

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXXIII, No. XII

www.cincyherps.com

December 2008

Calendar of Events

December 3 – Monthly Meeting featuring Chris Bauer speaking on African Herping. This will be our Holiday Meeting.

January 7 – Monthly Meeting featuring Dr. Michelle Boone, professor of zoology at Miami University, speaking on amphibian conservation.

February 4 – Monthly Meeting featuring GCHS member Mike Schornak speaking on his trip to India and all the herps found therein.

Announcements

Calling all photographers!!

The Forked Tongue is looking to spruce up its layout and is looking for member-taken photographs to use in upcoming newsletters. All that needs to be submitted is the photograph, name of photographer, scientific and common name, and brief summary of where the photo was taken. All photographs can be returned if requested. Submissions can be sent to editor. See contact info section. Thanks!

A Word from the President . . .

As many of you may be aware, our constitution under Article II, Section B, Subsection 6, states: “*the voting membership may see fit to elect to honorary life membership individuals who have made outstanding contributions to herpetology or the welfare of reptiles and amphibians. The proposal to elect an Honorary Life member must be circulated to all of the households of the voting members prior to the regular meeting during which the election will be held. A majority of the voting membership present at the regular meeting in favor is necessary for election to honorary membership.*” In accordance with our constitution, I am proposing that we vote to make Grady Calhoun an honorary life

member of the

Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society for his dedication to our society and reptiles, for his time and efforts in conservation and education, and for his outstanding contributions to field of herpetology and the many years of service he has provided to all of us. This matter will be brought to a vote at our January 2009 meeting.

November’s Business Minutes

- * Upcoming Museum Show November 28th & 29th
- * Upcoming Shows and Expos
- * Annual Christmas Meeting Details
- * Articles need for the Forked Tongue
- * T-Shirt Contest for local students
- * Guest/Member tracking
- * Excel Database for Herp Collections and Feeding Schedules – contact Brittany Gibson for info

Conservation Projects

- * We may have a possible project for doing a herpetological survey of cave herps in Kentucky in the coming year or two in coordination with a Greater Cincinnati Grotto surveying project. More information to come. See Matt Fille for details.

Conservation Updates

...and Thoughts From an, (*gulp*) EX-Officer.

Dean Alessandrini

Greeting and Happy Holidays!

Let me begin by saying that it has been an absolute pleasure to serve as an officer for the past (*many*) years. During my term as Vice-President, I have witnessed a remarkable evolution of this organization. The GCHS was, quite literally, on the verge of *folding*. It is now a strong and well-respected organization in the tri-state area, the state of Ohio, and far beyond. In no way am I

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exaggerating this statement, and I am very proud to have been a part of this period of re-birth of the Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society.

I believe that the reasons for the club's emergence over the past few years include: (*and not in any specific order*)

- The leadership of Grady Calhoun.
- The growth and success of the education committee lead by Peggy Fille.
- Our commitment to conservation and the respect that it has earned for us.
- And last, but **CERTAINLY** not least – our move to the Cincinnati Nature Center and the resulting influx of many quality and active members!

As I write this article as a *former* officer, I can honestly say that I have never been more proud to call myself a member of the GCHS. Our members, many of whom are “new” by standards of guys like me, have consistently amazed me with their willingness to roll up their sleeves and do whatever it takes to educate the public, ensure the well-being of herps, and promote and ensure conservation of herps. I can't help but get a little misty-eyed when I think of projects like Cedar Bog...when (at least) NINETEEN members gave up 1 or 2 Saturdays of their life to perform hard physical labor in cold and wet conditions in order to repair habitat for an endangered species right here in Ohio. That is of course just one example of many. You folks are the best! Make no mistake about it, you ARE making a difference!

I look forward to my new role in the GCHS as a *member*, and hope to remain in a leadership role in the Conservation Committee for many years to come.

The Evolution of GCHS Conservation – Influence is a Powerful Thing

As I have said before...once you realize that there really IS “*something you can do about it*”, well, you just don't have any excuse not to do anything now do you?

Our members have proven time and again that there certainly *is* something you can do about conservation of wild reptiles and amphibians. I hope that the future holds many more victories for the GCHS conservation committee, and I truly believe that it will. More than

anything I suppose, I hope that the way we approach conservation serves to influence other people and organizations. During one of his many presentations to the GCHS, Will Bird, president of the Kentucky Herpetological Society, indicated that we have influenced the KHS to become more involved in local conservation in the Louisville area. When I heard Will say that, I knew we were doing something very special. Influence is something we should strive to continue and to expand upon. Sharing our success stories creates positive influence. Positive influence is a powerful thing. You should all be very proud.

Well folks...I am writing this article as my first “action” in the GCHS as a non-officer. Although it feels very strange to say that, I am happy to have a bit more time to dedicate to conservation now without the responsibilities of being vice-president.

The plan is to provide a monthly “*Conservation Update*” in the GCHS newsletter, and to provide more specific project details on the web at: <http://www.cincyherps.com/conservation.php>.

In the mean time, feel free to email me at: herpconservation@hotmail.com if you would like information on how you can become more actively involved in conservation OR if you have ideas for other conservation projects that we should consider becoming involved with.

Thanks again for everything. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve the GCHS.

Dean Alessandrini

Conservation Committee Chairman
The Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society



GCHS Conservation Committee Members Survey for Hellbenders. YOU GUYS ROCK!! In this photo are: (left to right): Nick Alessandrini, Mike Schornak, Mike Sisson, Grady Calhoun, Todd Rosenhoffer, Me, Beth Cortwright, Al Winstel and Greg “Boo” Lipps.

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Education Information

- * Robin Fille is teaching an honors class this Spring at Wilmington College and is presenting on conservation of reptiles
- * Museum Show was a great success. We had many new people stopping by to get information and possibly becoming members. A Greater Cincinnati Grotto (Caving Group) member who happens to work at the Cincinnati Enquirer stopped in to get information and to publicize the event.
- * If you have a child or family member that is in middle or high school, please give them a copy of the T-Shirt contest form (please see Brittany for copies). All students ages 12-18 are encouraged to participate in this contest.

Rescue Report

- * Rescue has significantly slowed as the winter months approach. However, if there is a specific animal you are looking for, please see Matt or Peggy Fille to put your name on the adoption list.

Volunteer Corner

- * We are always in need of volunteers. If you are interested in field work, helping with educational programs, or reaching out to the community for new members and support, please see a board member today for more ways and information on to get involved.

A Must-Read

TIMBER RATTLESNAKES IN VERMONT AND NEW YORK
Biology, History, and the Fate of an Endangered Species

Soundly anchored in the latest scientific data, Furman proffers an accessible and engaging account of contemporary fieldwork and first-person interviews with herpetologists and old-time bounty hunters. For expert and lay readers interested in snakes, northeastern fauna and natural history, conservation, and endangered species, this volume clearly explicates the Timber Rattlesnake's biology as well as what happens and what to do when one bites. It also explores the troubling decline of the northeastern population caused by bounty hunting between the 1890s and the early 1970s, other past and present threats to the species' survival, and what measures are being taken—and additional ones that must be taken—to ensure that Timber Rattlesnakes survive and thrive in the northeastern United States. Historical and contemporary illustrations bring these reptiles and their world to life. Timber Rattlesnakes in Vermont & New York shines a new light on a maligned and misunderstood species.

Furman, Jon. University Press of New England, Lebanon, New Hampshire. 248 pp. ISBN 978-1-58465-656-2. \$24.95.

(excerpt taken from CNAH <http://www.naherpetology.org>)

Herp of the Month

Chinese King Rat Snake

Elaphe carinata



[photograph borrowed from <http://www.ratsnakes.com/Ecarinata.html>]

Common Names: King Ratsnake, Stinking Goddess, Keeled Ratsnake

Subspecies: *Elaphe carinata carinata* (Günther, 1864)
Elaphe carinata dequenensis (Yang & Su, 1984)
Elaphe carinata yonaguniensis (Takara, 1962)

Size: 150 to 170 cm (up to 240 cm)

Distribution: China, North Vietnam, Taiwan

Other Info:

Elaphe carinata is a large, heavy built snake, ranging in size from 4-6ft, (100-200cm), with some specimens becoming larger, so provide them with a spacious terrarium and a loose substrate as they like to dig. Being mostly terrestrial they are known to inhabit open forest areas, bamboo thickets, fields and meadows and have also been collected near houses. Specimens have been collected during the day and at night.

E. carinata are very easy to keep and breed. They will eat almost anything including rodents, birds, bird eggs, and other snakes. They have even been known to eat their own kind, so be careful not to house larger animals with younger ones.

Mating usually takes place in the spring with 6-12 eggs being laid in early-mid summer, taking 40-60 days for incubation. Hibernate for 2-4 months for best results.

The common name of "King ratsnake" refers to its habit of eating other snakes.

The common name "stink snake" or "stinking Goddess" refers to this species' highly developed post-anal glands, that when picked up are frequently emptied, with a very strong, bad odor.

[information taken from <http://www.ratsnakes.com/Ecarinata.html>]

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Heds or Tails? Tales of a Two Headed Snake

By Al Winstel



WABB on leaf litter. The tail is near center picture, head not visible

Recently I acquired a West African Burrowing Boa (*Charina (Calabaria) reinhardti*). For many years, this animal was known as the West African Burrowing Python, but a few years ago, it was moved into the same genus as the rubber boa, despite being an Old World snake and an egg layer to boot! The WABB is found in forest and forest edge areas (some also say savannahs) in Nigeria and neighboring countries. Some herpetologists still consider it a python which has evolved in a parallel manner to the rubber boa in the NW U.S..

This snake grows to about 3 feet long with a cylindrical body colored dark brown with orange to yellow speckling, mostly on the dorsal surface. It is thought to be a nest raider and to use the thickened tail as a foil to fend off adult rodents while the head feeds on their offspring. References suggest that baby rats are often taken preferentially to mice in captivity. So far my animal, a male, has refused pinky mice and gerbils and accepted pinky dwarf hamsters. I have yet to try rats. Food items are constricted by pressing them against enclosure sides. The tail is more obvious than the head, the former having a dash of white at the "neck." At certain angles, the tail also appears to have a groove in it right about where a mouth would be.

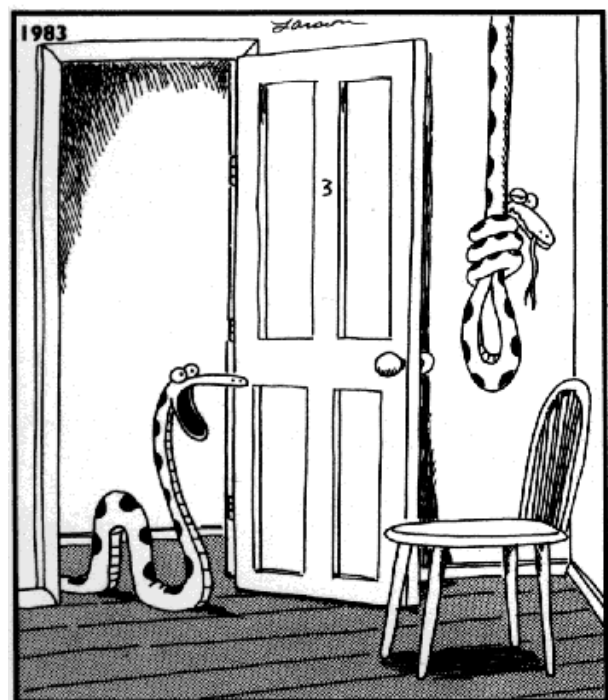
The WABB has been bred in captivity, but not frequently. Nearly all the animals available are wild caught. Females lay 1-3 large elongated eggs which hatch (and there have been some problems hatching eggs laid by wild caught females) into juveniles 10-12 inches long.

So far my animal is in a 10 gallon tank with 4-5 inches of cypress mulch, a water bowl, and a plastic hide which is partly buried in the mulch. The snake

alternates between occupying the mulch surface and being partly or completely buried. The mulch is slightly moistened to maintain humidity. I have read that access to high temperatures (high 80's to 90's) is necessary, so one end of the tank has a heating pad under it. The top is pegboard with wing nuts and sliding pieced of wood to hook it onto the tank rims. This is a pretty secure housing arrangement, suggested for burrowing species that have a lot of strength, a thick neck, and a pointed snout.

The WABB is inoffensive and makes no attempt to bite, so it is handle able, but most likely would do best with little disturbance in captivity.

.....
Never leave your herps unattended while on vacation...



"Oh no, Elliott! Why? ... Why? ..."

You might be a Herper if . . .

- * the Delta Cargo people know you by name
- * when a visitor in your home asks your pre-schooler "Do you know what this is?" And your kid replies "Of course, its a molurus bivittatus, better known as a Burmese Python."
- * you buy bleach but never do laundry.
- * you subscribe to newspaper just for substrate purposes.

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* you sleep on the couch, but have a lovely reptile setup in the bedroom.

Classified Advertising Policy

GCHS Members may run a free classified ad of 7 lines or less at no charge for an unlimited time; however, the ad will be canceled after one month unless the editor is informed to continue it. Please include scientific names for the animals with your ad as well as your phone number and area code. Ads of up to 7 lines for non-member are \$5 per issue; ad charges for items more than 7 lines long are as follows:

Business card size \$ 5 per issue

1/4 page \$10 per issue

1/2 page \$15 per issue

Full page inserts* \$15 per issue

*120 sheets per issue provided by advertiser

The GCHS is not liable for the quality of the merchandise advertised. The Society also reserves the right to refuse any ad considered to be inappropriate.

Requirements for Submitting Articles to the Forked Tongue

Articles can be submitted via CD or hard copy to Editor, GCHS, 4015 Brandy Chase Way, # 387, Cincinnati, OH 45245

Articles may be e-mailed to Brittany Gibson at GCHS.Editor@yahoo.com.

Black and white photographs can be included with articles. Photo submissions should include your name, phone number, and description of photo on the back. Photos can be returned.

All time dependent submissions must be in the editor's possession no later than the meeting previous to the publication.



Classifieds

GCHS T-Shirt Design Contest: See a board member for details, submission deadlines, and regulations. Please pass the word along to family and friends. We are looking to find a great design for a new T-Shirt!!

Discount: A 10% discount is offered to all card-carrying members of the GCHS at *All Creatures Animal Hospital*. Dr. Dan Meakin, All Creatures, 1894 Ohio Pike, Amelia, OH 45102, 513-797-7387.

Discount: A 10% discount is offered to all card carrying members of the GCHS by Dr. Dahlhausen at the Avian and Exotic Medical Center, 9951 Springfield Pike, Cincinnati, Ohio 513-576-1990

(Number to left of decimal indicates males; number to right of decimal indicates females; number to right of second decimal indicates number of unknown sex. For example, 3.2.1=3 males, 2 females, and 1 unsexed specimen)

	Steven E. Hubbard, D.V.M. John Weininger D.V.M. Nicole Waidelich D.V.M. John Gatens D.V.M. Justin Calhoun, D.V.M.	
Bright Veterinary Clinic 24505 Stateline Road Lawrenceburg, IN 47025 For Appointment Call: (812) 637-1345	Dearborn Co. Animal Clinic 44 Doughty Road Lawrenceburg, IN 47025 For Appointment Call: (812) 537-3545	

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Currently Held Positions

President	Matthew Fille	(513) 515-9669	Vice President	Chris Bauer	(859) 609-1846
Treasurer	Lori Becker	(513) 831-4898	Editor	Brittany Gibson	(419) 464-8529
Sergeant-at-Arms	Bill Creasey		Education Committee Chair		
Secretary	Kyle Becker	(513) 831-4898	Peggy Fille		(513) 528-4452
Advisor	Grady Calhoun	(812) 926-1206	Conservation Committee Chair		
		(513) 564-6041	Dean Alessandrini		(513) 518-9157

About the GCHS

The Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society holds monthly meetings which typically consist of a short business section, a refreshment intermission, and a program related to herpetology. Both members and nonmembers are invited to attend. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in reptiles and amphibians. New members may sign up by mail or at the monthly meetings. Members receive monthly issues of *The Forked Tongue* and free classified advertising. Annual dues should be directed to the secretary at the society's mailing address, according to the rates below:

Student	\$10.00	Corresponding	
	\$10.00		
Individual	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$25.00
Family	\$20.00	Institutional	\$30.00
Contributing	\$50.00		

Why Be a Member?

- Receive monthly issues of *The Forked Tongue*
- Meet individuals knowledgeable about herpetoculture
- Have access to captive-bred herps and feeder animals
- Participate in society-sponsored field trips, and outings.
- Receive a 10% discount on herp-related items and services when you show a valid membership card at the following establishments:

Delhi Pet Center	(513) 451-4015
Kentucky Reptile Zoo	(606) 663-9160
Harrison Pet Center	(513) 367-1115
All Creatures Animal Hospital	(513) 797-7387
Dr. Dahlhausen's	(513) 576-1990

P.O. Box 14783
Cincinnati, OH 45250

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