

# THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXXIII, No. IX

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September 2008

## The Editor's Den

The September Forked Tongue includes an article on the False Gharial as it appears on [www.flmnh.ufl.edu/cnhc/csp\\_tsch.htm](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/cnhc/csp_tsch.htm).

## Calendar of Events

**October 1** – Monthly Meeting featuring John Agnew speaking on “Hunting the False Gharial”

**November 5** – Monthly Meeting featuring Will Bird and Phil Peak speaking on Kentucky Field Herpetology

**December 3** – Monthly Meeting featuring Chris Bauer speaking on African Herping. This will be our holiday Meeting Details to come.

## Elections

As required by our constitution, a slate of officers willing to run for office was presented. Those include; for president, Matt Fille; for Vice President, Chris Bauer; for Treasurer, Laurie Becker; for Sergeant-at-Arms, Bill Creasey; for Secretary, Brittany Gibson

Nominations from the floor were solicited but none were made. Since all elected offices will be uncontested, there will be no voting. Positions of editor, education committee chair, and conservation committee chair are president appointments.

## Thank You

This may be the last newsletter that I have complete control of, so I want to take some time to brag a little about what we've done, where we are and where we should try to go. Dean, Peggy, Bruce and I took office six years ago. The president at the time called me and said I might want to come to the meeting to discuss dissolution of the GCHS. I had been president some time prior to this and really didn't want to see the society dissolve. All of us made a commitment to save the society and make it better. At that time the meetings were being held at Northern Kentucky University. We averaged less than 10 people at meetings, newsletters were sporadic at best, and our speakers few and far between. Some may have thought it wasn't save-able or even worth the effort.

Since that time we have grown to one of the most active and successful herpetological societies in the midwest and maybe even the country.

- We have a top notch website thanks to Tom Nagel and others. Ours' stacks up well to any of them out there.
- We have consistently had great speakers thanks to Dean
- We have an extremely busy and profitable education program thanks to Peggy.
- Our educational displays are professional and well stocked with a large variety of animals.
- We are now a well known conservation entity in the Midwest.

In the past couple of years I have spoken with officers of other herpetological societies and without exception have come away from those encounters knowing that the GCHS is in better shape than the other societies. So I really just want to say thank you. Thank you to the entire Fille family for their tireless efforts in the education program. Without their support our income and programs would be only a fraction of what we have. Thank you to Dean, who has consistently scheduled quality speakers and has established the GCHS as a bona fide conservation organization. We don't just talk about conservation, we do it. Thank you to all the members who supported both the educational programs and the conservation programs.

Lastly, thank you to the new officers. You really have a tough act to follow. I hope that you all have the same love for the GCHS that I do. I believe that one of the primary reasons for our success is the diversity of our membership and activities. We have plenty of members who are active in herpetoculture to cater to the pet owners and we also are actively involved in hard core conservation activities. Keep it growing!

**The October meeting will be Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Cincinnati Nature Center**

**The False Gharial** *Tomistoma schlegelii* (MÜLLER, 1838)



**COMMON NAMES:**

Tomistoma, False gharial, False gavial, Falso gavial malayo, Faux gavial malais, Baja (Baya) Kanulong, Bediai Sampit, Boeaja, Buaja, Buaya, Buaya Jolong-Jolong, Buaya Sa(m)pit, Buaya Senjulong, Buaya Sepit, Jolong-Jolong, Malay gavial, Malay gharial, Malayan fish crocodile, Senjulong

There is still doubt over whether this species should belong with *Gavialis gangeticus* in the family Gavialidae. The most recent fossil and morphological evidence suggests a closer relationship with the Crocodylidae, but there is strong biochemical & immunological evidence which disagrees with this.

**NAME ETYMOLOGY:**

- *Tomistoma* means "sharp mouth", derived from *tomos* (Greek for "cutting" or "sharp") + *stoma* (Greek for "mouth"), referring to the slender shape of the jaws
- *schlegelii* means "of Schlegel", referring to the Dutch zoologist H. Schlegel (1804-1884) who is credited with its discovery

**DISTRIBUTION:** Indonesia (Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java, possibly Sulawesi), Malaysia (Malay Peninsula, Borneo), possibly Vietnam, possibly extirpated in Thailand (none seen since 1970)

**HABITAT:** Freshwater lakes, rivers & swamps. Reported to use burrows. Seems to prefer vegetative cover, floating mats of vegetation and slow-moving waterways. Very little known, generally.

**STATUS:**

CITES: Appendix I

IUCN Red List: EN C1 (ENDANGERED)

Estimated wild population: under 2,500

*Summary:* Still relatively poor survey data, generally widespread but depleted with ongoing threatening processes

**APPEARANCE:**



Characteristic slender snout, not dissimilar to the gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), from which it derives its common name. Generally dark/chocolate brown as a juvenile, with black banding on tail and body. Dark blotches on jaws. Much juvenile colouration retained in the adult. Maximum size up to 5m (16 feet), although this species may potentially grow larger.

**DIET:** Elongated snout specialised for catching fish, but is actually a more generalist predator than this would suggest. Stomach content analysis from animals in Malaysia show evidence of fish, insects, crustaceans and mammals (Bezuijen *pers comm.*). It has been reported in the past to take animals as large as macaque monkeys.

**BREEDING:** Females sexually mature at 2.5 to 3m. Mound-builder (usually dry leaves or peat) of up to 0.6m (24 inches) in height. 20 to 60 large eggs laid in clutch. Egg length around 100mm. Incubation period around 90 days. The hatchlings receive no parental care, and mortality is consequently high - from predators such as wild pigs and reptiles.

**CONSERVATION:** Another poorly-studied species. Few surveys done, but those completed reveal very low populations in fragmented habitat. Enforcement of protected areas is limited. Habitat destruction (cultivation, dams & flood mitigation), drowning in fishing nets, overfishing of food resources and, to a limited extent, the skin trade threaten the species. While captive breeding has been initiated in Europe and the US, and captive animals are present at several centres around the world, conservation and management plans for wild populations are still lacking. Surveys are still being undertaken to assess current distribution in Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries.

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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 \$5 per issue; ad charges for items more than 7 lines long are as follows:

- Business card size**      \$5 per issue
  - 1/4 page**                    \$10 per issue
  - 1/2 page**                    \$15 per issue
  - Full page inserts\***      \$15 per issue
- \*120 sheets per issue provided by advertiser

**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 by Dr. Dahlhausen at the Avian and Exotic Medical Center, 9951 Springfield Pike, Cincinnati, Ohio 513-576-1990

(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)

	<p>Steven E. Hubbard, D.V.M.          John Weinger D.V.M.          Nicole Waidelich D.V.M.          John Gatens D.V.M.          Justin Calhoun, D.V.M.</p>	
<p><b>Bright Veterinary Clinic</b>          24505 Stateline Road          Lawrenceburg, IN 47025          For Appointment Call:          (812) 637-1345</p>	<p><b>Dearborn Co. Animal Clinic</b>          44 Doughty Road          Lawrenceburg, IN 47025          For Appointment Call:          (812) 537-3545</p>	

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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) 576-1990

P.O. Box 14783  
Cincinnati, OH 45250

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