

# THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## **The Editor's Den**

By Grady Calhoun

The December Forked Tongue features an article by Marc Frevola on feeding Yellow Tailed Cribos.

## **Calendar of Events**

1/7 Annual Meeting at NKU

## **Rescued Animals need Homes**

We need volunteers to adopt animals that are given to the society. If you are willing to provide a good home for iguanas, large boas or pythons, tortoises or crocodylians please contact Chris Bauer at (513) 424-5818 or Matt Fille at (513) 528-4452.

## **December Holiday Meeting**

The December holiday meeting was again a success. Thanks to Jim Harrison and Kristen for sharing their experiences of a recent Trip to St. Lucia.

## **Possible Change in Meeting Place**

We are in the process of evaluating a new meeting place. This is a very big decision that could significantly affect meeting attendance and membership either positively or negatively. We really would like the input of members to help with this decision. We are seriously considering moving the monthly meetings to the Cincinnati Nature center which is near Milford. Please contact Grady Calhoun at (812)926-1206 with any comments that have not already been shared via e-mail. **We will be making the decision at the January meeting.**

## **Feeding Hatchling Yellow Tail Cribos** **(*Drymarchon corais corais*)**

By: Marc Frevola

If a herper is involved with snakes long enough, sooner or later he or she will find themselves keeping a species that is very reluctant to feed as a hatchling. Whether it be mountain kings, grey bands or some other variety of picky serpent, it is a very stressful

and trying experience for even the most dedicated keepers. I recently found myself to be the proud poppa of a large clutch of Yellow Tail Cribos hatchlings (*Drymarchon corais corais*). Having raised other subspecies of *Drymarchon* such as the Eastern Indigo (*D. c. couperi*) and Texas Indigos (*D. c. erebennus*) I didn't think the YT's would be any problem. First mistake! Never assume anything when dealing with hatchlings, especially *Drymarchon*.

About ten days or so after hatching, the beautiful little babies went through their first shed and I figured at least half would be ready to take their first meal. Imagine my disappointment when only one out of twenty babies took a frozen thawed pink. After several weeks of continued failure and wasting pinks, I tried a few live pinks. This met with the same failure rate. It was time to break out the bag of tricks. The following is a synopsis of the different methods applied to trick the young into feeding.

First up was the old flopping goldfish trick. Most Eastern Indigos' first meal consists of a cold-blooded fish, so there was no reason to think their distant relative would be any different. Preparing for the onslaught of feeding frenzy, I placed each hatchling in its own small, opaque deli cup with a nice, plump flopping goldfish. After an hour or so, I checked back and once again was amazed that none of the snakes had eaten. Fine, I can deal with that, I'll outlast them I thought. I waited another five days and tried the same method. Nothing. Five more days.....nothing. Okay, so they don't like fish.

Second trick up the sleeve was a dead snake I had in the freezer. (Doesn't every herper keep an assortment of dead critters in their freezer?) I cut up parts of its tail and scented a couple of frozen thawed pinks with the blood, then even wrapped the skin around another pink and placed them in the deli cups again. Nothing.

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This was getting frustrating.

Third trick was scenting with an assortment of other cold blooded animals I either found or had. For the next several weeks I rubbed dead pinks on toads, tree frogs, and even a bearded dragon. Nothing, nothing and nothing! Now it was about two and a half months since hatching and I only had one baby feeding. This was getting beyond frustrating, not to mention the fact that I was acting like an insane person, rubbing dead pinks on anything that walked crawled or hopped.

After speaking with some other keepers and brainstorming with Dean Alessandrini, I thought I'd try some invertebrate scenting. I tried cricket guts on a pink, crickets by themselves, mealworms, even a nightcrawler. Nothing again. This was really beginning to bruise my ego.

Refusing to give in, I tried scenting frozen thawed pinks with dead chicks. I split the chicks and dipped the pinks in some of the viscera exposed, and placed them all in their little deli cups once more. After a very long and suspenseful two hours, I checked the cups and...Eureka!.....five babies had eaten! Only fourteen more to go.

In a very fortunate twist of fate, I just happened to be visiting Jim Harrison's Kentucky Reptile Zoo one weekend and discussed the matter with him. Jim suggested the cribo's were probably lizard feeders and that I try some baby leopard geckoes he had sitting in his freezer. (I told you all true herpers keep frozen critters in their freezer). I anxiously returned home clutching my bag of frozen lizards like a child with a newly prized possession. No sooner had I gotten home when I tried placing thawed geckos in deli cups with several of the snakes. SUCCESS! All but three of the remaining snakes fed!

For the next several weeks, I tried some more suggestions, including smearing frozen thawed pinks with fish oil, but no tricks seemed to work on the three unfeeding snakes and they eventually succumbed, even after force feeding them pinky heads. I tried to justify my failure by thinking that perhaps even in nature, these animals would not have

survived due to some possible imperfection in their make-up, but it was still a disheartening experience.

Finally, after several months of scenting pinks with lizard and chick viscera, I am happy to report that all the hatchlings are now eating unscented frozen thawed fuzzies. There are many ways to trick stubborn hatchlings into feeding. Finding the right food item and scent can be a long tedious procedure, but it is just step that must be taken in successful herpetoculture.

### **Is the 49 Footer Real?**

Many of you may have heard through the internet and even on some newscasts that a 49 foot, 985 pound reticulated python was recently found. As the story goes it was located more than a year ago in a small village but just put on display. The villagers had supposedly maintained the animal by feeding it dogs! Although I am quite doubtful that this information will be confirmed, it would be awesome to know that snakes do reach that size. If confirmed, the snake would smash the existing record of 33 feet by almost 50%.

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### 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:

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 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.**

### 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](mailto: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.

### Classifieds

For Sale: Feeder rabbits and rats. Call Rod Surber at (812) 637-0305 or e-mail me at [Indianarockshop@aol.com](mailto:Indianarockshop@aol.com).

For Sale: I will have baby corn snakes available in July, a few albino Okeetee corns and the offspring of a ghost X hypererythristic(red) cross. The latter will probably look normal, depending upon hidden traits, but breeding these offspring together should result in a variety of possibilities, including young with extra red, amelanistics, hypomelanistics, and ghost. Young are \$15 ea. and will be feeding. Al Winstel 513-729-2563. Could probably bring to meeting.

For Sale: Snakes, 2.0 CB ball pythons (*Python regius*), 1 baby (\$20), 1 yearling (\$30), both feeding; 1 baby Amazon tree boa (*Corallus hortulanus*), eating thawed pinks (\$25); 1 aberrant patterned Pueblan Milksnake (*Lampropeltis t. campbelli*) (\$25), 2 years old. eating thawed pinks, fuzzies. Call Al Winstel 513-729-2563.

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 |
| Sargent-at-Arms | Bruce Fille   | (513) 528-4452 | Education Conservation Committee Co-Chairman |                   |                |
| Advisor         | Ray Whitson   | (859) 342-8842 |                                              | Matt 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

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