

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Editor's Den

The December Forked Tongue features a list of 47 non-native reptiles living in Florida and some details about a few of the more interesting or potentially harmful animals now calling Florida home.

Calendar of Events

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

2/26&27/05 Educational Program at Krohn Conservatory. We will be looking for volunteers.

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

4/06/05 Monthly Meeting featuring Jim Harrison speaking on envenomation.

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*"

Non Native Species in the US

One of the last slides in the Quiz last month was of an American Alligator with a large Burmese python in its jaws. This was a surprise to many of us especially since it was shot in the wild. I did a search and found a really good website listing some of the non-native species now living in Florida. The website is the sponsored by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and is found at

<http://www.wildflorida.org/critters/exotics/exotics.asp>.

The site is dedicated to all of the non-native species in Florida. This is a very good website which includes range maps, population status, threats to native

animals and even some full color pictures. I focused on the reptiles. (I was surprised to see only 4 amphibians made the list) The site lists 47 different non-native reptiles living in Florida. I have enclosed the list and some facts about a few of the animals.

Estimated trend in populations

Thirteen species are expanding. Four species are stable. Four species are declining. Twenty six species have unknown population levels.

Breeding status

Thirty species have been breeding at least 10 years (but not necessarily consecutive years); thirteen for less than 10 years; and four species have no records of reproduction in the wild in Florida

Established status

Twenty eight established: populations are confirmed breeding and apparently self-sustaining for 10 or more consecutive years.

Nine species are present and breeding but for less than 10 years.

Eight species are present but not confirmed to be breeding. Populations persist only with repeated introductions and/or escape of individuals., and two species have populations whose status is unknown.

Distribution range

- 2 species occur in 51-66 counties ,
- 1 species occur in 21-50 counties ,
- 2 species occur in 11-20 counties ,
- 5 species occur in 06-10 counties ,
- 21 species occur in 02-05 counties , and
- 16 species occur in 01 counties

The February meeting will be held on Wednesday February 2nd at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center

Common Name	First year	Breeding status	Established?	Common Name	First year	Breeding status	Established?
<u>Red-eared Slider</u>	??	10+ years	Established	<u>Common House Gecko</u>	1979	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Spectacled Caiman</u>	1960	10+ years	Established	<u>Mediterranean Gecko</u>	1910	10+ years	Established
<u>African Redhead Agama</u>	1976	<10 years	Established	<u>Indo-Pacific Gecko</u>	1963	10+ years	Established
<u>Giant Ameiva</u>	1954	10+ years	Established	<u>Green Iguana</u>	1966	10+ years	Established
<u>Brown Anole</u>	1887	10+ years	Established	<u>Northern Curlytail Lizard</u>	1935	10+ years	Established
<u>Hispaniolan Green Anole</u>	1980s	10 years	Potentially	<u>Green-legged Curlytail Lizard</u>	1970s	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Puerto Rican Crested Anole</u>	1975	10+ years	Established	<u>Red-sided Curlytail Lizard</u>	1970s	10+ years	Established
<u>Largehead Anole</u>	1967	10+ years	Established	<u>Many-lined Grass Skink</u>	1990	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Bark Anole</u>	1946	10+ years	Established	<u>Bibron's Gecko</u>	1970s	10+ years	No, but Present
<u>Knight Anole</u>	1952	10+ years	Established	<u>Giant Day Gecko</u>	1990s	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Barbados Anole</u>	1990s	<10 years	No, but Present	<u>Texas Horned Lizard</u>	1934	10+ years	Established
<u>Marie Gallant Sail-tailed Anole</u>	1990	None Reported	No, but Present	<u>Ocellated Gecko</u>	1944	10+ years	Established
<u>Cuban Green Anole</u>	1980s	10+ years	Established	<u>Ashy Gecko</u>	1921	10+ years	Established
<u>Jamaican Giant Anole</u>	1975	10+ years	Established	<u>White-spotted Wall Gecko</u>	1990s	<10 years	No, but Present
<u>Brown Basilisk</u>	1976	10+ years	Established	<u>Moorish Wall Gecko</u>	1996	<10 years	No, but Present
<u>Green Basilisk</u>	1994	None Reported	No, but Present	<u>Nile Monitor</u>	1990	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Oriental Garden Lizard</u>	1978	10+ years	Established	<u>Javan Filesnake</u>	1970s	None Reported	Unknown
<u>Indochinese Tree Agama</u>	1990s	<10 years	No, but Present	<u>Common Boa</u>	1990	<10 years	Potentially
<u>Veiled Chameleon</u>	2002	<10 years	Potentially	<u>Burmese Python</u>	1980s	None Reported	Potentially
<u>Rainbow Lizard</u>	1964	10+ years	Established	<u>Brahminy Blind Snake</u>	1979	10+ years	Established
<u>Giant Whiptail</u>	1995	<10 years	Established				
<u>Asian Flattail House Gecko</u>	1983	10+ years	No, but Present				
<u>Mexican Spinytail Iguana</u>	1972	10+ years	Established				
<u>Black Spinytail Iguana</u>	1978	10+ years	Established				
<u>Tokay Gecko</u>	1965	10+ years	Established				
<u>Yellowhead Gecko</u>	1939	10+ years	Unknown				
<u>Tropical House Gecko</u>	1990	10+ years	Established				

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Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus*

First year: 1960 **Extirpated year:** N/A

Established status: Populations are confirmed breeding and apparently self-sustaining for 10 or more consecutive years.

Statewide trend: Stable

Threats to natives: Preys upon a variety of vertebrates (Ellis 1980) and competes for food and space with the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)

Species Account: The native range of the spectacled caiman extends from southern Mexico to northern Argentina, where it may attain lengths of over 2.4 m (8 ft). South Florida specimens were released or escaped from the pet trade and are typically less than 1.8 m (6 ft) long. Breeding populations occur in localized areas of Dade and Broward counties, where they inhabit freshwater marshes, heavily vegetated ponds and lakes, and canals. This "small" crocodylian is secretive but is feisty when cornered. The caiman can be differentiated from native crocodylians by a curved bony ridge across the moderately sharp snout just in front of the eyes. Hatchlings are banded with very dark brown on a dark olive ground color, and the color darkens and the pattern obscures as they grow. It is susceptible to cold weather, and its northern expansion is limited by occasional freezes in south Florida (Bartlett and Bartlett 1999). Extirpation of the caiman population at Homestead Air Force Base, Dade County, was begun in 1977 (Ellis 1980) but caimans are still breeding there (L. J. Hord, FFWCC, Okeechobee, personal communication). In 2001, a nest of 41 eggs was collected (39 hatched) and 2 adults were killed near the junction of Levee No. 67A and Canal No. 123 (Holiday Park), Broward County (L. J. Hord, personal communication).

Habitats: Lake, Freshwater river or stream

Burmese Python *Python molurus bivittatus*

First year: 1980s

Established status: Species are present and breeding but for less than 10 years.

Statewide trend: Unknown status

Threats to natives: Preys upon mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and even fish. Due to its large size, it could potentially threaten a variety of wildlife species. May provide food for American alligators.

Species Account: This large constrictor may reach a length of 8 m (26 ft). It is found from India to lower China, the Malay Peninsula, and on some islands of the East Indies, where it typically lives near water. It is semiaquatic but a good climber. It is one of the most commonly kept exotic snakes in the pet trade because of its "gentle" disposition. Burmese pythons have been reported from the saline glades and mangroves at the south end of Everglades National Park since at least the 1980s. Specimens collected on Main Park Road in 1996 and 1997 appeared to be recent releases, however (Meshaka et al. 2000). Almost 70 Burmese pythons of all size classes have now been collected from Everglades National Park and 2 "fights" between pythons and American alligators have been documented (S. Snow, Everglades National Park, personal communication).

Habitats: Estuarine community

Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus*

First year: 1990

Established status: Species are present and breeding but for less than 10 years.

Statewide trend: Unknown status

Threats to natives: Large carnivorous species that can dig up reptile eggs (including alligators) and prey upon birds, mammals, frogs, lizards, snakes, fish, and crabs.

Species Account: This large lizard occurs over much of Africa, where it is typically found along riverbanks. It can reach a length of 2.1 m (7 ft), but most adults are 1.5-1.8 m (4.5-5 ft) long. Monitors are excellent swimmers and divers, and they typically shelter in burrows dug by other animals. A monitor observed with spinytail iguanas on Gasparilla Island quickly entered a burrow; around Cape Coral, monitors are usually observed along canals and usually escape by swimming (R. W. Repenning, FDEP, Punta Gorda, personal communication). Frequent

sightings of all size classes of monitors in Cape Coral over the last 10 years indicate that a population is probably established. Monitors are occasionally observed elsewhere in Florida, particularly along Card Sound Road in Dade County (P. E. Moler, FFWCC, Gainesville, personal communication), but whether these represent escapees or established populations is unknown. Nile monitors are frequently imported in the pet trade and sometimes escape or are deliberately released by pet owners.

Habitats: Freshwater river or stream, Estuarine community, Exotic plant community, Low density suburban development, areas peripheral to core urban areas, and small towns

Veiled Chameleon *Chamaeleo calytratus*

First year: 2002

Established status: Species are present and breeding but for less than 10 years.

Statewide trend: Unknown status

Alternate common names: Yemen Chameleon

Threats to natives: Unknown, but could compete for insect potentially prey on smaller lizards.

Species Account: This species is native to the southwest and western Yemen, where it inhabits mountainous coastal agricultural lands where there is more moisture. In a 1-year classes (including hatchlings representing several clutches Myers. Males reach 61 cm (24 in) total length, but females a small spur on the heel of the hind foot, and the casque or a female. Coloration is highly variable and changes rapidly conditions and the mood of the individual. Males typically gold, green, and blue mixed with yellow, orange, or black. with a mottled pattern of white to gold spots on the body a captivity, 30-60 (up to 85) eggs are typically laid per clutch annually. Females are sexually mature at ca. 5-6 months of breeding will often develop bright blue spots (Fife 1999).] females change from light green to almost black with bright Chameleon eggs often go through a diapause, or rest, periodic months to hatch (Fife 1999).

Habitats: Low density suburban development, areas peripheral to core urban areas, and small towns

Established status: Populations are confirmed breeding and apparently self-sustaining for 10 or more consecutive years.

Statewide trend: Expanding

Threats to natives: Sometimes preys upon smaller anoles, frogs, and nestling birds (Collette 1961, Ruibal 1964, Brach 1976, Nicholson and Richards 1999).

Species Account: The knight anole, which is native to Cuba, has become established over much of the heavily planted suburbs of South Miami, where it is often called "iguana" or "iguanito" (Bartlett and Bartlett 1999). It is readily observed in summer hanging head down on large tree trunks within a few meters of the ground, supporting the front of its body away from the tree with its legs. Both sexes engage in these displays, at which time they are brilliant green in color. From October through April, it is relatively inconspicuous while hiding in bushes or high in trees, especially the crowns of dying coconut palm trees (Brach 1976). In St. Lucie Co., juveniles and adults were observed at night perched in Brazilian pepper along canals and in tall slash pines in pine flatwoods (Krysko et al., in press). Knight anoles feed on large insects, smaller anoles, nestling birds, and fruits, such as those of the Bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) (Brach 1976). Males may exceed 46 cm (18 in) in length and have huge pink dewlaps. The typical body coloration is bright green with yellow flash marks below each eye and on each shoulder, but cold or frightened individuals can be chocolate brown or almost black. The head is large and bony, and a low vertebral crest and larger nuchal crest can be erected. Although alert, knight anoles are slower than many other anoles and are more prone to stand their ground and even become aggressive when disturbed, often biting their attacker (Bartlett 1995a, Bartlett and Bartlett 1999).

Habitats: Low density suburban development, areas peripheral to core urban areas, and small towns, Rockland Hammock.

**Extirpated
year:**

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 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.

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

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