

# THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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January 2008

## **The Editor's Den**

Happy New Year! The January 2008 *Forked Tongue* features an article from Al Winstel on Horned Frog Care.

## **Calendar of Events**

January 2, 2008 – Monthly meeting featuring an presentation of the reptile and amphibian survey performed at the Cincinnati Nature Center.

February 6, 2008 – Monthly meeting featuring Adam Mann speaking on a 2007 herp survey of a SW Kentucky Habitat.

February 23 and 24 – Educational Program at the Krohn Conservatory.

March 5, 2008 – Monthly meeting featuring Jason Folt speaking on Herping in Arizona

March 15, 2008 – Ohio Amphibian Research and Conservation Conference. See details below.

April 2, 2008 – Monthly Meeting featuring Kristen Wiley of the Kentuck Reptile Zoo speaking on a Timber Rattlesnake Study.

May 7, 2008 – Monthly meeting featuring Beth Cortwright speaking on a 2008 Trip to the Galapagos Islands.

June 4, 2008 – Monthly meeting featuring Jeff Davis Speaking on Central American Herping.

## **A look back and forward**

Although 2007 was probably the very best year of the GCHS, I am confident that 2008 will be even better. 2007 was highlighted by excellent Conservation and Education programs. Thanks to Dean Alessandrini, the conservation committee chair, and Peggy Fille, the education committee

chair, these two programs have achieved great success. Although the winter months are typically not as busy on the educational front as the warmer months, we have booked programs for almost every week of both January and February. We routinely are asked to come back year after year indicating that the job is being done right. Our conservation efforts have been a lot of fun and are being recognized. Dean has been asked to speak at the Ohio Amphibian Research and Conservation Conference in March of this year to illustrate how organizations such as the GCHS can work with state and local agencies in conserving reptiles and amphibians.

We will have plenty of opportunities in 2008. Please contact our committee chairs to get involved.

## **Ohio Amphibian Research and Conservation Conference**

GCHS's own Dean Alessandrini will be one of the featured speakers!

Formerly the Ohio Working Group of the Declining Amphibian Populations Taskforce (DAPTF), this 4th meeting will take place on March 15, 2008 at the Ohio Historical Society, 1982 Velma Avenue (intersection of I-71 and E. 17th Avenue). Directions are given below.

Invited speakers from the Midwest will present findings of recent research and conservation projects involving Ohio's frogs, toads, and salamanders. In addition, we are pleased to announce our keynote speaker, Dr. Jim Bogart, Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, presenting "**Unisexual Ambystomid Salamanders in Ohio.**" If you are interested in learning more about Ohio's amphibians and networking with other herpetologists and naturalists, then be sure to reserve this date and register for this meeting. A limited number of spaces are available for those

**The January Meeting will be Wednesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center**

wishing to present posters relevant to the conference topic.

The Conference will start with setup and registration at 8:30 AM. Paper presentations will commence at 9:00 AM. The auditorium and a display area will be available for oral and poster presentations, respectively. A box lunch will be provided as part of the regular registration fee of \$20 (\$10 for students). Registrations received after February 22, 2008 and on-site registration fees are the same, but with no lunch. The Conference concludes at 5 PM. Please let others know about this conference. We would really like to have a good GCHS showing. See the website <http://www.ohioamphibians.com/meeting/index.html> to register.

### **Lazy Man's Horned Frog Care**

By Al Winstel

I haven't had the pleasure of keeping a horned (pacman) frog since I was 12. I think it was a Columbian (*Ceratophrys calcarata*), but at that time, you were working with wild caught animals rather than the nice clean captive bred we have these days. Anyway, I recently decided it was time to revisit the keeping of the horned frog. I purchased a normally colored ornate horned frog (*Ceratophrys ornata*) at a herp show (Cranwell's horned frog (*Ceratophrys cranwelli*) is also available, as well as some *cranwelli* X *ornata* hybrids and *cornuta* X *cranwelli* hybrids. The Cranwell's also come in an albino form. Apparently ornates differ from Cranwell's in that the former are greener, and have a smaller head and shorter horns.

My first thought was, "How am I going to house this thing?" Actually I thought about this before the purchase and already had a set up in place. I considered a gravel substrate (possibility of swallowing the gravel and dying), a mud substrate (frog burrows in, is never seen, and tank is really hard to clean), paper towels with a small amount of water in the tank which is tilted to provide a dry area at one end), and even a furniture foam substrate (easy to shape, clean by rinsing out, but pretty ugly). Finally I decided on

a 2 part substrate: "Bed-A-Beast" shredded coconut husk bedding over a piece of fiberglass screening. Under the screening is a layer of "Ammo-carb," the stuff they use in fish tank filters to absorb ammonia. The tank is a 2.5 gallon all glass with a flexible black plastic bottom. A while ago, I had drilled some small (eighth inch or so) holes in one end of the bottom.

The reasoning behind this set up is that it allows me to maintain some landscaping without having to tear the whole tank down frequently in order to provide the frog the clean conditions that it's highly permeable skin requires. Routine cleaning consist of dumping de-chlorinated water (1-2 pints) over the entire tank substrate. This is done every couple of days or so. The tank is sitting on a piece of wood placed into a 3 gallon plastic critter keeper. Water runs through the holes in the tank bottom and is collected in the critter keeper which is then emptied and rinsed into the herp room sink. So far this approach seems to be working pretty well. At first I tried it without the screening, but the frog dug down all the way to the ammo-carb and I was afraid that it would be ingested during feeding (mostly dusted crickets with an occasional pinky mouse). The screening fixed this problem. The other thing I am running into is that the wood absorbs the dirty water, so I need to find a non-absorptive material like brick or plastic to hold the cage up above the floor of the critter keeper.

I imagine ultimately I will have to replace substrate, but so far I have not noticed any odor apart from the coconut husks.

Probably a similar system could be used successfully with some other captive amphibians.

### **Interesting Information**

I was doing some internet surfing to find out how to build a nest box for Screech Owls. I frequently came across references that the owls will often place live blind snakes into their nesting sites. Most other animals are killed prior to being brought to the nest site. It is speculated that the blind snakes eat insect pests in the nest site. Pretty cool huh?

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### 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
1/½ 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.**

### Requirements for Submitting Articles to the Forked Tongue

Articles can be submitted via CD or hard copy to Editor, GCHS 11470 Gatch Hill Road, Aurora, IN 47001.

Articles may be e-mailed to Grady Calhoun at [gradycalhoun@embarqmail.com](mailto:gradycalhoun@embarqmail.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 editor's possession no later than the meeting previous to the publication.

### Classifieds

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
Sergeant-at-Arms	Bruce Fille	(513) 528-4452	Education Committee Chairman		
Advisor	Vacant		Peggy Fille		(513) 528-4452
Secretary	Kyle Becker	(513) 831-4898			

## 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	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$25.00
Family	\$20.00	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	(513) 326-2368

P.O. Box 14783  
Cincinnati, OH 45250

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