your observations can make valuable contributions on the behalf of amphibians and reptiles. Herpmapper partners include: biologists working for state or regional agencies, university researchers, or conservation organizations such as the HHS. Get started now and help make a difference: www.herpmapper.org

Correction – Vol. 27, No.2, Welcome New Members, **New members** should have read: Dale L. Bolejack and Nick Holtzelaw. **Returning members** should read: Mike Wood and Paul Gessner

HHS to participate in ZGreen Fest in Zionsville, April 24

The Greenfest is a nature-related event that runs from 2-5pm. HHS members will display herps during this time. Please see Jim Horton for more information.

SWORDS AND HERP ART (Part 3)

Photos & text by Roger Carter

This sword is thirty-six inches long and shows a snake at the end of the handle with its mouth open as if it is striking at someone. The color is mostly black except for the blade which is probably stainless steel and is sharp. There is a gold band near the hilt with the word "CHINA" on both sides.



Shirts for Salamanders 2015



Funds raised through the National Amphibian Expo "Shirts for Salamanders" campaign will go towards helping with the costs of the *ex situ* component of the salamander studies at the C.R.A.R.C. and Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Please visit the following links for more information on the two projects benefiting from this campaign: cramphibian.com and blog.frogsneedourhelp.org



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



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.**

2016 HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

March 16, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Andrew Hoffman (Hanover College/Missouri St. University)
Topic: “Helping Hoosiers Care About Herps”.

March 26, 2016 – Amphibian Outing at McCormick’s Creek State Park. Amphibian related activities, talks, field herping.

April 10, 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 Other dates: June 26

April 15-16, 2016 – Herpetology Weekend - Slade, Kentucky. A fun-filled weekend of Herpetological presentations, field hikes and free admission to the Kentucky Reptile Zoo.

April 20, 2016 – HHS meeting, Guest Speaker – Todd Pierson will discuss the evolution and distribution of lungless salamanders in Appalachia.

April 24, 2016 – ZgreenFest, Zionsville, IN 2-5pm, HHS will display live herps

May 7, 2016 – “Hoosier Herpout,” our largest outdoor field herping event. Camping, a cookout, herp identification, photography. And camping.

May 18, 2016 – HHS Meeting. Guest Speaker: Mr. Ted Levin (author/journalist), presentation, book sales, book signing. America’s Snake: The Rise and Fall of the Timber Rattlesnake”.

June 22-25, 2016 - International Herpetological Symposium, St. Louis, MO.

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____ **New Member**

____ **Renewal**

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____ **Individual/Family Membership \$20.00**

____ **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

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