



# 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 20 Number 9

September 2009

## President's Message

Jim Horton

The weather has been very odd this year. This has a definite effect on the activity of reptiles. What I'm getting at is, we would like to schedule a trip in the field but weather conditions often ruin the plans.

There is little time left for field hunting and I'd like to plan an impromptu trip to search for herps. The best plan is to post it on our website so please check in as often as you can. If the time comes, I'll place a notice hopefully within a week's timeframe.

Also, our canoe trip was a great success! Everyone had a great time and we even saw a few herps. Another trip will be planned next year.

The HHS needs to get more involved with our membership and outings such as those mentioned above are a great way to meet and greet fellow members.

Did you read in the Star that the Indianapolis Water Company is planning to re-construct the canal in the Broadripple area? If they go through with it, it will kill many young hatchling turtles still in the ground (actually entombing them in concrete). It will also prevent adults from nesting along the shoreline. Butler associate professor of biological sciences, Travis Rayn is at the center of this controversy. He has studied 6 species of turtles in the area. You may note that in the past, he spoke to our organization about that study. They are still in the middle of this proposal and hopefully they can come to a conclusion that will not affect the animals that thrive along the canal borders.

Thanks to Mitchell Wehrle for his prompt and informative article in this issue on field herping! Mitchell is enthusiastic young man who has a real passion for herps and herping. Ed Ferrer has written a book review, there is information on the Midwest Symposium in Chicago, and more...

## HHS T-shirts available now!

The new shirts feature a Kirtland's snake and our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo beside it. They are available for \$10.00 each at the general meetings and at the reptile show.

**Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, September 16th**  
**Guest Speakers: Jim Horton and Pat Hammond**  
**Butler University, Gallahue Center, (science building)**  
**Room#108, 7:30 p.m.**

**Topic: *Herping Adventures in Costa Rica***

Septembers speakers are H.H.S.' own members Jim Horton and Pat Hammond. Jim has been a member of the H.H.S. since 1989 and is currently our president and editor of our monthly newsletter, the Monitor. Pat joined H.H.S. in 1994 and has served as vice-president in the past and is an active board member. Both our excellent field herpers and photographers. Jim and Pat have logged many miles in search of herps from the midwest to the east coast of the United States. Most recently they took a herping field trip along the Central Pacific coastline of Costa Rica this past may. They will discuss the herps, fauna and flora of this tropical country. Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse natural habitats in the world. Be sure to find out what Jim and Pat found in their herping adventure!

**A Snake Hunting Guide."Methods, Tools and  
Techiques for Finding Snakes"**  
**By Will Bird and Phil Peak**

A book review by Ed Ferrer

Will Bird and Phil Peak are founding members of the Kentucky Herpetological Society and for many years have field studied the herps of Kentucky and worked toward the conservation of herps throughout the Commonwealth. They have participated in numerous snake surveys within State and National Parks and have served in helping make decisions to implement wildlife conservation strategies. Will and Phil have presented for one of our monthly meetings as well as speaking at the 2006 Midwest Herpetological Symposium that we hosted. Will is currently the president of the Kentucky Herp Society and Phil serves as vice-president.

When I found out that they were going to publish a book on snake hunting, I couldn't wait to get my copy. This book discusses practical advice and hints that are helpful in finding snakes. Different methods for exploring are mentioned such as hiking in correct habitat and road cruising as well as correct times and seasons that prove best. Numerous techniques such as funnel traps, natural cover and artificial cover are described in great detail. Various tools such as types of maps, GPS, snake hooks, cabbage rakes, tongs, compasses, and cameras are listed. Suggestions on proper clothing and shoes/boots are discussed. The importance of documenting finds and keeping accurate field notes is emphasized. During a four year period from January 2003 to December 2006 Will and Phil documented a total of 3,467 live snakes of 30 different species!

I particularly liked the part of the book where it listed 12 different species and discussed the best strategies for locating and working with them. For example, when seeing a large snake in the water under field conditions determining if it is a cottonmouth or a water snake is very important and sometimes difficult particularly in dim light. Behavior differences can help to quickly distinguish one from the other. When swimming, the cottonmouth is much more buoyant and seems to float on top of the water while the water snakes tend to swim with most of their body submerged. When encountered in the field "a cottonmouth is less likely to make a rapid retreat, instead moving away at a much slower rate, if at all". When looking for black rat snakes the reader is reminded that black rat snakes are often more arboreal than other snakes and it is advised that "herpers' investigate trees and rafters of abandoned buildings, barns and other out buildings in rural areas. There are many such hints that would help a reader concentrate on certain species of interest.

I never get tired of reading and rereading this highly informative book. After reading it, I am always ready to go field herping. I recommend this book for anyone interested in field herping whether the "herper" is just getting started or already is an experienced hand at finding snakes. I believe a new and "improved" edition of this book will soon be available. I know I will purchase that as well. For information of how to obtain a copy of this book you can email Will at [Will@Ectotherms.net](mailto:Will@Ectotherms.net) or call him at (502) 479- 0619.

# Herping in Martinsville

By: Mitchell Wehrle

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, my Dad, Pat Hammond, Roger Carter, Rick Marrs, and I went herping in Martinsville. We began our trip in Morgan Monroe State Forest at Roger's favorite wood pile spot to see what we could find. We were only there for about ten minutes when Roger told me to look in a hollowed out log. When I did, I saw a mid sized copperhead stare right back at me. So Roger used a wire to fish him out. We laid him on a flat spot and took some pictures. Then Roger decided to play Jim Harrison and safely picked him up and let me hold the tail. After we set him down I picked him up with some gentle giant tongs. I had a very large adrenaline rush, something I will never forget.

After that we went to check out an old tractor trailer and some tin. We found a worm snake. It would try to stab me with its tail. We attempted to capture a slimy salamander with no luck. At another spot we found two longtail salamanders and a long millipede, not herp related but very cool. All the animals we found I have never seen in the wild before. This was a huge unforgettable day for a young herper as myself.



(Mitchell Wehrle with black rat snake)



(Millipede)

We were not done yet so we decided to go over to my grandparent's private property. This is the place where the Herp club had helped us lay some tin a couple of years ago. So we got into Roger's truck and drove to the tin spots. The first pieces were baren, but then we found a ringneck snake that was about to shed. Under the next tin we found a milk snake, small but very colorful. The next ones were empty again but then we found a very large black rat snake. It had a lot of scars on it, probably from birds of prey or coyotes. The next tin had another milk snake and in the next, another milk snake. Then we went to the junk pile and found yet another *aggressive* milk snake. It repeatedly bit Rick's camera then it bit Roger. After that we laid some more tin down for future excursions and decided to call it a day and head home. It was the best herp outing ever and I will never forget it. I would like to publicly thank Roger, Pat and Rick for leading, teaching and giving me such an amazing day. I would also like to thank my Dad for keeping up, we really covered some ground.



Mitchell, Roger, Rick, and Pat



Northern Copperhead

# **25<sup>th</sup> Midwest Herpetological Symposium**

## **October 9-11, 2009**

Hosted by the Chicago Herpetological Society

Kevin Fitzgerald- Stand up Comedy and Prairie Rattler telemetry

Bob Henderson- A West Indian pot-pourri: Treeboas, racers, and (maybe) a lizard and frog.

Jeff Lemm- Amphibians and Reptiles of San Diego County

Bill Peterman- The Discovery of a New Genus of Lungless Salamander from the Appalachian Foothills of North Georgia.

Gregory J. McConnell- Costa Rica: A Living Classroom

Zoltan Takacs- How the cobra escapes its venom

More speakers to come...

Included with registration is \$5.00 admission to the NARBC show at Tinley Park. This is usually a \$15.00 charge.

The banquet speaker Saturday night will be Kevin Fitzgerald from Animal Planet's E-Vets. Our Friday icebreaker will include short presentations by Dr. Steve Barten and Mike Pingleton.

For more information: [www.Chicagoherp.org/mhs/](http://www.Chicagoherp.org/mhs/)

**Georgio's Comfort Inn**

**October 9-10, 2009**

Register (before 09/15/09): \$75

Register (after 09/15/09): \$85

Banquet: \$35

Rooms (MHS Rate): \$94.99

## **Got Rodents?**

Hoosier Mouse Supply can take your orders for rodents and they will deliver to the monthly meeting on Wednesday, the 16th. (317) 831-1219

# A message from Jason Hood

## (Vice-President of the Chicago Herpetological Society)

Those of you who have been around for a few years probably know what the Midwest Herpetological Symposium is, but for those of you who don't, it's a gathering of people interested in herpetology to listen to entertaining and informative speakers, an opportunity to meet and interact with your peers, and the continuation of the Chicago Herpetological Society's mission to educate and encourage cooperation between professional and amateur herpetologists. Toward that end we gather an outstanding list of speakers, host a nice icebreaker on Friday night, and a banquet and auction on Saturday night.

This year the event will be October 9-11 at Georgio's Comfort Inn in Orland Park, Il. That is the same weekend as the NARBC show in Tinley Park and our hotel is less than ten minutes away from the show. Register before September 15, and the symposium costs \$75; after that date it costs \$85. All MHS participants will be able to attend the NARBC show on Sunday for only \$5. Rooms at the Comfort Inn will be \$94.99 (MHS rate).

Friday night's icebreaker will include short presentations by CHS members Dr. Steve Barten, a veterinarian specializing in herp medicine and a great photographer, and Mike Pingleton, author and another great photographer. On Saturday we will feature Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald who appeared on Animal Planet's Emergency Vets for ten seasons and is a stand-up comic, Bob Henderson, author and senior curator of herpetology at the Milwaukee Public Museum, with tales of his years working in the West Indies, Jeff Lemm, author and herpetologist at the San Diego Zoo's Institute for Conservation Research, talking on the herps of San Diego county, Bill Peterman, a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri, on his discovery of the first new genus of amphibian described from the U.S. in nearly 50 years, Gregory McConnell, professor of biology at Emory and Henry College, speaking on the biodiversity of Costa Rica, Zoltan Takacs, star of "Snake Wranglers: Swimming with Seasnakes", on how the cobra escapes it's venom, and more speakers to come.

Food, speakers, entertainment, discount admission, companionship, story telling, and liquid refreshments for a very low price. You can't afford not to come.

## Adoptions

### Sulcata Tortoise

Sulcata Tortoise raised him from 2 ounces to 6 years old, approximately 30 pounds. I need help finding a permanent home for him. I have asthma, and the amount of dust he makes in his enclosure leaves me sick most of the time. In addition, I have developed arthritis in my spine and he's getting hard for me to handle. I know for certain he is a male. He's very friendly, and would be excellent for educational purposes. It's very upsetting for me to do this, but I have to do what is in the best interest of my health as well as what he needs - more space.

Tammy Boatman - Clinton, Indiana (765) 832-1063 [tsboatman@att.net](mailto:tsboatman@att.net)

### Green Iguana

We had a phone message from someone who has an adult iguana that they NEED to give away. Debbie Davis, (812) 372-1091. [dgaild@comcast.net](mailto:dgaild@comcast.net)

### Red Eared Sliders – Male and Female (approx. 2 ½ years old)

The female is approximately 8-9 inches and the male is approximately 5-6 inches.  
Mike Sibbing (cell - 317-507-9899) (email - [mikesibbing@gmail.com](mailto:mikesibbing@gmail.com)) Location – Franklin, IN

## EVENTS

September 16 – HHS General Meeting, Guest Speakers: Jim Horton and Pat Hammond. Topic – *Herping Adventures in Costa Rica*.

September 19 - Indiana Bat Festival – Indiana State University, Terre Haute

September 25-27 – Hoosier Outdoor Expo, Ft. Harrison State Park.

October 9-11, 2009 – Midwest Herpetological Symposium, hosted by the Chicago Herp Society. [www.chicagoherp.org](http://www.chicagoherp.org)

November 8 – 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. For info: (317) 861-5550, [www.midwestreptile.com](http://www.midwestreptile.com)

## 2009 Show and Tell participants (and their herps)

**Elliot Stahl** - (albino gopher snake, transpecos ratsnake)

**Pat Hammond** - (reptile books)

**Angela Thomas** - (cat gecko, Schnider's skinks)

**Nicole and Ashley Edginton** - (ball pythons "stricker" and "Missy")

**Mitchell Wehrle** - (woma and ball python)

**Amy Baird** - (tri-color hognoses)

**Rick Marrs** - (Indiana milksnakes)

**Sue Henderson** (ringneck snake)

**Ed Ferrer** - (Florida kingsnake, green tree python, albino Burmese python)

**Jim Horton** - (Bull snake, marbled salamander, leachie gecko)

**Roger Carter** - (green tree python)

**Holly Carter** - (Pakistani rat snake)

## HHS Canoe Trip (Driftwood River)



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.**

### **Your HHS OFFICERS for 2009**

PRESIDENT <a href="mailto:stardali84@hotmail.com">stardali84@hotmail.com</a>	Jim Horton	(317) 865-0464
VICE-PRESIDENT <a href="mailto:pythonpals1@msn.com">pythonpals1@msn.com</a>	Ed Ferrer	(317) 787-7448
SECRETARY <a href="mailto:drymarchonzz@hotmail.com">drymarchonzz@hotmail.com</a>	Holly Carter	(317) 873-6561
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP <a href="mailto:turtlelovin@att.net">turtlelovin@att.net</a>	Dave Mitchell	(317) 570-9643
SERGEANT AT ARMS <a href="mailto:bluemoosey8@yahoo.com">bluemoosey8@yahoo.com</a>	Brittany Davis	

### **Appointees for 2009**

EDITOR <a href="mailto:Stardali84@hotmail.com">Stardali84@hotmail.com</a>	Jim Horton	(317) 865-0464
PROGRAM DIRECTOR <a href="mailto:pythonpals1@msn.com">pythonpals1@msn.com</a>	Ed Ferrer	(317) 787-7448
WAYS AND MEANS <a href="mailto:necali@comcast.com">necali@comcast.com</a>	Angela Thomas	Cell - 727-7553 (317) 882-5266

### **MEMBERS AT LARGE**

Richard Searcey	(765) 349-2347	<a href="mailto:ighaus@comcast.net">ighaus@comcast.net</a>
Dave and Elliot Stahl	(317) 842-2648	<a href="mailto:copperhead210@sbcglobal.net">copperhead210@sbcglobal.net</a>
Pat Hammond	(317) 241-2793	<a href="mailto:gnavbone92@yahoo.com">gnavbone92@yahoo.com</a>
Roger Carter	(317) 873-6561	<a href="mailto:drymarchonzz@hotmail.com">drymarchonzz@hotmail.com</a>
Rick Marrs	(317) 549-3673	
Mike Wood		<a href="mailto:twobears@embarqmail.com">twobears@embarqmail.com</a>
Amy Baird		

Suggestions, submissions and articles for *The Monitor* are welcome. Submit your typed or legibly hand written articles by the first Wednesday of each month to: PO. Box 40544, Indianapolis, IN 4620-0544 or 7712 Miracle road, Indianapolis, IN, 46237. Email articles to: [stardali84@hotmail.com](mailto:stardali84@hotmail.com)

Articles may be emailed or CD's are accepted. Back issues of *The Monitor* are available. Send requests to our PO. Box, or contact Holly Carter. Quarterly Advertisement Rates for publishing your ad in *The Monitor* are: ¼ Page - \$10.00; ½ Page - \$15.00; and Full Page - \$25.00. Classified Ads are free to all paid H.H.S. members and will be printed for two months. All ads must be submitted to the Editor by the first Wednesday of each month. All artwork is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without written permission from the artist.