

# THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXX, No. VI

[www.cincyherps.com](http://www.cincyherps.com)

June 2005

## The Editor's Den

The June Forked Tongue features an article on my recent experience in breeding *sulcatus* and other recently arrived babies and an article from The Center for North American Herpetology (CNAH) Lawrence, Kansas

We need articles! Please forward me anything that you would like to write about – Well not anything...it should be herp related somehow. It's breeding season. Put together a summary of what you have had success with or attempted to.

## Calendar of Events

8/3/05 Monthly Meeting featuring Joe Collins speaking on "*North American Herpetology, Problems and Perspectives*"

9/7/05 Monthly Meeting featuring Brian Horne speaking on *Adventures of a Tropical Herpetologist: Stories from Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, and Brazil*

10/5/05 Monthly meeting featuring Gary Gerald speaking on *Ecology of the Rare Northern Pine Snake*.

## Don't Miss Joe Collins!!

We are very fortunate to have a herpetologist of his caliber speaking to the GCHS. He has agreed to stay a while and sign his books so remember to bring them. I'm sure it will be a memorable meeting.

## Sister Group Relationship of Turtles to the Bird-Crocodylian Clade Revealed by Nuclear DNA-Coded Proteins

Naoyuki Iwabe, Yuichiro Hara, Yoshinori Kumazawa, Kaori Shibamoto, Yumi Saito,

Takashi Miyata, and Kazutaka Katoh *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 22(4): 810–813 (2005)

Abstract: The phylogenetic position of turtles is a currently controversial issue.

Recent molecular studies rejected a traditional view that turtles are basal living reptiles (Hedges, S. B., and L. L. Poling. 1999. A molecular phylogeny. *Science* 83:998–1001; Kumazawa, Y., and M. Nishida. 1999. Complete mitochondrial DNA sequences of the Green Turtle and Bluetail Mole Skink, statistical evidence for archosaurian affinity of turtles. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 16:784–792). Instead, these studies grouped turtles with birds and crocodiles. The relationship among turtles, birds, and crocodiles remained unclear to date. To resolve this issue, we have cloned and sequenced two nuclear genes encoding the catalytic subunit of DNA polymerase  $\alpha$  and glycylamide ribonucleotide synthetase–aminoimidazole ribonucleotide synthetase–glycylamide ribonucleotide formyltransferase from amniotes and an amphibian. The amino acid sequences of these proteins were subjected to a phylogenetic analysis based on the maximum likelihood method. The resulting tree showed that turtles are the sister group to a monophyletic cluster of archosaurs (birds and crocodiles). All other possible tree topologies were significantly rejected.

A copy of this article can be downloaded gratis by visiting the CNAH PDF Library at [http://www.cnah.org/cnah\\_pdf.asp](http://www.cnah.org/cnah_pdf.asp)

CNAH Note: The above paper is yet another that supports the higher-level taxonomy as shown on the CNAH web site at <http://www.cnah.org/taxonomy.asp>

For those that use a traditional named hierarchy, turtles are a distinct Class.

The August meeting will be held on Wednesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

## Sulcata Eggs and Other Neonates at the Calhoun House! by Grady Calhoun

I hate to count my eggs before they hatch but I needed an article. I obtained a pair of sulcatas in August of 2002. They were both rescue animals from two different people. Coincidentally enough, the owners both reported that they had their respective tortoises for eight years and that they had them since they were hatchlings. The tortoises were very different. The male, which I named Lumpy, was considerably smaller with significant pyramiding of the shell. The female, which had already been named Bertha, was much larger but still less than 25 pounds. She had a relatively smooth shell with a slight malformation in the rear. Her previous owner gave her the run of her house and decided to get rid of her when she, Bertha, started rearranging furniture. I have had both for nearly 3 years. Although the male attempted to breed Bertha every year I assumed they were too young and small for anything to take. As a matter of fact it still seems virtually physically impossible for copulation to have taken place given the relative difference in size of the two animals. I know it did however because I actually got down to their level and observed copulation. During the warmer months I keep the two outside so that they can graze at will and are afforded the benefits of direct sunlight. As is typical Lumpy was seen mounting Bertha quite frequently, up to the day before she laid eggs! I noticed that Bertha had become quite restless, just like the articles say! She was digging in all corners and even in the sides of the enclosure. These digs were not the typical 1 inch scrapes but were up to 4 inches deep. She also urinated in the holes. It appeared that she was having difficulty digging much past 4 inches. I used a roto-tiller to soften up the dirt in one of the areas she was digging. This loosened up the soil to a depth of approximately 7 inches. The next day, the male was observed digging in that hole and extended it horizontally a few inches. Just an observation - I'm not trying to imply intentional "team work" here. Later that same day the female was observed digging in the hole with her front feet. She later turned around in an egg laying position and was digging with her rear feet. I checked for eggs later

that night and there were none. The following day she was observed backed into the hole actively laying eggs. She was left undisturbed and monitored periodically. She was finally observed on top of the eggs facing forward. She had attempted to cover the eggs with dirt. After she left the site the eggs were gently removed. A total of ten eggs were found. One was smashed beyond repair and two others were cracked but not oozing. Seven looked perfect. I will begin incubating the eggs and will hopefully have babies for Christmas. Stay tuned.

I have successfully produced baby Northern Blue Tongue Skinks for about three years. The parents were not cooled down and are maintained in separate cages. They were put together on five separate occasions from February 6<sup>th</sup> to February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Breeding was observed every time. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> I found that six babies had been born. I offered them live wax worms two days later. Four of the six ate readily and had quite the attitude, opening their mouths to display the almost black tongues of newborns. The other two were lethargic and not eating. When handled, they felt weak and "soft". I resorted to a tried and true technique that most lizard keepers have probably tried - baby food. I don't know if it's a natural reflex or if they are actually hungry but most lizards will lick baby food from a syringe or similar when placed directly on their lips. I have experienced this with a variety of geckos, prehensile tailed skinks, and iguanas. I added a little bit of water to some "Stage 1" meat. I usually use chicken. (Obviously, fruits and vegetables should be used for vegetarian lizards.) Both of these lizards ate readily. I had to repeat this for three days but now both are indistinguishable from the others. I am certain that they would have died without this extra care. Its way too easy not to at least attempt with lizards that are not eating.

On 7/19/05 my grey banded king snake eggs began to hatch. Five eggs were laid on 5/19/05 and maintained in a Tupperware-type bowl between two layers of damp paper towels. They were maintained in a room between 80 and 85 degrees. Total incubation time was 61 days.

The August meeting will be held on Wednesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

## 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](mailto: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 desired publication.

## Classifieds

For Sale: 0.0.6 captive bred and born **Northern** Blue Tongue skinks. Born 7/2/05. All eating great! Come from dynamite parents. \$100 each, \$175/2. Call Grady at (812) 926 1206.

For Sale: Captive bred and hatched grey-banded king snakes, Blair's phase. \$75 each. Hatched 7/19/05. Call for availability. I won't sell them until they have eaten a pinky once. Call Grady at (812) 926-1206.

For Sale: 1.0.0 Carpet x Diamond Python (*Morelia spilotes*), 6 years old, tame, 8 ft +, eats pre-killed large rats. Has been in my collection for 4+ years. \$125 or trade. Call Mike McMullen (513) 753-1899.

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](mailto: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)

The August meeting will be held on Wednesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

### 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 Co-Chairman		
Advisor	Ray Whitson	(859) 342-8842		Peggy Fille	(513) 528-4452
Secretary	Vacant			Chris Bauer	(513) 424-5818

### 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	\$12.00	Sustaining	\$25.00
Family	\$18.00	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

The August meeting will be held on Wednesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center