

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Editor's Den

The July Forked Tongue includes features an article on Dean's amazing herp dog.

Calendar of Events

10/04/06, Monthly meeting featuring Glen Schulte speaking on Herps of Costa Rica.

11/01/06, Monthly meeting featuring Kristen Stanford speaking on conservation efforts of two Ohio species, the Eastern Fox Snake and Lake Erie Water Snake.

Ohio Proposes Another Exotic Animal Bill

House Bill #643 has been regulating exotic and dangerous animals was introduced on 8/10/2006. The website listed below:

http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=126_H_B_0643

does not indicate that any thing further has happened. We are looking into meeting dates and times. I recommend that any Ohio Resident read the Bill closely. It is fairly restrictive. The Bill Sponsors are listed. They should be contacted to voice your opinions. If you choose to contact the Bill Sponsors, please be tactful and suggest solutions and reasons for your disagreement with the proposed Bill. Ranting and raving will impact us negatively. We have a very tough row to hoe given the recent death in Indiana and the swallowed hand in Ohio. It's hard to argue that these animals aren't dangerous. Every time one us herp enthusiasts causes media attention because of our stupidity-yeah stupidity, we sink deeper and deeper into an undefendable position. I can't think of a single instance in which the events leading up to such bans couldn't have been avoided with basic common sense. You have to feel for the family of the guy who was recently allegedly killed by a python but what was he doing alone in a shed with a 13 foot reticulated python!

Herp Dog

by Dean Alessandrini

My Labrador reminded me yesterday that I NEED to work with him in the field!

We have an adopted an African spur-thigh tortoise (found crossing a road in Cincy) in our fenced in yard. He cruises around eating grass all day in the yard. My dogs and the tortoise have a truce and don't bother one another, but the dogs know what "turtle" means (I named the tortoise "turtle", original I know)

Anyway...My step-daughter left the gate open few days ago and I did not see the tortoise for over a day. After checking all the hiding places I could think of, I was convinced the tortoise had escaped the yard. Get this...(and remember It had been almost THREE YEARS since I have worked with this dog to look for indigo snakes).

..I took my lab in the yard and said "Cooper, FIND THE TURTLE... FIND THE TURTLE!"

Well, it took him about 30 seconds to find it. He immediately put his nose to the ground, and ran around looking for the scent. He picked it up and followed the scent trail it to a blue spruce tree in my yard and went under it and "showed me" where the tortoise as hiding...in a thicket of branches under the tree. He was excited as all get-out that he "won the game". I have NEVER said "find the turtle" to Cooper before, but 3 summers ago, we played "Find the Snake" (I used a snake in a vented container that I would hide) It appears that Cooper not only remembered, but he was able to make the connection to the "game" he used to play and substitute the word "turtle" which he recognized! Is that amazing or what? I played the game with him again this morning for fun with the same result. He gave me a look like "this is too easy" Cooper is 8 years old now and does not have a lot of "good" years left. I have got to get this dog in the field!

Embarrassing Moment

by Marc Frevola

The Next Meeting will be on Wednesday, October 4th at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

Every year at the beginning of the year I introduce the kids to the snakes I keep in the back of the room and make them aware of how to handle them. As I got to the Mexican Black King, I told the kids to make sure they wash their hands first as king snakes eat other snakes and if your hands smell like other snakes, they may be bitten. I washed my hands and opened the cage to take out the king. Well, I washed my hands, but not my arm, and it grabbed the skin above my wrist and wrapped my arm before I even knew he was doing it. I remained calm and explained to the wide-eyed kids what was going on and that I was going to try running cold water over its head to get it to let go. After five or so minutes under the cold water tap it would not let go, but proceeded to tighten its grip and do that ugly twisting, pulling thing that kings do. I then tried some spray perfume and antibacterial soap, thinking the alcohol would cause it to release me. Nope. It only made him mad. I then stuck my hand in front of the cold air conditioner vent for a few minutes, hoping the cold would do it. Still no good. At this point he had been chewing on my arm for a good (bad) fifteen minutes and I was getting a little concerned about infection and such. I've seen snake saliva eat the fur off a mouse in as short a time. Finally the bell rang for dismissal and I went over to another male teacher for assistance. He screamed and backed away from me. I then put my arm in a plastic bag so as not to attract attention to myself and went downstairs to a friend of mine and finally we managed to pry it off. I think the snake got tired of hanging on, more than we actually got it off. I washed my arm with antibacterial soap, poured alcohol on it and put Neosporin on it. It may have been overkill, but at this point I was a little shaken. After 24 hours it seems to be okay. It was a first day those kids will never forget.

Feeding Tip

by Michael Matthews

About two weeks ago, brought to my attention by a family member was a hatchling Florida King snake that was purchased in September of 2005. The breeder informed my family member that the snake had eaten pinky mice twice. I'm not disputing that because in my experience I have had to deal with problem feeders myself.

The snake hadn't eaten for him since he purchased it and he asked if I would try to get it to eat. About two weeks prior, I borrowed a pinky pump from a friend. The snake was brought to me a couple of days later. It was thin and weak. I didn't give it much hope. I was in the process of feeding my hatchling corn snakes and

I recalled the process of scenting a pinky with lizards, commonly anoles.

I didn't have any anoles. I did however have a recently shed skin from a corn snake hatchling. I cut off a small section and stretched it over the head of a pinky. When I offered it in this manner it was taken without hesitation. This technique has worked for three feedings in a row. This may be of use to those out there with finicky feeders.

Creation of a Vernal Pond

by Grady Calhoun

I have been wanting to create a vernal pond on my property for many years now and I finally did it! I searched my property and decided on an area that was a natural drainage path. The area is wooded and receives a significant amount of run-off when it rains. There is a small basin-like area there that I was somewhat surprised didn't already hold water. To start I used a roto-tiller to loosen up the soil in 4 to 6 inch layers. I then used a garden tractor with a snow plow to move the loosened soil to what would become the dam. After a few hours of tilling then plowing, I formed a basin that was approximately 20 feet wide and 20 feet long. I was into soil with a lot of clay so I believe it has a good chance of holding water. I also removed a couple of trees and some large vines, whose root systems may prevent the basin from holding water. If the dam holds, the pond should probably be about 20 feet wide by 40 or 50 feet long and at least 2.5 feet deep since the drainage ditch should back up to the height where the dam overflows.

The first significant rains didn't even start to fill the area but I'm banking on that being because it has been so terribly dry the last couple of months.

If the pond holds water from the fall and spring rains, I plan on introducing egg masses from Spotted Salamanders and Wood frogs, both of which I know occur within a few miles of my house. It is likely that gray tree frogs and maybe even some of the Jefferson's salamanders, which have an established population in my neighborhood, will find the pond themselves in time. It all depends on the damn dam though. I'll keep you posted.

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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 editor's possession no later than the meeting previous to the publication.

Classifieds

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

For Sale: 75 gallon aquarium including freshwater filter system, lighting, hood, all accessories, fish, solid pine stand. Excellent condition. Asking \$400 OBO. Please call Erin at 513-471-2950.

For Sale: 0.0.5 Grey banded kingsnakes. \$75 each. Hatched on 7/22/06. Will be eating pinks before I sell. Call Grady Calhoun at (812) 926-1206.

For Sale: 1.0 Tri-colored hognose snake. This is a yearling about 12 inches long. Eats frozen-thawed fuzzies. \$200 Call Grady Calhoun at (812) 926-1206.

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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