

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Editor's Den

By Grady Calhoun

The August *Forked Tongue* features an article by Al Winstel on an outer banks vacation and the herps he observed.

The August meeting will be held at Northern Kentucky University at 7:30 Wednesday, August 7th. We meet in room 421 of the Natural Science Building.

Calendar of Events

- 8/7 Monthly Meeting. Program: Will Bird of the Louisville Zoo on Reptiles at the Louisville Zoo and Venomous Snake Handling
- 8/24 GCHS Canoe Trip at Thaxton's in Butler KY
- 9/4 Monthly Meeting. Program: Winston Card on Herpetological Exhibitions in the Philippines (tentative)
- 9/14 Behind the Scenes trip to Louisville Zoo
- 9/21 GCHS Picnic at Marty Hay's Place

Announcements

At the July meeting the GCHS constitution was discussed. There were no comments on the document provided at the previous month's meeting. No requests for copies were made from corresponding members. The constitution as provided at the June meeting will be adopted.

A nominating committee will be appointed at the August meeting. This committee will select individuals to run for offices in the next election.

The design for our 25th anniversary T-shirt is complete. John Bellman produced a wonderful watercolor of the Tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatus*). I have sent copies of the artwork to a t-shirt vendor. We should have ordering information for the next meeting.

Iguana Homes Needed!

We are getting quite a few calls from people who want to get rid of their green iguanas. In most cases the animals are three feet long or longer. If you can provide a good home for one of these animals please call Grady Calhoun at (513) 564-6041.

Upcoming Events

We are ending summer with a plethora of activity.

Canoe trip - We have planned a canoe trip on the Licking River for Saturday August 24 at Thaxton's Canoe rental in Butler KY. This location was chosen because it is not quite as commercial as some of the locations in Indiana. The cost is \$12 per person. This is for members and their families only. We need to provide a definite number so you must be signed up by the August Meeting. Contact Dean Alessandrini at (513) 347-0099 for details.

Zoo Trip - Dean has arranged for us to tour the Louisville Zoo reptile facilities on September 14th. This will be a great opportunity to see the animals "Behind the Scene". This is also available only to GCHS members and their families. The cost is \$4 per person. Parking is probably extra. Sign up by the September meeting. Contact Dean Alessandrini at (513) 347-0099 for details.

GCHS Picnic - Marty Hay has been gracious enough to offer her place as a site for the GCHS summer picnic. This is tentatively scheduled for September 21. More details will follow.

July Highlights

The July Meeting featured a presentation by Grady Calhoun on the Herpetology Weekend at Natural Bridge Kentucky. There were plenty of slides some of which were quite good!

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The Herper's Guide to an Outer Banks

Vacation

By Al Winstel

This summer, my family decided to visit the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Cape Hatteras and vicinity). As usual we had to visit a number of tourist "attractions" to satisfy all participants. Of course my idea of a great vacation is to spend my time trash turning, road hunting, and visiting natural areas where I am likely to encounter novel herps. This then is my attempt to provide information that might be of use to those trying to make a family vacation into a herp trip with a minimum amount of suffering on the part of all involved. I'll cover the Outer Banks area from north to south.

The farthest north we got was the city of Corolla near the northern border of the state. The big attraction for the usual tourist here is the Currituck Lighthouse, the only one that we visited which allowed visitors to climb to the top. It costs \$6/person to make the climb and there is also a gift shop outfitted with everything in the world that you could possibly adorn with a lighthouse picture or drawing. While your family is enjoying these activities, you would best spend your time lifting boards and pieces of sign in a grassy area on the other side of the parking lot and searching the oak trees there for rat snakes (black or greenish rats, I'm not sure which variety would be found here). I did discover an eastern narrow mouth toad under an old sign and was able to photograph it with my son's help after holding the toad in an empty water bottle in the shade of my car until the son was available. If the lighthouse line is especially long, I suggest you spend some time walking a boardwalk out to the intracoastal waterway in search of water snakes, rat snakes, and cottonmouths. I took the walk, but only saw some laughing gulls and boat tailed grackles.

As you drive south from Corolla you will pass through the towns of Sanderling and Duck, eventually reaching the famed site of the Wright Brothers' first powered airplane flight. This area is especially interesting to tourists now, since next year will be the 100th anniversary of their success. The area at Kitty Hawk (possibly named for the small falcon also

called a sparrow hawk or kestrel) has a visitor center, gift shop, a large monument, and the beginning and ending locations of some of the first successful flights. Pretend to be interested in the markers at the flight locations. The farthest one (I believe the flight was around 825 feet) is a great departure site for an unmowed, grassy area which borders a small canal. I spotted a couple green herons, quite a few large yellow bellied slider turtles, and some six lined racerunners in the area. Be advised that the area is also home to a lot of tiny prickly pear cacti about the diameter of a golf ball which will stick to just about anything, including the tops and bottoms of tennis shoes. The canal I followed met a damp grassy ditch that ran along the road which I checked for glass lizards without any luck.

Just south of the Kitty Hawk Memorial is Jockey Ridge State Park, created to preserve a huge desert like sand dune running parallel to the shore. The area was very hot when we visited and the family spent time in the gift shop and a picnic shelter. If you are crazy enough to walk the trails in the heat, you will probably see tracks of lizards and possibly snakes. Although I didn't expect to see any amphibians, I did run across a Fowler's toad near a water fountain. It lacked the dark throat spot usually seen on Fowler's in our area. The folks at Jockey Ridge were very excited about hognose snakes. As I recall they were prominently featured in all their displays. I'm not sure why.

If you drive a mile or so south, you will find an access to the Nags Head Woods, an area run by the Nature Conservancy. To their credit, they provide wildlife lists for the area which takes up several hundred acres. It was tough convincing my family that there was a lot to see here. Eventually I was able to visit in the evening while they enjoyed the beach outside our hotel room. Just adjacent to the visitor center, I got a really good look at a redbelly watersnake crawling along the boardwalk and an eastern cottonmouth hunting the edge of a pond. These guys are both most likely to be seen in the evening as it gets cooler. I believe I was there about 7 P.M. An additional, very large redbelly watersnake was observed and photographed with its

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head raised about a foot off the ground near the road at the edge of a dry pond nearby. Although these water snakes are said to be brown with a red belly, my impression was that they were very close to black with a bright reddish brown venter, quite beautiful for a water snake. The cottonmouth, a typical eastern animal with little head markings and an obvious pattern, despite about a 3 ½ foot length, was really neat to watch. Rather than depending on its camouflage to avoid my attention or being spotted while escaping, the snake was lying along the water's edge moving its neck and head around while poking the soil and sticks, obviously in search of frogs (I heard a bullfrog here earlier) or other prey. This sighting was made possible by a board walk constructed 10 or 15 feet above the water level, allowing me to observe the snake without intruding upon it.

This was a really nice area, but please realize that everything here is protected. Leave the snakes and other wildlife for future visitors to see.

Moving further south you will come upon Bodie Island Lighthouse. I was unable to find a lot to interest me herpetologically here, so you'll just have to suffer through another lighthouse tour. Depending upon how you view lighthouses, you'll be happy or disappointed that this is one you can't climb. However, if you continue south a few miles to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, you can tour the refuge visitor center which again provides lists of the many different types of wildlife found there, including herps. A trail, leaving from behind the restrooms immediately skirts a pond just filled with yellow bellied sliders, with a few large common snappers attending them. Although feeding the wildlife is forbidden, it appears that a lot of people have ignored the rules, since these turtles are definitely looking for a handout. These are viewed from a boardwalk. In the same pond, you may be able to see some shiny almost fluorescent blue and orange fish darting about in the shallows. About the size of feeder goldfish, these are Cyprinodon variegatus, relatives of the pupfish found in Death Valley and other sites out west. I thought I was doing pretty well spotting the

turtles when my wife informed me that a family just behind me was leery of beginning the trail when they saw a large black snake crossing under the boardwalk. I tried to get a description from Sue, but the best guess I could make was a black racer (she doesn't look too closely at snakes ever since I tossed a large black racer into the front car seat with her on a Florida vacation. There was a perfectly logical reason which I won't go into here). If you walk the rest of the boardwalk for a mile or 2, you will see a variety of shorebirds including great egrets, little blue herons, and several species of terns. There is also a nearby osprey nesting tower which is even more visible from the center where spotting scopes are set up. I walked the trail in the heat of the day, also finding some healthy mosquitoes and biting flies along the way. About 6:30 P.M. I approached the end of the hike and did a double take as I noticed a rough green snake on the vegetation right next to the boardwalk. The snake was caught, photographed, and released. If I recall correctly, the refuge brochure also mentions corn snakes, (greenish) rat snakes, and glass lizards among possible herps to see.

Bear with me, there's only one more lighthouse to go, the one at Cape Hatteras (We didn't get far enough south for the Ocracoke Lighthouse). This one was actually moved a few years ago since the beach upon which it sat was slowly eroding away. The house is the tallest brick lighthouse in the U.S. and provides a visitor center and gift shop, plenty to keep your loved ones busy while you scout the shrubby edge around the grassy yard of the lighthouse. You ought to be able to find six lined racerunners with no trouble. I even saw one on the porch of the visitor center. If your family decides to take in the video showing how the lighthouse was moved, you may be able to borrow the car for 15 minutes or so and drive to the original lighthouse location where once again there is a bevy of yellow bellied sliders begging for handouts.,

We decided not to wait the hour and a half for the ferry to the southern island of Ocracoke, so that's about as far as I can take you. Possible herps in the area that I haven't mentioned include green treefrog,

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squirrel treefrog, southern leopard frog, eastern spadefoot toad, oak toad, southern toad, southern cricket frog, Cope's gray treefrog, spring peeper, pine woods treefrog, eastern mud turtle, diamondback terrapin, 5 species of sea turtles (sea turtle programs are available at some of the preserves and refuges), five lined skink, ground skink, eastern glass lizard, eastern kingsnake, Carolina salt marsh snake, brown snake, eastern ribbon snake, eastern garter snake, worm snake, scarlet snake, ringneck snake, mud snake, rainbow snake, brown watersnake,, timber rattlesnake, pine woods snake, and black swamp snake. The last I believe is a northernmost range extension for this species. If you do decide to visit the Outer Banks, there are additional historic sites that we didn't visit. A really good book that covers the activities of Blackbeard the pirate, the Wright Brothers, environmental threats to the area, geology of the Outer Banks, and the unusual relationship between wax myrtle trees, Outer Banks Kingsnakes, and rice rats is Ribbon of Sand by Alexander and Lazell. You also may wish to get Amphibians and Reptiles of the Carolinas and Virginia by Martof, Palmer, Bailey, and Harrison III. The area has a lot of things to study, see, and do from relatively uncrowded beaches to the birthplace of the first English baby in North America to the Graveyard of the Atlantic to a herp list with some really unusual animals and some interesting distribution puzzles. Everything I've mentioned is no more than an hour or so drive from the Nags Head area, much of it on 55 MPH roads. If you have a little extra time, the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge occupies the North Carolina mainland right next to the Outer Banks. There are more herp species there than on the Outer Banks, but bring plenty of insect repellent.

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Requirements for Submitting Articles to the Forked Tongue

1. Articles can be submitted via 3.5" floppy disk or hard copy to Editor, GCHS 11470 Gatch Hill Road, Aurora, IN 4700.
2. Articles may be e-mailed to Grady Calhoun at gcalhoun@seidata.com.
3. 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.
4. All time dependent submissions must be in the editors possession no later than the meeting previous to the desired publication date.

Classified Advertizing 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:

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|--------------------|----------------|
| 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 advertized. The Society also reserves the right to refuse any ad considered inappropriate.

Classifieds

Available: Venomous snake video available: This video has extractions from king cobras, gaboon vipers, and several others, plus graphic snakebite slides. Kentucky Reptile Zoo is a non-profit educational exhibit and venom extraction laboratory. \$10.00 donation plus \$5.00 postage and handling will bring this video to you! Please note everything is filmed as it happens and is not professionally edited. Send a check or money order to Kentucky Reptile Zoo, 200 L&E Railroad, Slade, Kentucky 40376. Visit our website at www.geocities.com/kentuckyreptilezoo for more information, or call 606-663-9160.

Available: Captive bred baby ball pythons (*Python regius*). Hatching started June 4. Normal ones will be \$30 ea.. Hope to have them feeding by early July. There is a possibility of some aberrant babies, which will probably be in the \$100-\$200 range. Also expecting hatchling pueblan milks during July, maybe some apricots. Hope to sell locally. Al Winstel 513-729-2563, AlWinstel@msn.com (Northern Cincinnati).

For Sale: CB ball pythons (*Python regius*) and CB Pueblan milksnakes (*Lampropeltis t. campbelli*) \$30 each. Will be feeding on pink or fuzzy mice before sale. Pueblans are both white band and apricot tinted band. Al Winstel 513-729-2563 (Northern Cincinnati).

Discount: A 10% discount is offered to all card carrying members of the GCHS at my veterinary clinic that treats a lot of reptiles. All Creatures Animal Hospital, 1894 Ohio Pike, Amelia, Ohio 45102, Dr. Dan Meakin 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)

Currently Held Positions

| | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| President | Grady Calhoun | (812) 926-1206 (513) 564-6041 | Vice President | Dean Alessandrini | (513) 347-0099 |
| Treasurer | Peggy Fille | (513) 528-4452 | Secretary | Diane Bauer | (513) 451-1203 |
| Seargent-at-Arms | Bruce Fille | (513) 528-4452 | Editor | Grady Calhoun | (812) 926-1206 (513) 564-6041 |
| Advisor | Ray Whitson | (859) 342-8842 | Education Conservation Committee Chairman | Fred Fannin | (513) 734-6906 |

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:

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| 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 |
| Norwood Pet Center | (513) 351-7230 |
| All Creatures Animal Hospital | (513) 797-7387 |
| Dr. Dahlhausen's Veterinary Clinic | (513) 576-0131 |

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