

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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February 2004

The Editor's Den

By Grady Calhoun

The February Forked Tongue features highlights of the January meeting and a recent handout on salmonella published by the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Calendar of Events

3/3 Monthly Meeting at NKU

February Meeting Highlights

We had a good turnout for the February meeting discussing recent legislation in Dayton. There was a group discussion to get members' input on what they thought the rules should be and why. It seemed to be a general consensus that taking an approach of fighting any and all regulations on reptile keeping would not get us very far. Given the current numbers of reptiles, both dangerous and harmless, being maintained in captivity, it seems that at least some regulations will be imposed and some are probably necessary. Some of the key issues surrounding potential legislation usually center on dangers to the public and owners of such animals. The numbers of such animals is also important in considering such legislation. Some statistics regarding these issues are provided below:

- * Each year the US imports 2 million reptiles and exports 9 million. (Humane Society of the United States)
- * There are 377 million pets in the US, and only 290 million people. That's 64 million households with pets for an average of 6 pets per home. (American Pet Product Manufacturers Assn)
- * The pet industry takes in an estimated \$31 billion per year. (2003 est.- APPMA)
- * 3% of all US households own a pet reptile. (American Veterinary Medical Assn)
- * There are an estimated 9 million reptile pets in the US. (APPMA)

Krohn Conservatory Show

On February 21st and 22nd, we put on an educational program at the Krohn Conservatory. By all accounts it was a great success. We had a good display of a variety of reptiles at the program and spoke with a large number of patrons. In addition we had the "Photo with a Snake" event that netted some needed operational funds for the GCHS. We have already been invited back for 2005 and asked to provide two dates!

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 crocodilians please contact Chris Bauer at (513) 424-5818 or Peggy Fille at (513) 528-4452.

Change in Meeting Place

The monthly meetings of the GCHS will be held at the Cincinnati Nature Center beginning with the April 7th meeting. The dates and times for the meetings remain the same, the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm.

Salmonella Information

Here's the latest from the AVMA about salmonella (published in Dec 2003 journal):

ARAV Special Publications

Salmonella Bacteria and Reptiles:

CLIENT EDUCATIONAL HANDOUT

Most, if not all, reptiles carry Salmonella bacteria in their intestinal tract and intermittently or continuously shed these bacteria in their feces. Salmonella bacteria usually do not cause any illness in reptiles, but can cause serious illness in people.

Salmonella bacteria are easily spread from reptiles to humans. Humans may become infected when they place their hands on objects, including food items, that have been in contact with the stool of reptiles, in their mouths. For example, infants have become infected after drinking from bottles of infant formula that became contaminated during preparation. Individuals who prepared the formula had not washed their hands after touching a reptile or because reptiles were allowed to walk on kitchen counters. For Salmonella bacteria to

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spread from reptiles to humans, the bacteria must be ingested. Therefore, simply touching or holding reptiles will not result in spread of bacteria unless something contaminated with reptiles feces or the reptile itself is placed in the mouth. Most Salmonella infections in humans result in a mild, self-limiting illness characterized by diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. However, the infection can spread to the bloodstream, bone marrow or nervous system, leading to severe, and sometimes fatal, illness. Such severe infections are more likely to occur in infants and in individuals whose immune system is compromised (for instance, bone marrow transplant recipients, persons with diabetes mellitus, persons infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, and chemotherapy patients). Unfortunately, Salmonella bacteria cannot be eliminated from the intestinal tract of reptiles. Administration of antibiotics to eliminate these bacteria has been unsuccessful and may result in emergence of Salmonella bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics. Attempt to raise or identify reptiles that do not carry Salmonella bacteria have also been unsuccessful; therefore, bacterial culture of stool samples in an attempt to identify reptiles that are not carrying Salmonella bacteria is not recommended. Fortunately the spread of Salmonella bacteria from reptiles to humans can be easily prevented by using the following routine precautions:

- * Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water after handling reptiles, reptile cages and equipment, and the stool of reptiles.
- * Do not allow reptiles to have access to the kitchen, dining room, or any other area in which food is prepared. Also, do not allow reptiles to have access to bathroom sinks and tubs or to any area where infants are bathed. Consider keeping your reptiles caged or limiting the parts of the house where reptiles are allowed to roam free. Always wash your hands after coming into contact with any area where reptiles are allowed to roam free.
- * Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling reptiles, reptile cages, or reptile equipment. Do not kiss reptiles or share food or drink with them.
- * Do not use the kitchen sink, kitchen counters, bathroom sinks or bathtubs to bathe reptiles or to wash reptile cages, dishes or aquariums. Reptile owners may wish to purchase a plastic basin or tub in which to bathe or swim their

reptiles. Waste water and fecal material should be disposed of in the toilet instead of the bathtub or household sink.

- * The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children less than five years of age avoid contact with reptiles and that households with children less than one year of age not own reptiles. The Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians encourages reptile owners with young children to discuss steps to minimize risks associated with owning reptiles with their reptiles' veterinarian and their physician. Children should be supervised when they are handling reptiles to ensure that they do not place their hands or objects that a reptile has contacted in their mouths. Reptiles should not be kept in child care centers.
- * Immunocompromised persons should avoid contact with reptiles.
- * Follow instructions from your reptile's veterinarian concerning proper diet and environment for your reptile. Healthy reptiles living in proper environments are less likely to shed Salmonella bacteria.

Information in this handout is not meant to discourage reptile ownership. With a few exceptions (for example, infants or immunocompromised individuals), most people have a low risk of acquiring salmonellosis from reptiles, but this risk can be reduced even further by following simple precautions. Reptiles can be safely kept as pets, but reptile owners should be aware of the methods for reducing their risk of acquiring Salmonella bacteria from their reptiles. This handout was developed by the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is intended for informational purposes only; please seek advice from your physician and your reptile's veterinarian if questions or problems occur.

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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
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

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 gcalhoun@seidata.com.

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: Feeder rabbits and rats. Call Rod Surber at (812) 637-0305 or e-mail me at 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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