KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER NO. 101

AUGUST 1995

ANNOUNCEMENTS

22ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND CALL FOR PAPERS.

The 22nd annual meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society will be held November 4-5, 1995, in Down's Auditorium in the University of Kansas Natural History Museum in Lawrence, Kansas (see map on following page). Registration and coffee will begin at 8:30 Saturday morning, the meeting will begin at 9:30. Sunday morning sessions will begin at 9:30, and the meeting will adjourn at noon. At this time, we are issuing a call for papers from those interested in speaking at the meeting. All submissions are welcome. Send a title and short abstract of your paper to David Reber, 1097 E 1400 Rd., Lawrence, KS 66046. Please indicate what, if any, audio-visual equipment you will need. The deadline for submitted papers is October 1, 1995.

We would also like to issue a final call for nominations for the Gloyd-Taylor Scholarship. Any KHS member conducting herpetological research or any person conducting research on Kansas herps may be nominated. At this time, we have received NO nominations, so get busy! Send nominations to David Reber at the above address.

If you have some interesting (and legally acquired) live herps, we encourage you to bring them for the live herp exhibit. The herp exhibit is an opportunity for all to see a variety of animals we don't see everyday, or perhaps have never seen. It also provides an opportunity for photography. Wildlife photographers Joe and Suzanne Collins will be on hand to provide photographic coaching. Those of you who have a collection of slides may wish to bring your ten best for the free-for-all slide show Saturday afternoon.

The social and auction will begin at 7:00 PM Saturday evening (location will be announced at the meeting), and will be led by auctioneer Joe Collins. Please remember to bring an item or two to donate to the auction (as always, no live herps or items made from previously live herps). This is KHS's primary fund raiser and as such allows KHS to accomplish many of it's goals while keeping dues low. If you wish, you may send items in advance to the Rebers' or Collins'.

There are many motels/hotels in Lawrence to choose from. Some of these and their rates for single rooms are as follows:

Super 8 Motel
515 McDonald
842-5721
$40.88 +tax

Travelodge Motel
801 Iowa
842-5100
$38.00 +tax

Best Western
730 Iowa
841-6500
$47.95 +tax

Virginia Inn
2907 W 6th
843-6611
$36.95 +tax

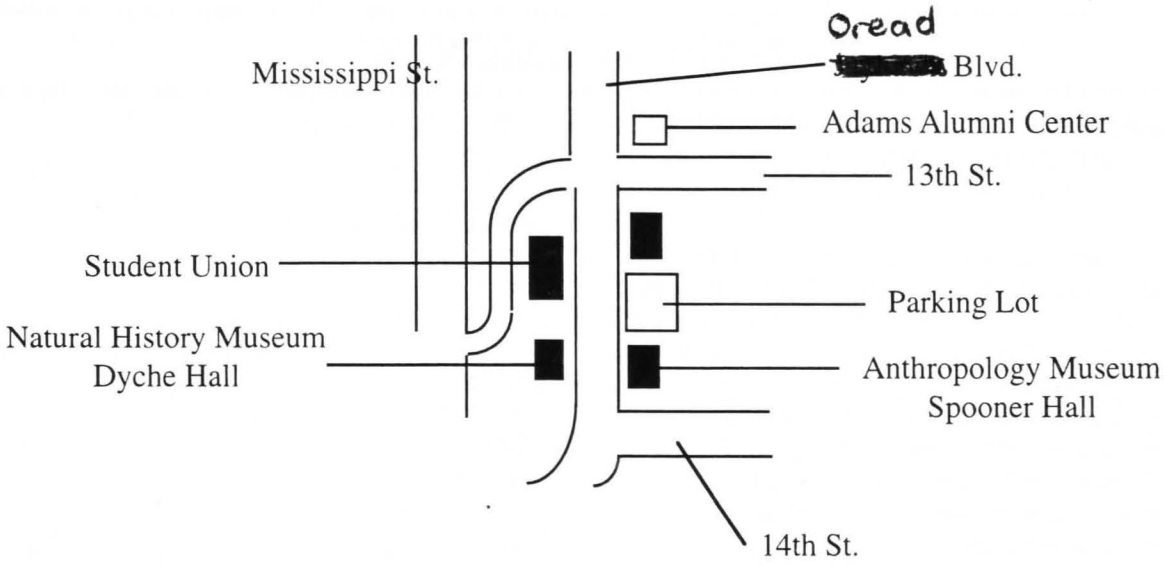
Westminster Inn
2525 W 6th
841-8410
$36.00 + tax

Hope to see you on November 4th.

—David Reber

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE

Krieger Publishing announces the following new titles: *Reptiles and Amphibian Variants: Colors, Patterns, and Scales* by H. Bernard Bechtel and *Coral Snakes of the Americas: Biology, Identification, and Venoms* by Janis A. Roze. The former tome is 224 pp., with 223 color photos and is available for $64.50. The latter volume will be 500+ pp., with eight tables, 38 field maps, 49 pattern layouts, and 63 color photos. It will be available in 1996 for approximately $95. Orders received before 1 December 1995 will receive a 25% discount and payment will not be due until a proforma invoice is rendered. In addition, Krieger is reprinting the classic titles *Snakes and Snake Hunting* and *The Keeper and the Kept* by Karl Kauffeld. Both volumes list for $29.95 and include Retrospective sections by Robert T. Zappalorti. For more information, write to Krieger Publishing Co., PO Box 9542, Melbourne, FL 32902-9542 or call (407)727-7270 to order directly.



Directions and Map for Annual Meeting.

The Natural History Museum is located on east campus. If you are taking I-70 (Kansas Turnpike), the easiest way to get to the Museum is to exit at the West Lawrence exit and proceed due south to 9th Street. Turn left at 9th and head east to Indiana Street (one block E of Mississippi, which is the third stoplight). Turn right at Indiana and go to the top of the hill. You will have to turn left and then take an immediate right. The Museum will be within 1 $^1/_2$ blocks on your right. The campus is open on weekends and there is no charge for parking. Those coming by other routes are left to their own devices, as there are several different routes to KU, none of which are easy to describe and any attempt here to explain those routes will probably lead to hopeless confusion. Basically, KU is the largest visible landmark in Lawrence and can be seen from several miles away. Let your eyes be your pilot and proceed to east campus and you should be able to easily find the Museum.

KHS BUSINESS

KHS TO MEET AT KANOPOLIS LAKE

The fall KHS field trip will be held Saturday and Sunday, 30 September and 1 October 1995. The meeting and camp site will be the Rock Wall camping area located on the east side of Kanopolis Lake. Running water and clean restrooms are located near the camping area. Signs will be up after 7:00 PM Friday evening the 29th of September to assist members and their friends as they search for the site. CB channel 4 will be monitored for those with CB radios.

Kanopolis Lake is located in Ellsworth County which is southwest of Salina. The entrance to the east side of the lake is about six miles south of the intersection of Kansas highways 140 and 141. This is about 0.75 miles northwest of the dam on highway 141.

Members using county maps can locate the camping area by finding the point where sections 16, 17, 20, & 21 of T16S, R6W in Ellsworth County come together. Camping sites are in that general area. Some county maps do not show all of the roads around the lake, and some of the maps indicated roads are gravel when in fact they are paved. The Rock Wall area is marked with a sign.

Motels are available in Lindsborg for those not wishing to camp. Lindsborg is located about 25 miles southeast of the camping area. Food, fuel, and other supplies are also available in Lindsborg as well as some of the other smaller towns near Kanopolis Lake.

Kanopolis Lake is located in the Smoky Hills. A diversity of amphibians and reptiles can be found in the area, as well as many other interesting plant and animal species. Mark the last day of September and the first day of October on your calendars, and plan to join the KHS for an enjoyable fall week-end at Kanopolis Lake.

More information can be obtained by contacting Larry L. Miller, KHS Field Trip Chairperson, 840 S.W. 97th Street, Wakarusa, KS 66546. Phone 913-836-2119.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Nominations for the KHS Executive Council are as follows: President-Elect — Daren Riedle, Emporia and Karen Graham, Wichita. Daren is a graduate student at Emporia State University and has been quite active in KHS affairs for several years. He has published several original papers in the KHS Newsletter and is a KHS Gloyd/Taylor scholar. Karen is supervisor at the Sedgwick County Zoo herpetarium and has campaigned against the Sharon Springs rattlesnake hunt. Karen Toepfer is running unopposed as KHS Secretary/Treasurer. Election of officers will be held at the KHS Annual Meeting in November.

KHS Nominating Committee
Alan Volkmann, chairman
David Edds

THE CONTINUING TALE OF THE KHS LOGO

The KHS Executive Council has decided to extend the period for submissions for a KHS logo for one last time. Although we have received a few potential logos, we would like to get a couple more before the Annual Meeting. The Council will decide prior to the meeting which logos appear to appropriate and they will then be presented to the membership at the meeting for a final vote. Please submit your entries to me at the address listed in the inside front cover of this issue. Remember, the winning logo will receive a $175 cash prize, courtesy of Joe and Suzanne Collins.

— EMR

ARCHIVIST WANTED

KHS is looking for someone who is willing to maintain and catalog various historic KHS materials and files which have accumulated over the past two decades. At present, these materials are in several locations and the KHS Executive Council has decided to have all these materials in one central location. Anyone interested in storing and maintaining this material should contact KHS President David Reber at the address listed on the inside front cover of this issue.

KHS ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

The 1996 Annual Meetings of the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles and Herpetologist's League will be held on the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence in late July of that year. The organizers of this meeting have requested assistance by KHS and its membership in putting together a live animal exhibit of native Kansas herps, as we did in 1977. If possible, we would like to have examples of Kansas specimens of every known species of Kansas amphibian and reptile on hand. With the exception of possibly two species, this should be possible. Anyone who would like to assist in this effort, should contact Eric Rundquist at the address and phone number

listed in this issue's inside front cover for further information. In addition, the local committee is also looking for volunteers to assist them in actually running the meeting. Anyone from KHS who would like to volunteer, should contact either Dr. William Duellman or Dr. Linda Trueb at the Division of Herptology, Natural History Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045. These are the premier herp meetings of the year and a great way to meet others in your field and gain new and valuable information.

KHS CONTRIBUTION RECOGNIZED

The following certificate was presented to KHS in appreciation of several members' efforts with regard to rattlesnake roundups. In 1994, KHS member and Sedgwick County Zoo Herpetarium supervisor Karen Graham, assisted by KHS members Randall S. Reiserer, Alison Reber, and David Reber, put together a booth during the Zoo's Conservation Day celebration. The group voiced the Zoo's opposition to rattlesnake roundups.

In July of 1995, the KHS Executive Council voted to continue support of the Sedgwick County Zoo by contributing $100 to help fund a permanent display of the Zoo's opposition to rattlesnake roundups. KHS members Joe and Suzanne Collins graciously agreed to match funds with KHS, and the Natural Heritage Center, Inc., pledged support of $50, for a total contribution of $250.

KHS BRINGS YOU GREAT NEWS OF THE WORLD

REPTILE POACHER PLEADS GUILTY

A New Jersey man arrested early Friday morning by Kansas Wildlife and Parks officials for poaching snakes in Bourbon County pleaded guilty to three counts of a five-count indictment Friday afternoon in Bourbon County District Court.

Rudy Arthur Komarek, 66, pleaded guilty to hunting without a license and two counts of taking and dealing in wildlife. District Magistrate Judge Sam Mason ordered Komarek to pay fines and court costs of $252 and catch the next bus out of Fort Scott.

The convictions put the lid on a three-month undercover operation between the KDWP and the Bourbon County Attorney's office. According to Bourbon County Attorney John Swarts, the sting was instigated when Komarek called a University of Kansas professor in early March and attempted to entice him to help Komarek find endangered [sic] Timber Rattlesnakes.

The professor, Swarts said, informed the KDWP of Komarek's plan to come to Kansas and poach snakes and officers from that agency posed as guides for Komarek, showing him areas where rattlesnakes and other reptiles gathered.

KDWP Conservation Officer Doug Whiteaker said he was pleased with the result of the sting operation.

"We were satisfied with the outcome of it. We wanted to send a message that he wasn't going to be able tocome to Kansas and poach snakes, and I think the convictions did that," he said.

Whiteaker added that while talking to undercover investigators, who videotaped snake hunts at Komarek's request, the poacher repeatedly talked about poaching, his past criminal history, and the fact that he had been arrested and served time for trafficking in reptiles.

"I can't begin to describe the ego (Komarek had). He took pride in the fact that he had been caught (for dealing in reptiles)," Whiteaker said.

Swarts said that a search of outstanding warrants showed Komarek is presently wanted in New York for illegally dealing in reptiles. Swarts said, however, that the charge is a misdemeanor and that Komarek could not be extradited to the state to face charges.

"He's done four months of federal time for smuggling reptiles," a source close to the investigation said. "He was also arrested in New York for attempted manslaughter for placing rattlesnakes in a man's home and mailbox."

Komarek was arrested by KDWP and Fort Scott police officers at 4:22 a.m. ... while waiting for a bus. After obtaining a search warrant ..., officers searched a canvas bag in Komarek's possession and found a Black Rat Snake, a Yellowbelly Racer, and a Timber Rattlesnake. Timber Rattlesnakes are a protected species in Kansas.

Whiteaker said he believed Komarek was going to take the snakes to the east and sell them.

"Right now reptiles are a big fad on the east coast," he said.

— Fort Scott Tribune, 30 May 1995
(submitted by Suzanne L. Collins, Lawrence)

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

You're enjoying a lakeside stroll when you look down and, YIKES! There, basking in the warm morning sun, is a long, heavy-bodied brown snake.

Every nerve in your body screams, "Red alert," as your mind mimics the screeching sounds from the shower scene in "Psycho."

It's a fight-or-flight situation, and many people, especially those without a hoe in their hand, choose flight rather than take on the deadly "water moccasin."

Now for the truth. Those large and sometimes contentious snakes that inhabit all of Kansas are probably nothing more than harmless water snakes.

They are probably NOT the [venomous] Western Cottonmouth — commonly called a water moccasin — which is sometimes found in Cherokee County at the upper end of the Ozark Plateau in far southeastern Kansas.

So why have many Kansans come to believe that cottonmouths inhabit virtually every waterway in our state? It's a notion that has led to the untimely demise of many a slow-moving water snake.

Larry Zuckerman, an aquatic ecologist for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks [and KHS member], suggests that water snakes may have gotten a bum rap from Kansans with Oklahoma backgrounds, Kansans who live along the Oklahoma border, or Kansans with relatives in Oklahoma, where Western Cottonmouths are commonly found.

There may be other theories behind the belief that Kansas is home to water moccasins, but one thing is certain — it is the most widely held misconception concerning reptiles in Kansas.

Joe Collins, a zoologist with the Natural History Museum at the University of Kansas, says people assume that if it's a snake and around water, it must be a cottonmouth.

"They don't realize that most snakes that hang around water are harmless water snakes that will indeed bite you

but don't have any venom delivery system," said Collins, co-author of the Peterson field guide "*Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern/Central North America*"

Collins says that what puts water snakes crossways with humans is their similar appearance to cottonmouths. They are both big-bodied and slow-moving.

But the primary difference is that water snakes tend to be longer. But like cottonmouths, they have tempers.

"They just don't have any use for anything bigger than them," he said. "One of the best ways to identify whether or not you have a water snake in your hand is how many times it can bite up and down your arm before you can drop it. They're not your show-and-tell animal unless you really want a lot of excitement."

Collins says that water snakes are mostly subject to predation from above, from herons, cranes, and hawks. And humans, who are certainly considered predators, present the No. 1 threat to water snake survival.

"Men and baseball bats ... those two are a real deadly combination when it comes to water snakes," Collins said. "Snakes are scared to death of people. The water snake looks at you like you're something out of 'Jurassic Park.' "

There are four species of water snake in Kansas, Zuckerman said, that most frequently fall victim to the "kill it, it's a water moccasin" fever.

"I can't believe how many people have called me at work and told me they killed a water moccasin," Zuckerman said. "I say, 'No, you killed a water snake.' "

The four are the Plainbelly or Blotched Water Snake, the Diamondback Water Snake, the Northern Water Snake, and the Graham's Crayfish Snake.

State records for the four are: Blotched Water Snake, caught in Pratt County, 55 1/2 inches; Diamondback Water Snake, caught in Douglas County, 55 1/2 inches; Northern Water Snake, caught in Miami County, 45 inches; and Graham's Crayfish Snake, caught in Barton County, 41 inches.

Zuckerman said the Northern Water Snake is the most widely distributed of the four, and, therefore, the one most likely to cross paths with man.

"They're all aggressive," Zuckerman says. "When I've been fishing back east, I've seen them rear up and lunge at people who are swimming. But you have to consider what eats them — large birds like herons. It's a defensive move."

What prevents the Western Cottonmouth from establishing a foothold, so to speak, in Kansas is Mother Nature. All wildlife species have a range in which they thrive and survive. Many species, common in neighboring states, live on the edge of their range in Kansas.

"If you see a snake in Cherokee County, leave it alone. But if it's anywhere else — well, hell, leave it alone, too," Collins said. "Water snakes eat dead fish, they clean up rivers and ponds ... They do a real good job as scavengers."

The bottom line is that Kansas winters are too severe for the cottonmouth to establish a viable population, even though it is considered one of the five [venomous] snakes found in Kansas.

The other species are the [Western] Rattlesnake, the Timber Rattlesnake, the Massasauga (found in wetland areas like Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge) and the Osage Copperhead.

Collins says he used to collect all species of snakes but now relies on undergraduate herpetologists when it comes to water snakes.

"I love to watch other people, particularly a young herpetologist, catch their first water snake," Collins said. "It's great theater."

— Steve Harper, Wichita Eagle, 9 July 1995
(submitted by Suzanne L. Collins, Lawrence)

ZEANDALE MAN DISCOVERS RECORD SNAPPING TURTLE

A Zeandale man was temporarily in possession of an uncommonly large snapping turtle recently.

Mitch Blockolsky and his father-in-law, Jerry Shandy, decided to salvage what had begun as a bad day by gathering poke greens along the Kansas River northwest of Zeandale May 8. Along the way the two men noticed a snapping turtle, apparently headed for higher ground. They carefully captured the creature and at first intended to cook it and eat it, but because it was so large, Blockolsky said they had second thoughts.

After several telephone calls, Blockolsky was put in contact with Joe Collins, the resident herpetologist at the Natural History Museum in Lawrence. From Collins, Blockolsky learned the state record in Kansas for the Common Snapping Turtle was listed as 32 pounds. Collins instructed Blockolsky to have the turtle weighed on a certified scale and to take pictures of the specimen.

Blockolsky took the turtle to Howie's Recycling in Manhattan and the certified scale there indicated a weight of 34 pounds. He also took the turtle to Harold Klaassen, a professor of biology at Kansas State University, who measured the turtle. Klaassen and two witnesses to the measuring, Ray Matlock, Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Reserve Unit, and David Hoover, Kansas Wildlife and Parks [Department], each signed a letter indicating the dorsal straight line of the shell measured 15 3/8 inches.

In a telephone interview May 19, Collins indicated he is convinced the specimen is indeed a state record. The previous record, a female captured by Wayne Hoffman at the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Refuge on November 7, 1985, had measured 15 1/2 inches, or 1/8 inch longer than Blockolsky's turtle, but weighed two pounds less. Collins

said as soon as he has a photograph and confirmation of the weight, Blockolsky's turtle will be entered as the new state record. Collins said specimens of the Common Snapping Turtle have been recorded weighing up to 88 pounds, but not in Kansas.

Blockolsky said some of the authorities he spoke with expressed an interest in obtaining the turtle for research, but he was not thrilled at the prospect of seeing the turtle killed and dissected, with only the shell preserved. He was entertaining the notion of turning the turtle loose on a nearby farm pond, but on May 14 what to do with the turtle was no longer an issue. It managed to climb out of its stock tank prison and escaped, probably into a nearby ditch full of water leading to the Kansas River.

As mentioned earlier, finding the turtle was a bright spot in an otherwise bad day for Blockolsky. His pickup had a flat tire, the spare was flat also, and his wife called to inform him she had blown out a tire on her way to work. After dealing with this series of tiring setbacks, he and his father-in-law went to the river to check on their boat. The boat was no longer visible and will hopefully be there when the water goes down.

"We did end up with two bags of poke and a big turtle, though," Blockolsky said.

— Wamego Smoke Signal, 24 May 1995
(submitted by Suzanne L. Collins, Lawrence)

SNAKE HANDLER SURVIVES BY THE SKIN OF HIS TEETH

With bloody fang marks on his hand and venom from a King Cobra in his body, George VanHorn rushed to the laboratory and grabbed two vials of epinephrine.

He jumped in a car outside and while his horrified assistant started the mad drive to the hospital, VanHorn injected himself in the forearm and thigh.

"It was like, you know, what can I do to turn this around?" VanHorn said from his hospital bed in Orlando. "I was telling myself to live ... because I didn't really think I was going to."

Then he blacked out, slumped forward in his seat and began to turn blue.

VanHorn, 51, who owns a snake breeding and venom production facility, had been bitten by other snakes. But this was by far the worst. He was [bitten] ... while preparing to extract venom from a 12-foot cobra nicknamed Show Material.

He was unconscious for 2 1/2 days. But by Sunday, he was out of intensive care and able to talk.

"I'm really amazed," he said, still sounding weak in a telephone interview. "I really didn't think it was possible to survive that."

"It's very impressive," said Dr. Mehrdad Ganjianpour, a surgical resident at Orlando Regional Medical Center. "To have a snake that big and with such a large dose of venom. Everybody chipped in quite a bit to save his life, including himself."

VanHorn owns the Reptile World Serpentarium in St. Cloud, which has more than 1000 snakes. VanHorn was preparing to control the snake with a hook when it launched its long, greenish-gold body from a table about 6 feet away and struck VanHorn on the back of his left hand.

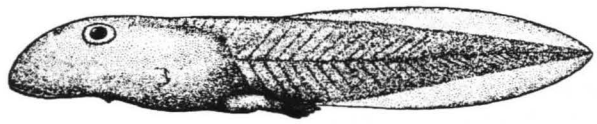
Cobra bites can be fatal by themselves, but VanHorn is also allergic to snake venom after years of exposure and about 10 bites.

He flung the snake onto the floor and rushed into a nearby lab. He retrieved epinephrine to combat the allergic reaction while his assistant, Bonnie Watkins, hurried to the lab and removed antivenin from a refrigerator.

He was taken first to St. Cloud Hospital, then flown in the late afternoon to the hospital in Orlando.

Doctors administered antivenin intravenously. Extra doses, made specifically for cobra bites, were rushed from a snake center in Punta Gorda. Vials also were relayed from a zoo in Birmingham, Alabama. Snake experts in Gainesville and in New Mexico gave advice by phone, Ganjianpour said.

— Arkansas Democrat Gazette, 4 July 1995
(submitted by Suzannne L. Collins, Lawrence)



FEATURE ARTICLES

SNAKE AWAY?

JOHN E. SIMMONS
DIVISION OF HERPETOLOGY
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS, LAWRENCE 66045

At first, the call did not sound that different from many we get at the Natural History Museum regarding snakes in the house. The woman had seen a snake in her basement, and she was afraid. Her description of the serpent was vague—dark, maybe three feet long, no pattern. I started to reassure her that it was probably a harmless snake when a note of panic crept into her voice. "You don't understand," she said, "I am really afraid of snakes." I tried to explain that snakes don't usually hang around in a basement for long, when she stopped me again. "I shot at it with my .410," she said. Three shotgun blasts. In her basement. In the city. With small children in the house upstairs. I tried to explain to her how much more dangerous firing a shotgun in her basement was than the presence of the snake. "You still don't understand," she insisted, "how terrified of snakes I am."

She said that someone had told her that if she dug a trench around her house and filled it full of diesel fuel, it would keep snakes away. Did I think this would work? I reluctantly agreed that it probably would, but cautioned her about the legal restrictions, physical dangers, and the environmental costs of such a solution, especially as she had small children at home. "I don't care how dangerous it is," she insisted, "I am that afraid of snakes."

She had already called an exterminator, who only offered to rid her house of spiders. She wanted to know if there were any chemical products on the market to repel snakes. There are products available, but to the best of my knowledge, they don't work.

Despite their lack of proven success, snake repellents have found a market because people who are terrified of snakes are willing to try almost anything to keep snakes away (one is reminded of such folk tales as the one which claims that snakes will not cross a horsehair rope). For many years, the manufacturers of repellents could market anything without listing the ingredients, but mandatory labeling requirements have caught up with them. We now know what it is that they want us to pour on the ground around our houses in the name of snake control.

A recent mail order catalog advertisement featured a product called "Dr. T's SNAKE-A-WAY™", distributed by Dr. T's Nature Products Company, Inc., in Georgia. The label depicted in the advertisement lists naphthalene (7%) and sulfur (28%) as active ingredients, plus unnamed "inert ingredients" (65%). *Inert* only means that the chemicals are not part of the repellent action of the compound. It does not mean that the inert ingredients do not react with other chemicals. In some cases, the inert ingredients may be as dangerous as the other ingredients. The EPA has registered thousands of inert ingredients of fumigants and pesticides.

The advertisement promises that this product "is effective against both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes." It says you merely have to "sprinkle it around the area you wish to protect" and that "it will even remain effective through normal rainfall." It claims to be "University tested, EPA registered" but then cautions that it is "Not for use against copperheads or cottonmouths." This is extremely misleading advertising for a potentially dangerous product. Consider the following statements made in the advertising and what they really mean:

1. It is *"effective against both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes...Not for use against copperheads or cottonmouths."* If it is effective against poisonous snakes, it should certainly be effective against copperheads and cottonmouths, as both of these species are venomous. And how could a repellent possibly work against all snakes *except* copperheads and cottonmouths?

2. *"Snake-A-Way is the only snake repellent that has been university tested..."* Notice that they don't tell you what it was university tested for, much less at what university. Perhaps it was university tested and found to be ineffective. It could well have been university tested as a repellent of undergraduates, or even for clothes moths, which in fact is what naphthalene is intended to be used for—a repellent for insects, not snakes.

3. *"Snake-A-Way is the only snake repellent that has been...EPA registered."* The truth is this: the product is EPA registered because the law *requires* it to be. This product is required to be registered because it is a poison. The EPA registration is not, in any way, a statement of the effectiveness of the product, only that the manufacturer has met certain legal labeling requirements.

Naphthalene is a trade name for the chemical *bromomethane*, or *methyl bromide*. It is manufactured to be used as a stored product fumigant and soil fumigant. It is not intended to be used as an outdoor snake repellent. It is possible that the company is in violation of the law by selling this stuff as a snake repellent, because in doing so, they are recommending an improper application of the chemical.

You may recognize the name naphthalene—it is also sold as moth flakes, mothballs, moth crystals, tar camphor, and white tar. It is effective when used in tightly closed containers where the vapor concentration can reach equilibrium. It is NOT effective in open-air situations, where rain and wind rapidly dissipate the vapors. Although not a recommended application, naphthalene is occasionally used to drive away unwanted skunks from beneath people's houses. To be effective for this purpose, a very heavy application is required, so the fumes will be concentrated enough to be unpleasant to the skunk. This much naphthalene, used in such a way that also humans breathe it in can be dangerous. Imagine how much naphthalene it would take to make an effective barrier all the way around a house.

Naphthalene is poisonous to humans, as well as to insect pests. It enters the human body through the nose and mouth as a vapor or dust. It is also absorbed by the skin and eyes. It chemically attacks the eyes, blood, liver, kidneys, and central nervous system. It destroys red blood cells. It can cause cataracts, eye irritation, severe dermatitis, headaches, confusion, nausea, vomiting, extensive sweating, dysuria (painful urination), jaundice, acute anemia, and kidney failure. Should you accidentally ingest naphthalene, it can also cause abdominal pain, bladder irritation, and kidney failure. And yes, it can be fatal.

How powerful is this stuff? The STEL for naphthalene is set at 15 ppm (parts per million). STEL stands for *Short Term Exposure Limit*. This is the maximum amount of a chemical that a person can be exposed to for a period of up to 15 minutes, without adverse effects. The TLV is set at 10 ppm. TLV stands for *Threshold Limit Value* is the maximum amount of a substance a person can be exposed to repeatedly without adverse effects. The odor of naphthalene is not recognizable until it reaches approximately 25 ppm. Thus, the stuff will hurt you long before you are even aware that you are breathing it.

Naphthalene was once widely used in museums for pest control, and is still commonly sold as a household fumigant. The use of naphthalene is now avoided in most museums due to both the health risks to employees from long-term exposure, and because long-term use can cause damage to the specimens it is supposed to protect.

Spreading a mixture of naphthalene and sulfur on the ground is damaging to the environment. This product, if applied as the advertising instructs, will almost certainly repel all forms of life for a brief while, and probably kill quite a few, too. Once the airborne concentration of naphthalene drops, however, it will repel little or nothing, and certainly not snakes. To be effective as a snake repellent, it would need repeated applications at regular intervals. Used in this way, the product would present a serious health risk to anyone living nearby.

The folklore on snake repellents is an old and rich one. At one time or another, white ash, onions, burning of old shoes, king snake oil applied to boots, rattlesnake bones worn around the ankle, and an impressive array of both benign and caustic chemicals have been recommended as snake repellents. None have ever been shown to be effective.

There have been more brutal attempts at chemical snake control, too. In the 1940s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that farmers sometimes killed raiding bullsnakes by inserting strychnine crystals into chicken eggs and leaving them out as a form of poison bait. Calcium cyanide was sometimes dropped into rodent burrows suspected of harboring snakes. Mustard gas was once used on rattlesnake dens. Not as effective, but commonly employed nevertheless, were such products as "oil of smoke." At any rate, snakes are far less susceptible to repellents and poisons than are mammals, due to differences in metabolism, among other things.

People who fear snakes need to be told that chemical snake repellents are not an effective means to keep snakes away. They need to know that the products will, in all likelihood, cause harm to many other living things in the environment, including themselves. There are ways to keep snakes away from your house, but the use of a chemical repellent will not do it.

The only effective means of repelling snakes is to not to attract them in the first place. Brush and firewood piles should be kept well away from dwellings. Grass should be trimmed short and kept short. Eliminate rock piles. Any place that rodents live, snakes may follow. Flat pieces of wood, metal, or cardboard that snakes might use for cover should be removed. Drains and ventilator openings should be screened. Outside doors and walls should be maintained in good condition, and storage areas should be kept free of rodents. Gaps in walls, pipe chases, cracks and crevices should be sealed.

For those few people who actually have a serious snake problem, despite taking these precautions, the only option left is physical removal of the snakes. This is best accomplished by hiring someone who is not afraid of snakes to come and catch each snake as it is found on the property. Trapping with drift fences and funnel traps may also be effective. There is at least one commercial trap available, the "Multiple catch snake trap" sold by Valentine, Inc. (4259 S. Western Blvd, Chicago, Illinois 60609), though I don't know how effective it is.

Recently, I have seen ads in some Japanese publica-

tions for an aerosol spray intended to be used to kill snakes. It is called "Habu-Knock™," named for the habu viper (*Trimeresurus flavoviridis*). I shudder to think what the ingredients of a product might be that advertises, "Just spray against venomous snakes: Habu...cobras, vipers, asps, rattlesnakes..."

Based on my experience in responding to countless numbers of snake calls over a 20-year period, the problem of snake infestations is greatly exaggerated. Many people are afraid of snakes, some people are desperately afraid of them. When people who fear snakes see one close to their house, they often panic and imagine that there are dozens. My standard procedure for a "snake in the house" call is to respond in person only if the snake is currently in line-of-sight. If not, I instruct the person to call me back when they can see it. I rarely get calls back. If the people are still concerned, I give them the names of a couple of local herpetologists who will search houses for live snakes for a fee.

If you get a call from someone who believes they have a snake in their house, the most important thing to remember is to be compassionate. Understand that the person calling is probably upset. Calm them down, reassure them that snakes rarely cause harm, and are, in fact, beneficial organisms. Do not belittle the caller's fear, or dismiss the caller casually. What may be an irritation to you could be an emotional crisis to the person who has called. One more caution—never give a positive identification of a snake over the phone, even if the person tells you they see an elliptical pupil and rattles on the tail. Verbal descriptions from people unfamiliar with snakes are wildly inaccurate. You never know if the animal they are looking at could be an exotic species that has escaped from a neighbor, or even a large land leech.

To complete the story about the woman whose call I reported at the first of this paper—I tried to reassure her that, based on her description, the snake was probably harmless, most likely a rat snake. I cautioned her carefully about using poisons around young children, and about the dangers of firing a shotgun inside a house, and inside the city. She was so upset that I then took the unusual step of telling her to call me back at any time, day or night, if she saw the snake again, and gave her my home phone number in addition to the one at the office. Someone that afraid of snakes needs help, not ridicule. Fortunately, she has never had to call back.

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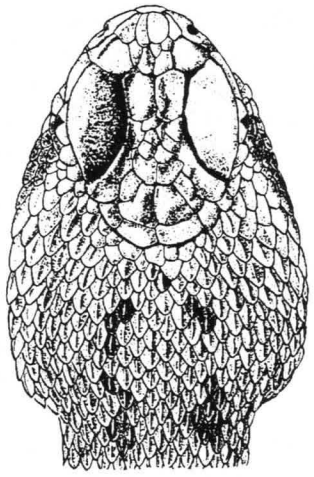

Results of the Seventh Annual KHS Herp Counts Held 1 April-31 May 1995

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The seventh series of KHS-sponsored Kansas Herp Counts, a controlled census of amphibians and reptiles held annually by many Kansas herpetologists, normally during the months of April and May, took place in 1995. A total of 24 counts were conducted this year and are reported herein, demonstrating various approaches to censusing amphibians and reptiles. One count was sponsored by the Society and held in late April. Common names are those standardized by Collins (1990).

Following my position statement last year (Rundquist 1994), where state endangered and threatened species, species in need of conservation, or commercially valuable taxa are reported, exact localities are not listed. Persons with a legitimate interest in accurate locality data may contact me with a request for such information. In addition, some species reported herein may appear to be new county records. Without preserved voucher specimens or officially catalogued photographs, such listings herein are not valid county records nor are they valid literature records. Although I understand that, in many cases, it is not possible to have additional verifiers available, I cannot accept self-verification for such records without the existence of these voucher specimens or photographs.

Douglas County Herp Count

A herp count was conducted by Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins in Douglas County from Baker Wetlands to Gardner City Lake, Johnson County, on 8 April 1995 from 5:30 PM to 8:15 PM. the count method was road-cruising.

Five-lined Skink	1
Rat Snake	1
Prairie Kingsnake	3
Northern Water Snake	3

Total

4 species ..... 8 specimens

Verified by Joseph T. Collins

1st Bourbon County Herp Count

Led by Lewis Anderson, a herp count was conducted in the afternoon on 9 April 1995 in Bourbon County. Temperatures were in the 70s. Participants were Lewis Anderson, Melissa Arnold, Jeff Vaughan, Bryan Williams, and Cynthia Newcomb.

Northern Cricket Frog	17
Southern Leopard Frog	3
Ornate Box Turtle	2
Collared Lizard	8
Five-lined Skink	1
Six-lined Racerunner	1
Western Slender Glass Lizard	1
Western Worm Snake	1
Ringneck Snake	1
Rough Green Snake	1
Milk Snake	1

Total

11 species ..... 37 specimens

Verifier was Lewis Anderson.

2nd Bourbon County Herp Count

A second Bourbon County herp count, also led by Lewis Anderson, was conducted in the afternoon and evening on 9 April 1995 in Bourbon County. Temperatures were in the 70s. Participants were Lewis Anderson, Melissa Arnold, Jeff Vaughan, Bryan Williams, and Cynthia Newcomb

American Toad	22
Spring Peeper	27
Western Chorus Frog	20
Bullfrog	19
Collared Lizard	3

Total

5 species ..... 90 specimens

Verifier was Lewis Anderson.

Anderson County Herp Count

On 16 April 1995 from 8:30 PM to 10:45 PM, Joe Collins led a herp count in Anderson County in the vicinity of the Brecheisen Farm. Participants were Aondrea (Lee) Bartoo, Bill Brecheisen, Joseph T. Collins, Josh Hernandez, Emily Moriarty, Michael Moriarty, Jeffrey Parmelee, and Erik R. Wild.

American Toad (four observed + choruses)	20
Western Chorus Frog (four observed + choruses)	100
Crawfish Frog (19 observed + choruses)	100
Plains Leopard Frog (13 observed + choruses)	50
Bullfrog	2
Snapping Turtle	1
Common Garter Snake	1
Plainbelly Water Snake	2

Total

8 species ..... 276 specimens

Verified by Joseph T. Collins

Sumner County Herp Count

Larry Miller led a herp count in Sumner County at Sec. 14, T35S, R3W on 22 April 1995 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Participants were Claire Adams, Mary Kate Baldwin, Ben Bammes, Nathan Bammes, Allison Brooks, Katie Crowe, Kelly Farmer, David Duniven, Larry L. Miller, Jared Nance, Joel Nance, Kay Nique, Mrs. Carson Ward.

Great Plains Toad	3
Plains Leopard Frog	1
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	1
Yellow Mud Turtle	1
Prairie Lizard	1
Southern Prairie Skink	7
Six-lined Racerunner	4
Plains Blackhead Snake	2
Ringneck Snake	38
Ground Snake	3

Total

10 species ..... 61 specimens

Verified by Larry L. Miller.

3rd Bourbon County Herp Count

Also conducted by Lewis Anderson, a third Bourbon County count was done on 27 April 1995 in the evening. Lewis Anderson was the only participant

Northern Cricket Frog	50
Spring Peeper	30
Gray Treefrog complex	120
Southern Leopard Frog	25

Total

4 species ..... 225 specimens

Lewis Anderson was the verifier.

Shawnee County Herp Count

A herp count was conducted in Shawnee County on 29 April 1995 from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. at Sec. 34, T13S, R17E. Participants were Shawn Ames, Lucia Baldwin, Mary Kate Baldwin, Neil Bass, Mary Crouch, James Frager, William Frager, Kevin Freed, Kembra Howdeshell, Dan Johnson, Eric Kessler, Larry L. Miller, Carolyn Moriarty, Emily Moriarty, Michael Moriarty, Dan Murrow, Jared Nance, Joel H. Nance, Daren Riedle, Frank Shepherd, Jim Shepherd, Travis W. Taggart, and Tim Wray.

American Toad	1
Five-lined Skink	3
Great Plains Skink	12
Ringneck Snake	41
Prairie Kingsnake	1
Lined Snake	1

Total

6 species ..... 59 specimens

Verifier was Travis W. Taggart.

Second Douglas County Herp Count

The first of several herp counts at the annual KHS Spring Field trip occurred in Douglas County near Elk Creek on 29 April 1995 from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.. Participants were Shawn Ames, Lucia Baldwin, Mary Kate Baldwin, Neil Bass, Mary Crouch, James Frager, William Frager, Kevin Freed, Kembra Howdeshell, Dan Johnson, Eric Kessler, Larry L. Miller, Carolyn Moriarty, Emily Moriarty, Michael Moriarty, Dan Murrow, Jared Nance, Joel H. Nance, Daren Riedle, Frank Shepherd, Jim Shepherd, Travis W. Taggart, and Tim Wray.

Northern Cricket Frog	1
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	4
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Five-lined Skink	8
Great Plains Skink	5

Western Slender Glass Lizard	1
Western Worm Snake	1
Ringneck Snake	244
Racer	3
Milk Snake	2
Common Garter Snake	3
Copperhead	6

Total

12 species ..... 279 specimens

Verifier was Emily Moriarty.

Osage County Herp Count

The second KHS Field Trip herp count was held in Osage County at Osage County State Fishing Lake, Secs. 5, 6, 7 & 8, T15S, R16E on 29 April 1995 from 12:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Participants were Neil Bass, Keith Coleman, Mary Crouch, James Frager, William Frager, Kevin Freed, Jim Gubanyi, Marla Gubanyi, Kembra Howdeshell, Dan Johnson, Eric Kessler, Larry L. Miller, Carolyn Moriarty, Emily Moriarty, Michael Moriarty, Dan Murrow, Jared Nance, Joel H. Nance, Daren Riedle, Eric Rundquist, Frank Shepherd, Jim Shepherd, Travis W. Taggart, and Tim Wray.

American Toad	3
Northern Cricket Frog	2
Western Chorus Frog	4
Plains Leopard Frog	3
Bullfrog	2
Snapping Turtle	1
Ornate Box Turtle	4
Five-lined Skink	30
Great Plains Skink	1
Northern Prairie Skink	8
Ringneck Snake	2
Racer	2
Rat Snake	4
Common Kingsnake	8
Western Ribbon Snake	2
Common Garter Snake	5
Lined Snake	10
Graham's Crayfish snake	1
Northern Water Snake	6

Total

19 species ..... 98 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

Sixth Annual Cowley County Herp Counts

On 29 April 1995, Al Volkmann led his annual herp count in Cowley County at 13 mi E of Winfield from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The primary count method was rock turning. One inch of rain had fallen in the previous 12 hours and the survey began in steady rain that persisted for one hour. Skies remained overcast. Temperatures varied from 13-17°C. Water temperature was 13°C. Participants were Norman Cubbage, Joyce Lent, Bob Previtera, Jennifer Previtera, Kathy Speer, Al Volkmann, and Todd Volkmann.

Northern Cricket Frog	50
Plains Leopard Frog	3
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	4
Common Snapping Turtle	1
Slider	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Collared Lizard	3
Great Plains Skink	12
Western Slender Glass Lizard	2
Ringneck Snake	47
Flathead Snake	14
Racer	5
Milk Snake	1
Common Kingsnake	2
Prairie Kingsnake	1
Coachwhip	2
Common Garter Snake	4
Copperhead	1

Total

19 species ..... 157 specimens

Al Volkmann was the verifier.

Wabaunsee County Herp Count

The third KHS field trip herp count was conducted in Wabaunsee County at Newton's Lazy Boot Ranch on 30 April 1995 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 PM. Participants were Neil Bass, Keith Coleman, Joseph T. Collins, Suzanne L. Collins, John Denison, Jim Gubanyi, Kembra Howdeshell, Larry L. Miller, Jared Nance, Joel H. Nance, Daren Riedle, Frank Shepherd, Jim Shepherd, Travis W. Taggart, Russell Toepfer, Mark Van Doren, Mara Wallace, and Tim Wray.

Northern Cricket Frog	3
Western Chorus Frog	13
Plains Leopard Frog	1
Ornate Box Turtle	8
Collared Lizard	9
Great Plains Skink	29
Ringneck Snake	2
Flathead Snake	11
Racer	6
Great Plains Rat Snake	5
Common Kingsnake	3
Milk Snake	8
Common Garter Snake	2

Lined Snake 3

TOTAL

14 species ..... 103 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

4TH BOURBON COUNTY HERP COUNT

Lewis Anderson conducted a fourth Bourbon County herp count on 4 May 1995. Temperatures were in the 60s. Lewis Anderson was the only participant.

American Toad 23
Western Chorus Frog 11
Gray Treefrog complex 43
Crawfish Frog 7

TOTAL

5 species ..... 84 specimens

Lewis Anderson was the verifier.

SECOND OSAGE COUNTY HERP COUNT

Led by Larry Miller, a second herp count was conducted in Osage County on 4 May 1995 at Sec. 3, T14S, R17E from 12:45 PM to 2:15 PM. Participants were Claire Adams, Clay Adams, Laura Adams, Leslie Ash, Amanda Artzer, Zachery Baksh, Mary Kate Baldwin, Ben Bammes, Nathan Bammes, Hanuman B-Eagle, Bireta, Alexandra Bixler, Alex Bleiberg, Natalie Bonebrake, Jacqueline C., Carmen Brooks, Dylan Brooks, Akhila Challa, Jessica Cook, Katie Crowe, David Duniven, Elizabeth Elliott, Cameron Ellis, Schuyler Ellis, Stacy Elmer, Katie Farmer, Kelly Farmer, Melody Faulkner, Evan Fisher, Julia Franklin, Kevin Freed, John Freeman, Katie Garlinghouse, Derek George, Rachael Greene, Jennifer Hoyt, Jennie Hughes, Howard Johns, Esther Kennedy, Stacie Kossoy, Matt Leifer, Lori Meador, Stephanie Meador, Larry L. Miller, Katie Moore, Jared Nance, Kay Nique, Jeff Nolde, Kerstin Nordstrom, Adam Obley, Nikhil Paruklar, Megan Petty, Micah Rolfs, Alexis Rowe, Jonathan Schmidt, John Schroer, Mack Schroer, P. R. Schroer, Jim Shepherd, Ben Straus, Laura Straus, Zach Straus, Alex Tarr, Michaela Tarr, Sarah Temple, Allison Viola, Sarah Wanless, Wesley West, Blake Whitaker, and Chris Yorke, all from Topeka Collegiate School.

American Toad 2
Northern Cricket Frog 7
Western Chorus Frog 1
Gray Treefrog 3
Plains Leopard Frog 1
Bullfrog 1
Five-lined Skink 4
Great Plains Skink 2
Western Slender Glass Lizard 1
Western Worm Snake 5
Ringneck Snake 82
Racer 1
Copperhead 1

TOTAL

13 species ..... 111 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

JOHNSON COUNTY HERP COUNT

On 5 May 1995, a short herp count was done in Johnson County at the Shadow Glen Country Club from 10:00 A.M. to 11:45 A.M.. Participants were Joseph T. Collins, Suzanne L. Collins, Larry L. Miller and Suzanne L. Miller.

Five-lined Skink 2
Western Worm Snake 2

TOTAL

2 species ..... 4 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller,

SECOND SHAWNEE COUNTY HERP COUNT

Larry L. Miller and Suzanne L. Miller did a second Shawnee County herp count at SE 1/4 Sec. 25, T13S, R15E on 9 May 1995 from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

American Toad 4
Northern Cricket Frog 12
Western Chorus Frog 4
Gray Treefrog 5
Plains Leopard Frog 2
Bullfrog 1
Five-lined Skink 2
Ringneck Snake 6
Racer 1
Common Garter Snake 1

TOTAL

10 species ..... 38 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

Third Shawnee County Herp Count

A third herp count was conducted in Shawnee County in the eastern part of the county on 13 May 1995 from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The count method was road-cruising and rock turning. Larry L. Miller was the only participant.

Northern Cricket Frog (chorus)	9
Western Chorus Frog (chorus)	2
Gray Treefrog (chorus)	5
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	1
Snapping Turtle	2
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Collared Lizard	3
Great Plains Skink	2
Ringneck Snake	51
Racer	3
Rat Snake	1
Gopher Snake	3
Massasauga	1

Total

13 species ..... 84 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

Jefferson County Herp Count

A herp count was done in Jefferson County in the northern and eastern halves of the county on 14 May 1995 from 2:30 PM to 8:45 PM. The count method was cruising gravel roads. Participants were Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins.

Woodhouse's Toad	1
Gray Treefrog (calling)	3
Painted Turtle	6
Prairie Kingsnake	1
Northern Water Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	2

Total

6 species ..... 14 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

Third Douglas County Herp Count

A third herp count was held in Douglas County at the north side Lone Star Lake on 15 May 1995 from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Participants were Mary Crouch and Larry L. Miller.

Northern Cricket Frog	2
Five-lined Skink	2
Western Slender Glass Lizard	1
Ringneck Snake	5
Milk Snake	1

Total

5 species ..... 11 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

Fourth Douglas County Herp Count

David Reber conducted a herp count on 19 May 1995 at an abandoned quarry on the north side of Clinton Reservoir near Douglas County Road 350 E. Some temporary and permanent water was present. Participants were David Reber, Allison Reber, and Richard G. Reber.

Plains Narrowmouth Toad	1
Blanchard's Cricket Frog	1
Gray Treefrog	5
Toad sp.	5
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Ringneck Snake	27
Copperhead	2

Total

7 species ..... 42 specimens

David Reber was the verifier.

Fifth Douglas County Herp Count

Emily Moriarty led a herp count in Douglas County near the Lawrence Airport on 19 May 1995 from 9:30 PM to 10:30 PM. Participants were Annie Moriarty and Emily Moriarty.

Smallmouth Salamander	1
Plains Spadefoot	20
American Toad	5
Great Plains Toad	2
Woodhouse's Toad	10
Western Chorus Frog	7
Gray Treefrog	10
Plains Leopard Frog	6

Total

8 species ..... 61 specimens

Verifier was Emily Moriarty.

Linn County Herp Count

Joe Collins held a herp count in Linn County at the Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge and vicinity of Cadumus on 21 May 1995 from 10:00 A.M. to 6:30 PM. The count method was road-cruising and rock-turning. Participants were April Hernandez, Michael Moriarty, Emily Moriarty, Suzanne L. Collins, and Joseph T. Collins.

American Toad	1
Snapping Turtle	2
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	8
Slider	4
Five-lined Skink	2
Great Plains Skink	7
Six-lined Racerunner	2
Western Worm Snake	1
Ringneck Snake	46
Great Plains Rat Snake	1
Rat Snake	1
Milk Snake	1

Total

13 species ..... 77 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

Second Sumner County Herp Count

Suzanne L. Miller and Larry L. Miller held a herp count in Sumner County at Secs. 14 & 15, T35S, R3W on 21 May 1995 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Great Plains Toad	12
Northern Cricket Frog	5
Plains Leopard Frog	6
Bullfrog	7
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Southern Prairie Skink	5
Six-lined Racerunner	11
Western Slender Glass Lizard	1
Ringneck Snake	26
Coachwhip	1
Ground Snake	12

Total

12 species ..... 88 specimens

Verifier was Larry L. Miller.

Sixth Douglas County Herp Count

David Reber conducted a short herp count at his residence approximately two miles south of Lawrence on 24 May 1995. Snakes were located under artificial (tin) shelters and amphibians were found in water-filled ditches. The Rat Snakes were mating when found and the female laid eggs on 12 July 1995.

Bullfrog	3
Plains Leopard Frog (tadpoles)	100
Prairie Ringneck Snake	1
Rat Snake	2

Total

4 species ..... 106 specimens

David Reber was the verifier.

Kansas Turnpike Herp Count

While traveling to more southerly climes, Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins conducted a road count on the Kansas Turnpike from Lawrence to the Oklahoma border on 27 May 1995 from 7:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M..

Bullfrog	1
Ornate Box Turtle	2
Painted Turtle	2
Slider	1
Rat Snake	1

Total

5 species ..... 7 specimens

Verifier: Joseph T. Collins

Second Kansas Turnpike Herp Count

On returning from their travels, Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins conducted a road count on the Kansas Turnpike from the Oklahoma border to Lawrence on 31 May 1995 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Snapping Turtle	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	6
Slider	1

Total

4 species ..... 9 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

Total species in this year's counts were 49 and total specimens observed were 2119.

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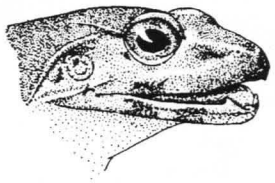

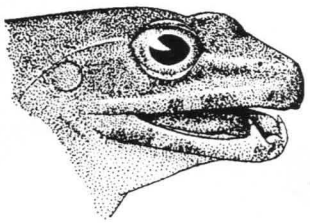

Butler County Turtle Rangers

Lewis Anderson
1911 JFK
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

Each year, an untold number of turtles meet their deaths on our nation's highways. In Butler County, Kansas, two men are doing what they can to prevent these reptile roadkills. Bryan Nolan and Mark Jones, Butler County Highway Department employees, spend their days maintaining and patrolling the road of the state's largest county. Whenever the men encounter a turtle, they take a few seconds to stop and remove the turtle from the roadway and place it away from the road, facing in the direction it was heading. The reptile rescue team also saves snakes and any other creatures in need.

A couple of years ago, the men decided to start keeping track of the turtles and, at the end of the day, they tally any turtles removed from the road on a chart. Up to now, they have rescued over 300 turtles, including between 30 and 40 this year. The men were initially teased by some of their fellow employees for their valiant efforts, but they don't hear much about in anymore. "I just hate seeing turtles get run over," said Nolan. Being out in the country gives the men the opportunity to observe other wildlife as well. For example, Nolan can pinpoint areas in the county where armadillos are residing.

The Butler County Turtle Rangers, Nolan and Jones, should be commended for assisting these creatures on their journeys. If turtles could talk, they would surely say thank you.