

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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November 2006

The Editor's Den

The November Forked Tongue Features an article on culturing crickets.

Calendar of Events

February 7, 2007 – Monthly meeting featuring Phil Peak and Will Bird speaking on Snake Conservation in Kentucky.

March 7, 2007 – Monthly meeting featuring Jim Harrison and Kristen Wiley speaking on venom extraction.

April 4, 2007 – Monthly meeting featuring Jeff Davis Speaking on the Eastern Massasauga.

May 2, 2007 – Monthly Meeting featuring Marc Frevols Speaking on Using Herps for Learning in the Classroom.

Where are we going?

This passed Saturday, several members of the GCHS got together for a road trip to the Columbus Swap meet. We ran into the president of the newly formed Columbus Herp Society. We spoke with him for quite a while regarding the status of the new society and some of the difficulties that they are facing. It really made me proud of what we have achieved at the GCHS. It sounds corny but we really have come a long way in the past five years or so. I think we take a lot of what we have for granted. This new society is at odds with their local zoo. We were told that the Columbus Zoo does not condone reptile keeping of any kind therefore any society that involves reptile keepers is obviously bad. In contrast we have a good relationship with our zoo. We are frequently recommended to individuals who call the zoo with questions regarding local or exotic species and for reptile rescue. Their monthly meeting attendance is 5 to 15 people. Remember when we were getting that type of crowd at NKU? It was a very, very long time ago. Now our minimum is around twenty.

They asked us for tips on being more successful. When I thought about it, it was clear that we are so very active in the community. We are holding many, many educational programs every year, probably close to one per week. This effort literally touches thousands of people. It projects both us and the animals we love in a positive light. We are routinely asked back for repeat presentations indicating that our efforts are well received.

On the conservation front, we have been more active than I can ever remember. Our efforts range from the surveys at near Lunken Airport, at the Cincinnati Nature Center and in Indian Hill to being actively involved in saving habitat. We are not viewed strictly as a group of pet owners but more as group of individuals with diverse interests including captive maintenance and reproduction to education to conservation.

OK. With all that said we should be content, right? Well, we should be proud of where we are but we need to keep going. We are going to schedule an executive meeting at the February Meeting for sometime in February. We used to have these meetings every month but I have gotten lax in scheduling them. They are typically held in a mutually agreed upon location, like a members house or a local restaurant. These meetings are open to all members of the GCHS. We would really like to hear what ideas you have for making the GCHS even better. I would really like to see everyone get involved with something. If there is something you would like to see us do or see us do differently, make a suggestion! Topics that I would like to address include increasing membership and attendance and getting more people involved in the things we already do.

Newsletter Legacy

When I became president, for the second time, I was given two boxes of relatively well organized *Forked Tongues*. We have the vast majority of all of the issues ever published. Of course they're hard copies. With the help of GCHS Member Whitney Willis, we are going to capture all of the past issues of Forked

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Tongues electronically. Old issues will have to be scanned and saved to a CD. We will be periodically asking if anyone has issues that we have not been able to locate. My first request will probably be the easiest. I am looking for June and July of 2002. If anyone has these I would really appreciate a copy. Either mail me a copy or the original (I'll return the original) or better yet, scan it as a pdf file and e-mail it to me at gradycalhoun@earthlink.net.

How To Culture Crickets

by Sharon David, L.W.R., Canada

Setting up the Culturing Area

To start, you can use an aquarium or garbage pail (aquarium for small cultures, garbage can for big ones). Cut out a large section of the lid and add aluminum mosquito netting to the cut out section so as to allow for adequate circulation (don't use fiberglass netting as they will chew right through it).

It is best to have 2 cultures going so you can rotate the adults and young, since the containers will need to be cleaned out every 4-5 months. Remember they can jump quite well so a tall container is much better than a shorter one. Use cardboard egg cartons (not styrofoam) to line the container, about 3 rows high. They will need a water source, which can be either a closed yogurt container, sandwich box with a lid, etc. that has a hole poked through the top, with a piece of cheesecloth threaded through to the bottom to act as a wick for the liquid (container filled with water). You will want to check your water source regularly until you determine how often you need to add water. The crickets will suck up the water from the cheesecloth (and unfortunately often lay eggs there as well.)

You can also purchase insect waterers, which are similar to the duck/chicken self-waterers, but have a piece of foam around the bottom acting as the wick. These are costly, and I've found the yogurt container works just as well.

Feeding

For food, we have used all kinds of stuff, but the main foundation is rabbit chow (or similar well balanced rodent food, but mouse/rat chow is too hard and more difficult to feed, so I suggest rabbit chow instead), or dry dog food or cat food that is relatively small, plus greens in the form of lettuce, cabbage (not really recommended since it stinks as it decays!), or carrots. The crickets will consume these quite quickly, but only place in as much as they will eat in one to two days, since they will start to rot or dry up.

Breeding

If you have enough males and females, you can start getting them to breed quite readily. Remember that the higher the temperature, the faster they will reproduce. A temperature around 75-80 degrees F is best, and a 60-100 W light bulb attached to the lid of the aquarium or garbage can works fine).

Males are easily told apart from the females as they sing by scraping their wings together. Females have an ovipositor at the base of their abdomen that looks like a long black stick which separates into 4 pieces when the egg is being expelled.

The easiest thing we used for a breeding dish were sandwich boxes that are about 2 inches tall. They are filled with soil (preferably sterile bought kind, since you don't want other little bugs hatching out). Keep the soil moist, but not water laden. Check this regularly so it doesn't dry out since the eggs will dry out as well. Fill the soil with 1/2 inch of the top, but not more. Place the lid over top sideways so there is a space for the crickets to enter and leave. Place the egg layer box as far from the light/heat source as you can so the soil doesn't dry out fast.

Working with the eggs/larvae

You can check to see if females are under the lid and this will be an indication that they are laying. You can also move the soil around with a toothpick and check for eggs which look pretty much like maggot eggs (small oval whitish in color). Remove the egg container every 3 weeks or less often if you are getting them hatching out of there. Replace with a fresh dish, and place the egg dish into the hatching container (can be nothing more than a Rubbermaid container, or even into the garbage can or second aquarium.) Keep the young there for a couple of weeks or remove as you cull. The young crickets need similar food as the adults, but because their mouth parts are not full size, you should grind up their food into powder form so they can eat it easily.

Using the crickets

Once you start getting your colony going, you will figure out what your turnover rate is and how often you can cull. I have used killed crickets for food for many small birds (just place them in the freezer and they will slowly cool down, their metabolism will lower until they are asleep, and then they will die from the cold (yes, this is a humane way of doing this.) I have used newly hatched crickets (collecting them every day or two) to feed to hummingbirds and also to warblers which just loved them! Good luck!

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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
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 editor's possession no later than the meeting previous to the publication.

Classifieds

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

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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