

# THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXIX, No. XI

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

November 2004

## **The Editor's Den**

The November Forked Tongue features a review of the Christmas Meeting program and an article on Giant Salamanders.

## **Calendar of Events**

Dean Alessandrini has been busily working to ensure that we have quality programs at our monthly meetings. He has really outdone himself already for this year. We have a slate of really outstanding programs as well as a field trip planned for 2005!

1/05/05 Monthly Meeting featuring a herp quiz. Come and test your knowledge. Prizes will be given to the best herpers!

2/5/05 Monthly Meeting featuring the GCHS' Jason Folt speaking on field herping in Ohio

3/2/05 Monthly Meeting featuring Greg Lipps Jr. speaking on Ohio Herp conservation.

4/16/04 GCHS day at the Cincinnati Zoo See details below

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

## **Annual Holiday Meeting in Review**

The annual holiday meeting was a great success! Eric Keyster of the Cincinnati Zoo spoke about Japanese Giant Salamanders. These are truly impressive animals. It is almost hard to believe that they are amphibians. As is the case with many animals, these salamanders are endangered and listed as Cites I. In Japan they are given the highest protection afforded to animals. They are considered national monuments. In Japan nearly all of the land has been clear cut and replanted with non-native species. This has not seemed to affect the salamanders. The biggest threat to these animals is

the damming of the streams in which they live. It is hard to believe that these huge salamanders live in the streams that are relatively small. Dams have been created, possibly for the sole purpose of giving individuals government work, in many of the streams. These are a problem because the salamanders can not travel to the prime breeding grounds. There seems to be a good number of adults seen which leads to a misconception that the populations are doing well. The absence of a significant number of larvae and smaller animals is a real concern. As the older adults die off there could be a population crash because there is not a good population of younger animals maturing to breeding size. There are some conservation efforts underway but no government funding has been provided. Some animals have been pit tagged and fitted with radiotransmitters. The people of the areas seem to have new respect for these animals and have stopped eating them. Some of the positives associated with these animals include that the human population growth is negative and that the water quality of these streams is very good.

## **GCHS Day at the Cincinnati Zoo**

GCHS members will meet at the Reptile House at the zoo at **10:00 AM on Saturday, April 16th** and we will begin the tour. If a very large number of people attend, groups may need to go on the tour in shifts. If this is the case, those members not on the first shift will be able to tour the zoo until they are ready for the next group. We have the **Serengeti shelter** reserved, and we will be meeting there after the tours for a picnic. The rest of the day will be yours to explore the zoo as you please. The shelter will be reserved for the entire day, so you will be able to come and go as you please. **More details on the picnic to follow.**

We will receive a reduced rate of **\$8 for adults and \$5 for children 2-12 years old.** A code number will be given to the group, and you will need to know the

The January meeting will be held on Wednesday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

code number in order to receive the discounted price. Normal parking fees will apply.

Since we anticipate a very large turn-out for this event, please R.S.V.P with the number of people in your party to Dean Alessandrini at **herpconservation@hotmail.com** as soon as possible, so that we can give an estimated number of attendees to the zoo. Contact Dean with any questions.

### **Giant Salamanders**

The following article was reprinted in its entirety from Smithsonian National Zoological Park

/Friends of the National Zoo website,  
<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/AsiaTrail/GiantSalamanders/>

Two species of giant salamanders live in Asia. A similar huge amphibian, the Eastern hellbender, lives in the eastern United States. National Zoo staff are exploring which of two Asian species will do best on Asia Trail.

#### **Japanese Giant Salamander**

Order: Urodela  
Family: Cryptobranchidae  
Genus and Species: *Andrias japonicus*

**Size:** Japanese giant salamanders are about 55 pounds and 5 feet long.

**Distribution and Habitat:** Japanese giant salamanders inhabit the cold, fast-flowing mountain streams and rivers of northern Kyushu Island and western Honshu in Japan.

**Diet:** Japanese giant salamanders eat almost anything they can, from insects to fish to mice to small invertebrates like crabs. Giant salamanders have a very slow metabolism, and go weeks without eating, if necessary.

**Reproduction:** Japanese giant salamanders begin reproduction in late August, when herds congregate at nest sites. Males compete, viciously, with many dying due to injuries from fights. Females lay between 400 and 500 eggs in the fall, which may be fertilized by several males. Males aggressively

guard the nests, which may contain eggs from several females, until they hatch in the early spring.

**Conservation:** This giant salamander was first put under protection in 1951, and was recognized as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1976. It has no natural predators, but has been hunted by local populations for food, and is losing its habitat to deforestation.

#### **Chinese Giant Salamander**

Order: Urodela  
Family: Cryptobranchidae  
Genus and Species: *Andrias davidianus*

**Size:** Chinese giant salamanders range from 5.5 to 6.6 feet long and weigh 45 to 55 pounds

**Distribution:** Chinese giant salamanders are found in fast mountain streams at 650 to 3,300 feet above sea level, in the tributaries of the Pearl, Yellow, and Yangzi rivers, across 17 regions of China. Nocturnal creatures, they live in muddy, dark rock crevices along riverbanks.

**Diet:** They eat crabs, fish, snakes, aquatic insects, water rats, turtles, frogs and crabs. Giant salamanders have a very slow metabolism, and go weeks without eating, if necessary.

**Reproduction:** Little is known.

**Conservation:** Chinese giant salamanders are considered a delicacy, and their body parts are used in traditional Chinese medicines. They were recognized as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1976, and are fully protected in China. Despite having no natural predators, Chinese giant salamanders are highly endangered due to habitat loss and deforestation, as well as poaching.

The January meeting will be held on Wednesday January 5<sup>th</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.**

### Classifieds

For Sale: Captive Bred albino boa constrictors, (Peter Kahl strain). These are 2004 babies, all feeding and looking great! \$1000.00 each. Partial stripes available for \$1600.00. Call Scott Kass at 513-779-8124

For Sale: 1.1 Captive bred grey-banded kingsnake. Eating live pinkies. \$50.00 each. Call Grady Calhoun at 513-564-6041

For Sale: 7.0 '03 Tiger Rat Snakes (*Spilote pullatus*) Very well started, nice black and yellow coloration. Approximately 30 inches or more. Feeding voraciously on live hoppers. \$60 each or two or more for \$50 each. Call Marc (859) 344-9626

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)

### 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.

### 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 January meeting will be held on Wednesday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center