

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXX, No. XI

www.cincyherps.com

November 2005

The Editor's Den

We need articles! The November Forked Tongue features an update on my Sulcata breeding project, a new weapon for getting finicky snakes to eat, and a wonderful article about one of our GCHS members.

Calendar of Events

11/25&26/05 GCHS Reptile show at the Cincinnati Museum Center.

12/07/05 Holiday Meeting at Ryan's Steakhouse in Erlanger KY.

Annual Holiday Meeting

This also has become a tradition. We will have our meeting at the Ryan's Steakhouse in Erlanger, KY on our regularly scheduled meeting night. We will have a private room in the back of the restaurant. The cost is \$8.59 per adult (defined as 13 and over) plus drink (\$1.39) plus 15% gratuity. This adds up to \$11.50 per adult. Kids under 3 are free. Kids 4-12 are 50 cents per year of age. Each person pays as they walk in. It is an all-you-can-eat buffet with a wide variety of foods, salad and desserts. You can arrive at 6:30 and get your food. The program, featuring Paul Krusling, will focus on our efforts to study reptile and amphibian populations in Hamilton County.

Sulcata Egg-laying update

by Grady Calhoun

One of the previous issues of the Forked Tongue included information on the egg laying activity of one of my sulcatas. As of today she has laid three clutches of eggs this year. All were roughly 32 days apart. The clutches had 10, 9 and 10 each. The last clutch was laid at the beginning of September. All of the eggs in the first two clutches appeared to be infertile. I incubated them for several weeks and there were no indications of change. I opened them up and there were no signs of vascularization or blood. The third clutch does contain eggs that are showing at least some signs of change. "Dark white", if that makes sense, disks are forming on the tops of several of the eggs. I

have read that these calcium disks indicate that the eggs are fertile. I'll keep them incubating to make sure. In the past week, the first week of November, the female has been very restless again. She is digging frantically when outside. This is more than 60 days since the last clutch was laid. I placed her in her favorite nest hole, the one where all three previous clutches were laid, and she deepened the hole, backed into it, but no eggs. I took her to the vet, Dr. Steve Hubbard, in Bright, Indiana, to get x-rays. Sure enough there are 12 more eggs in there. All appear to be of normal size and shape. The challenge is to be able to provide a suitable egg-laying site indoors. I currently keep this female and a male, both less than 25 pounds each, in an enclosure that is ten feet long by four feet wide and about two feet high. Some may argue that this is too small for such active animals but indoor space is limited. I am having no problem maintaining general area temperatures above 70 degrees Fahrenheit with hot spots over 90. This set-up, however is not conducive to egg-laying because there is no deep substrate. It is looking like we may have to induce labor. I'll keep you up to date.

New Weapon in War to Feed Finicky Baby Snakes

by Grady Calhoun

We have published multiple articles on feeding finicky baby snakes over the years. I will keep this one brief. Although it may not be news to some of you, I discovered that the animals used to scent pinkies don't have to be from the snake's normal diet to work. I have bred gray-banded king snakes for years and have come to accept the fact that most of them will go several months before they eat unscented pinkies. My last clutch of gray bands yielded one that ate right away and three that have absolutely no appetite for any of my offerings. I have tried the typical: live pinky, slit head pinky, and anole scented pinky to no avail. I recently acquired a pair of tri-colored hognose snake hatchlings that consist of one who has eaten 4 live pinkies in 7 days (that's quite a lot for a 5 inch snake!) and one that refuses to eat. My research of these snakes suggests that fish may be taken or used to scent pinkies. I tried it and it didn't work, at least not on the hog nose. I tossed

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the fish flavored pinky in with one of my anorexic gray bands and it was promptly gobbled up. The next day I tried it on my other two with a fifty percent success rate. It took a long time to get to my point, but this is what surprised me. I really doubt that gray banded king snakes have the opportunity to eat fish in the wild. I just wanted to share that because it's really frustrating to have snakes that won't eat.

GCHS Member Receives Academic Accolades

The November 8, 2005 edition of the Kentucky Post featured an article on our own Marc Frevola.

Reprinted with permission below:

Maybe it's the snakes. Or maybe the race cars made out of balloons. Or maybe it's that the seventh graders in Marc Frevola's science class are just so interested in what they're doing.

Whatever the reason, Frevola's students consistently earn the top scores in Northern Kentucky on state science tests.

"Right now I have half a dozen snakes and turtles, a leopard gecko, and a tank full of hissing cockroaches from Madagascar – cool stuff like that," he said.

"The kids really love the hands-on interaction with nature," Frevola said. "I think it keeps them into the class even if we're not talking about animals at the time." During school breaks, Frevola lets students take animals home as long as they have a note from a parent. "I usually don't let them take the snakes because parents are a little wary about that," he added.

One of Frevola's classroom projects involves four corn snakes born this summer. Each one is being fed different amounts to see how feeding affects its growth, and each week the students are charting the snakes' length and weight.

Whether they know it or not, they are learning how to experiment and collect data.

A resident of Edgewood, Frevola was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. "I remember reading books about kids walking to school through fields and forests where they'd find snakes and other cool things," said Frevola. "I lived in a big apartment building, so this was just unbelievable to me." Frevola received a degree in wildlife management and worked for the U.S. Forest Service during summers. He got a teaching degree in biology, and has been at Ludlow Middle School for his entire 18 year career.

"I still like what I do," said Frevola, who is certified to go into administration if he wants, but prefers being in the classroom.

"There's something new every day. I'm like a big middle school kid myself, I guess – so if the subject's boring to me, I don't want to teach it."

Frevola said their success is a collaborative effort.

"It's not just me by any means," he said. "Ludlow Middle is a great school. There's great parental and administrative support. Anything you need, you can get if you ask. The kids come to seventh grade so well prepared because of the way the fifth and sixth grade teachers teach – and the team I work with is outstanding. I'm just a finisher really."

Frevola's typical day?

"Hit the ground running and don't stop," Frevola laughed. "I always start off every class with review. I do it constantly. The kids learn a lot of things during the year, but they just forget so easily."

"I try to get as many hands-on activities as I can to keep them interested. Recently, we talked about Newton's Third Law, so we made little balloon cars and raced them down the hall to demonstrate equal and opposite reactions."

The next day, he and his students brainstormed problems – why something did or did not work.

Barbara Martin, of Villa Hills, has worked with Frevola as a fellow teacher, as a former curriculum director, and now as assistant superintendent of the Ludlow Independent School District.

"He's really done some detailed analysis to be certain he's doing everything he can so his kids are learning and that they're successful. He's made it a personal goal."

"I've been in Marc's classroom," Martin added. "From the moment his students get into the classroom, he keeps them so engaged in the material that they suddenly look up from their work and there's the bell."

Frevola's students learn astronomy their first quarter, geology, second quarter, ecology, third, and then meteorology. At the end of each unit, students have to come up with a project to demonstrate that they've learned a specific concept. "What students get out of my classroom is really two-fold," Frevola said. "I think they go on to the next year looking forward to science saying 'Hey, science is cool; I liked this; this was fun.' The second thing is that they come out of the class with a real appreciation of nature because of the animals. There are so many kids in eth beginning who are terrified of snakes, and by the end of the year they're holding and playing with them. I think that's great."

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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
1/2 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.

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 demaled publication.

Classifieds

For Sale: 0.0.1 captive bred and born **Northern** Blue Tongue skink. Born 7/2/05. Eating great! Comes from dynamite parents. \$100 Call Grady at (812) 926-1206.

For Sale: 2.0 Captive bred and hatched grey-banded king snakes, Blair's phase. \$75 each. Hatched 7/19/05. Eating live pinkies. Call Grady at (812) 926-1206.

Rats and Mice for sale. Reasonable price. Call Jesse or Tom (513) 876-0579.

For Sale: 3.3 Normal Adult Okeetee Corn Snakes \$50 each. 2.1 Banana California Kingsnakes, adult proven breeders, \$100 each. 0.0.10 Cornsnake hatchlings of last year, \$30 for amelanistic, \$25 for normals. Call Mike Matthews at (513) 734-1336.

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)

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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 Veterinary Clinic	(513) 576-0131.

P.O. Box 14783
Cincinnati, OH 45250

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