

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Editor's Den

The January Forked Tongue features an article on a new twist on a hide box and an article on Mandarin Rat Snakes printed from Boa Kingdom www.boakingdom.com/mandarin.html. There are also a couple of opportunities for research and internship included

Calendar of Events

3/1/06 – Monthly Meeting Featuring Jeff Davis speaking on Frogs of Ohio.

4/5/06 – Monthly Meeting Featuring Carl Brune speaking on Herping in the Deserts of California.

4/21-23/06 Herpetology Weekend at Natural Bridge State Park

5/3/06 – Monthly Meeting Featuring Michael Graziano speaking on Successful Captive Maintenance and Breeding of Salamanders.

Hide boxes with a twist

by Grady Calhoun

You never stop learning about your hobby. I recently acquired a pair of tri-colored hognose snakes (*Lystrophis pulcher*). These animals are native to relatively humid areas of South America. One of the recommendations from the breeder was to provide a humidity box. This consists of a plastic container filled with damp sphagnum moss. The container is completely closed except for a hole cut into the side for access. My two hogs spend most of their time in there. I imagine that this would be a benefit to many snakes especially during the dry summer and winter months. I have found that my hatchling Gray-Banded kingsnakes spend a great deal of time in these as well.

Internship Available

The Kentucky Reptile Zoo, a nonprofit organization, is seeking student interns for the 2006 season. The zoo is an educational exhibit, reptile breeding and venom research facility located near Kentucky's Red River Gorge and Natural Bridge State Park. The intern will assist in the captive maintenance of the zoo's reptile collection, collect admissions to the exhibit, give interpretive talks and interact with the public, assist with educational outreach programs, and perform other duties as assigned. In addition, the intern will be responsible

for the completion of at least one research project related to the field of herpetology. The intern will **not** be involved in the handling of any venomous species.

Desirable qualifications include a willingness to handle snakes and other reptiles on a daily basis, ability to communicate effectively with people, writing skills, orientation to details, and self-motivation. The intern will be required to work Saturday and Sunday, with days off during the week. Students majoring in the biological or natural sciences are preferred. Interns are required to be either college students or recent graduates. Former interns have arranged for academic credit with their institutions. Benefits include experience with one of the most extensive and diverse collection of snakes in the United States, housing, and \$55/week to cover expenses. Interns have been successful in finding zoo keeper positions: over 95% hire rate! Personal transportation is recommended. A valid driver's license is required. Starting dates are flexible, but a minimum of three months covering spring (April-June) summer (June-August) and fall (September-November) is required.

Deadlines are **February 1** for spring, **April 1** for summer and **July 1** for fall. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, transcript, and at least 2 (preferably 3) references to:

Kristen Wiley, Internship Coordinator
Kentucky Reptile Zoo 200 L&E Railroad
Slade, KY 40376
or email to: kyreptil@pop.mis.net.

An Introduction to Mandarin Rat Snakes

(This article was printed from The Boa Kingdom website www.boakingdom.com/mandarin.html)

Mandarin Rat Snakes are found mostly in the mountains of south China. They can also be found in the mountain forests of Burma, Vietnam, and Taiwan. They are arguably the most beautiful and most sought after snake kept in captivity. Just looking at these awesome beauties you get a sense of their prestige and mystique. Their facial markings resemble an oriental style painted porcelain mask. Even their name "*Mandarin*" commands honor; a Mandarin is a person of very high rank in the Chinese Empire. As little as 10 years ago, Mandarins were practically unheard of in the reptile hobby, but as each year passes they continue to get more and more popular

The March meeting will be held on Wednesday March 1st at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

with keepers. These majestic little snakes are the "crown jewel" of any collection.

Caging Mandarins are shy, secretive snakes so their caging should be set up with this in mind. They do best when provided with ample hiding places and preferably some type of substrate which will provide for their tunneling habits. I use a 2-3 inch deep layer of aspen mulch. The aspen mulch holds the shape of their tunnels, unlike some of the other mulch products which the snakes literally have to crawl through. I've noticed mine just laying in their tunnels for large portions of the day. I also provide my Mandarins with a bowl filled with moist sphagnum moss. They lay in the moist moss bowls for hours at a time just about every day. In addition to the moist moss bowl, I also mist their cages with a spray bottle a few times a week.

Temperature Mandarins have a reputation of being a cool/cold temperature species, earned mostly from the need to keep wild caught imports in the 65-75 degree range. The truth is captive born & bred mandarins do fine with temperatures into the low-mid 80's. I keep mine in my heated snake room which hits 85+ during the afternoon hours and 78-80 at night. If you're not using a whole room heated just for reptiles, then you can successfully keep them at room temperatures ranging from 70-80 degrees. They are said to be able to thrive at temperatures as low as 65 degrees!

Feeding I feed my Mandarins live food. There are two reasons why I do this. First, Mandarins are incredibly shy and most will not take frozen/thawed or fresh-killed food from forceps. Second, they seem to prefer small food items, and also feeders that don't run around, they will become intimidated and hide, refusing to eat. The perfect solution to these feeding quirks is to put one or more fuzzies or crawlers (which do not pose any threat of rodent bites to your snake) in a bowl and leave it in their cage overnight.

Breeding Breeding Mandarins is fairly basic, I approach them the same as I do for Corn Snakes. In the fall, about 2-3 weeks after ceasing their feeding, I start cooling them with their temperatures eventually reaching 50-60 degrees. I'll keep them at these temperatures for about 8-10 weeks at which point I'll start to slowly bring them back up to normal. Once they've reached normal temperatures I start feeding them. After about 4-6 feedings I put the males and females together and keep them together until I notice the females looking full of eggs (I still separate & feed every week during this time). This may take 1-3 months depending on how soon after the initial introduction they start mating. They tend to mate in their hiding areas, not out in the open like many other colubrid species, which makes it a little difficult to monitor their breeding activities. Once the eggs are laid (4-6 seems to be average) I incubate at my

snake room temperatures of 80-84 daytime with a night time drop to 78-80. Anytime I have eggs incubating I keep the snake room temperatures from exceeding 84 degrees. Mandarins have fairly short incubation lengths, about 40-45 days. The babies are pretty thick-bodied and hardy. They'll usually feed on pinky mice after their first shed without hesitation.

Avila University in Kansas City, Missouri offers a Research Experience for Undergraduates entitled: NATURAL HISTORY OF THE HERPETOFAUNA OF ST. VINCENT

The program provides participants with experience in research by developing, implementing, and reporting on a project of their own design during an intense ten-week program that includes a three-week field trip to the Caribbean island of St. Vincent.

Students learn to access and use the primary literature, methods of field research, computer use, statistical analysis of data, to write for professional journals, how to choose a graduate program, to apply successfully to the program of their choice.

Senior faculty are Robert Powell, Avila University, John S. Parmerlee, Jr., Johnson County Community College, Ellen J. Censky, Director, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, and Robert W. Henderson, Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles, Milwaukee Public Museum. Seminars include history of St. Vincent, political and economic realities in a developing nation, tropical biology and conservation efforts in Caribbean nations, how to write for science, introduction to the Macintosh computer, using a research library and the role of museums in biological research, and graduate programs: selection and application.

The program will provide a \$4000.00 stipend, all expenses associated with the field experience, and on-campus lodging for non-resident students in Kansas City, Missouri. Up to \$800.00 is available for travel to and from Kansas City for an accepted student residing outside the continental United States.

Participants are financially responsible for travel to and from Kansas City, their food while at Avila University, and tuition (at a reduced rate). Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Students may earn up to 6 hrs of credit in biology research.

Additional information and application forms are available at

<http://www.avila.edu/bobpowell/7powreu.htm>

Applications must be received by 10 March 2006. For further information, contact Robert Powell at robert.powell@avila.edu

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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 \$2 per issue; ad charges for items more than 7 lines long are as follows:

Business card size	\$3 per issue
1/4 page	\$6 per issue
1/2 page	\$10 per issue
Full page	\$20 per issue

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

Requirements for Submitting Articles to the Forked Tongue

Articles can be submitted via 3.5" floppy disk or hard copy to Editor, GCHS 11470 Gatch Hill Road, Aurora, IN 47001.

Articles may be e-mailed to Grady Calhoun at gradycalhoun@earthlink.net.

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 editors possession no later than the meeting previous to the demaled publication.

Classifieds

For Sale: 0.0.1 captive bred and born **Northern** Blue Tongue skink. Born 7/2/05. Eating great! Comes from dynamite parents. \$100 Call Grady at (812) 926-1206.

For Sale: 1.1 Captive bred and hatched grey-banded king snakes, Blair's phase. \$75 each. Hatched 7/19/05. Eating live pinkies. Call Grady at (812) 926-1206.

Rats and Mice for sale. Reasonable price. Call Jesse or Tom (513) 876-0579.

For Sale: 3.3 Normal Adult Okeetee Corn Snakes \$50 each. 2.1 Banana California Kingsnakes, adult proven breeders, \$100 each. 0.0.10 Cornsnake hatchlings of last year, \$30 for amelanistic, \$25 for normals. Call Mike Matthews at (513) 734-1336.

For Sale: 3.3 South Carolina Corn Snakes (*elaphe guttata guttata*). These were bred by me, and are approx. 1.5 years old. All are nice looking, but a few have exceptional orange and red coloring, and all are feeding very aggressively on f/t mice. I am asking between \$40-\$50 each. Very healthy snakes. Feel free to call me at 228-0293 or e-mail at kdobrien76@aol.com with any questions. Ask for Kevin.

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 at Dr. Dahlhausen's Veterinary Clinic, 5989 Meijer Dr., Suite 2, Milford, Ohio 513-576-0131

(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)

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Currently Held Positions

President	Grady Calhoun	(812) 926-1206	Vice President	Dean Alessandrini	(513) 347-0099
		(513) 564-6041	Editor	Grady Calhoun	(812) 926-1206
Treasurer	Peggy Fille	(513) 528-4452			(513) 564-6041
Sergeant-at-Arms	Bruce Fille	(513) 528-4452	Education Committee Chairman		
Advisor	Vacant		Peggy Fille		(513) 528-4452
Secretary	Kyle Becker	(513) 831-4898			

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 percent 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 Veterinary Clinic	(513) 576-0131.

P.O. Box 14783
Cincinnati, OH 45250

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