

KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No. 108

JUNE 1997



ANNOUNCEMENTS

KHS ANNUAL MEETING CALL FOR PAPERS

This is official call for papers for the annual meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society, which will be held 8-9 November at the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. Those interested in making a presentation should submit a short abstract or topic no later than 15 September to KHS President Karen Graham, Sedgwick county Zoo, 5555 Zoo Boulevard, Wichita, KS 67212 or call 316-942-2213 ext. 229.

KHS GLOYD-TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP

Nominations are now due for the annual KHS Howard K. Gloyd-Edward H. Taylor Scholarship in Herpetology. Nominations for this award are open to any student enrolled in an accredited educational institution in Kansas or any KHS member enrolled in any accredited educational institution outside of Kansas. Students from primary school through university are eligible. Nominations should include typewritten details, not to exceed two pages, of the nominee's qualifications, plus name and address of the nominee and nominator. Self-nomination is excluded.

All nominations should be sent to KHS President Karen Graham, Sedgwick County Zoo, 5555 Zoo Boulevard, Wichita, KS 67212. The KHS Executive Council make the final decision and announce the scholarship winner at the KHS annual meeting.

Those wishing to contribute to the scholarship fund should send contributions to KHS Secretary/Treasurer Karen Toepfer and note that the contribution is specifically for the Gloyd-Taylor scholarship fund. All contributions are tax-deductible.

FALL FIELD TRIP

KHS Field Trip Chair Larry Miller announces that the 1997 KHS Fall Field Trip will be held at the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area in Linn County the weekend of 27-28 September. Plan to meet at La Cygne Lake at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. Additional details will be in the September *KHS Newsletter* or you may contact Larry at the addresses listed on the inside front cover of the Newsletter.

KHS ENTERS CYBERSPACE

The Kansas Herpetological Society is now the proud possessor of its very own web site on the World Wide Web of the Internet. The site was constructed by KHS member Travis Taggart at Southeast Louisiana State University and the URL (internet address) is "<http://vmsweb.selu.edu/~pbio4888/khsmain.html>". However, this address will change in the very near future and be transferred to the University of Kansas. Keep your eye on the Newsletter for the address change.

Travis has done a fine job in putting this site together and the KHS Executive Council congratulates him for his efforts.

NEW SECTION FOR KHS NEWSLETTER

With this issue, I am establishing a new section for the *KHS Newsletter*. In addition to the Announcements, KHS Business, News of the World, and Feature Articles sections of the Newsletter, occasional articles will appear in a Short Communications section. I have received over the years, a number of short submissions that do not easily fit into the

Events of Interest to KHS Members

27-28 September 1997 - KHS Fall Field Trip. Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Refuge. Contact Larry Miller for information.

8-9 November 1997 - KHS Annual Meeting, Sedgwick County Zoo. Contact Karen Graham for information.

Feature Articles section of the Newsletter. These articles generally contain anecdotal information on herps, information which is potentially important. As Henry Fitch ably argued (Fitch, H. S. 1987. The sin of anecdotal writing. *Herpetological Review* 18(4): 68.) a number of years ago, printed anecdotal information can be of significant value in a number of herpetological disciplines, such as natural history, distribution, and behavior. Three such articles are included in the inaugural Short Communications section of this Newsletter.

I encourage all KHS members to submit such observations to me. Please make your manuscripts no more than three paragraphs in length and submit both computer disk and hard copy, if possible. Initially, Short Communications will not be a regular feature of the Newsletter until such time as sufficient material is on hand to do so.

— EMR

OKLAHOMA TURTLE APPEAL

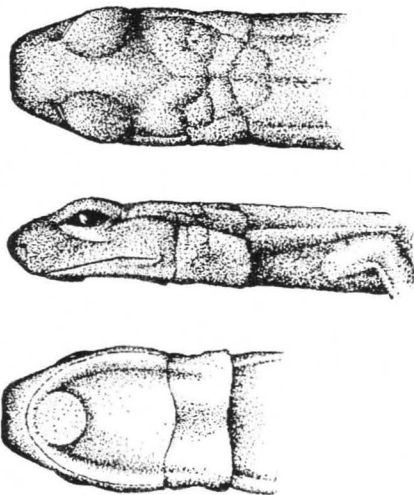
Longtime KHS member and Oklahoma Herpetological Society co-founder Dick Lardie requests help for Oklahoma's aquatic turtles. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation has proposed modest regulations that would limit harvest for no turtles under four inches in length (matching longtime federal regulation) and for no softshell turtle over 18 inches in length (to conserve the prime breeding female population). Apparently, legislation is being considered that would essentially remove any harvest regulations for aquatic turtles in this state. Commercial turtle harvest in Oklahoma has a significant impact on populations there, with over 58,000 individuals of at least 10 species being taken in 1996 alone.

Dick asks for support in opposing this legislation (Senate Bill 196). He suggests that letters be directed to Frank Shurden, chairman of the Oklahoma Senate Committee, and Representative Randall Erwin. The address is State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Those wishing additional information on this matter should contact Dick at 313 Flintridge Road, Enid, OK 73703.

NEW HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY PROPOSED

Paul Shipman, a KHS member now at Oklahoma State University, proposes the establishment of a new herpetological organization for the state of Oklahoma. As the Oklahoma Herpetological Society is now essentially an herpetocultural organization, Paul recognizes the need for a group oriented to primarily herpetological pursuits. He suggests that the purposes of the group be as follows: promote the pursuit, discovery, and dissemination of scientific knowledge of amphibians and reptiles; support and participate in the study of amphibians and reptiles in Oklahoma; responsibly and pragmatically promote the conservation of wildlife and that of Oklahoma amphibians and reptiles particularly; provide a forum for exchange of ideas and enjoyment of herpetology among Oklahoma herpetologists; and to aid in public education about amphibians and reptiles.

He further proposes that the format for such a group's endeavors would be best served by establishing a new publication (along the lines of the former OHS newsletter, *The Mountain Boomer*), holding one large annual meeting at different locations within the state, and hosting one or two annual field trips. Those wanting more information or wishing to assist Paul in his endeavor should contact him at Department of Zoology, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74048; phone: 405-744-5555; email: shipman@cowboy.net



KHS BUSINESS

KHS SPRING FIELD TRIPS

The first KHS spring field trip, held at the Z-Bar Ranch in Chase County, was a great success. Although the night of 2 May was uncharacteristically cold for this time of the year, clear skies and much warmer weather greeted the participants for the next two days. A total of 55 persons (which may be a KHS field trip record) met at the Z-Bar on the morning of the 3rd and were led by guides to three separate areas of the ranch and proceeded to diligently scour the environs for amphibian and reptilian inhabitants until 1700 hrs. A smaller group returned the morning of the 4th to continue the search. A total of 21 species and 696 individuals (which are listed in this year's Herp Count results later in this Newsletter) were discovered in the two-day period and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the outing. We hope to be invited back to this beautiful area.

The second KHS spring trip was held in the Red Hills area of Barber and Comanche Counties on 23-26 May, with headquarters at Coldwater State Lake. Weather conditions were almost ideal (except for a brief but violent thunderstorm Saturday night) and the herping proved exceptional. A total of 25 persons participated in the trip and the results are included in this year's herp counts. A group of members joined Eric and Ann Rundquist at his Fitchian study site at the Alexander Ranch in northwest Barber County on Saturday morning and were able to photograph such rarities as the Red-spotted Toad, Texas Blind Snake, and Night Snake. One peculiarity of the trip was the discovery of 23 Glass Lizards, which previously had been thought to be quite rare in the Gypsum Hills.

FITCH SCHOLARSHIP

The American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists is establishing a scholarship in honor of KHS Distinguished Life Member Henry S. Fitch's lifelong contributions to herpetology. The scholarship will be awarded annually to a deserving graduate student. The KHS Executive Council congratulates Dr. Fitch on this signal honor. In addition, the Council has voted to contribute \$1000 to the scholarship fund (the largest contribution by a group or individual to date).

CONTEST WINNER

The winner of last issue's Name That Herpetologist Contest is Daren Riedle. Daren correctly identified eight out of the ten herpetologists in the caricature. The herpetologists were: 1. Karl Patterson Schmidt, 2. Leonhard Stejneger, 3. Emmet Reid Dunn, 4. Clifford H. Pope, 5. George

Sprague Myers, 6. Gladwyn Kingsley Noble, 7. Raymond Ditmars, 8. Edward Harrison Taylor, 9. Graham Netting, and 10. Howard K. Gloyd. Congratulations to Daren, who will receive a copy of the KHS Special Publication No. 2, *The Lizards of Kansas* by Edward Taylor.

LEGISLATIVE REDUX

Well, the 1997 Kansas Legislative session has come and gone and the results were something of a mixed bag for KHS interests. The good news is that the two bills amending the state endangered species act were combined, passed and signed into law. This law incorporated without change the recommendations of the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Task Force (of which KHS member Joe Collins was a member) and will, I believe, significantly strengthen the previous law.

On the other hand, HB 2368, which proposed to suspend surface water quality standards for Kansas for the next two years, also passed and was signed by Governor Graves. As one of the species targeted in the bill was the Common Map Turtle, KHS has a significant interest in the outcome of this bill's passage. As it stands, a seven-member commission will be established to examine the validity of the science used to establish the state's water quality standards. The commission's recommendations will then be acted upon by future editions of the state legislature. This bill's passage threatens current federal funding for state water quality projects and, in my opinion, puts the people of Kansas at risk due to current surface water pollutants. It appears that the Sierra Club will challenge the law in court.

A bill to repeal the law allowing the current rattlesnake roundup situation here was introduced into committee by never made it to the floor of the house. Better luck next year.

— EMR



KHS BRINGS YOU GREAT NEWS OF THE WORLD

AREA RATTLESNAKES, COPPERHEADS WATCH OUT – ELK FALLS MAN WANTS YOU

An Elk Falls man has come up with an idea to organize the first annual Elk County Copperhead and Rattlesnake roundup this spring.

But his concept has a few complications to contend with first.

Stan Parker, who raises thoroughbred horses near Elk Falls, said that he plans to stage the roundup in April, hoping to have the event in three vacant lots next to the Elk Falls fire station.

"To be in Elk County means you have to create your own excitement," Parker gave as the reason to organize the roundup. "I fully intend to put on the first annual – and I did say annual – copperhead and rattlesnake roundup."

Parker, who has never organized a snake roundup before, said he hoped to find volunteers to capture Copperheads and rattlesnakes in the Elk Falls area as far south as northern Chautauqua County. Proceeds from the roundup, he said, would go to charitable organizations, although he admitted the amount going to charity would depend on how much it costs him to put on the event.

"I'm also willing to provide antivenom to anyone volunteering to help capture them," he said.

The roundup is tentatively scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, April 12 and 13.

Parker said although he had not heard of a large outcry from area ranchers over losses to cattle caused by Copperheads or rattlers, some area residents had reported seeing some of the poisonous snakes on the front porches before.

Yet, in addition to the need for volunteers and money – he already has a commitment for porta-potties – Parker will face hurdles from Elk Falls residents squeamish over having a snake roundup in their town, lack of cooperation from some area landowners who don't want snake hunters on their property, and state wildlife regulations.

Parker appeared before the Elk Falls City Council at its December meeting seeking support for the roundup, but the council decided against sanctioning the event, Phyllis Friend, Elk Falls city clerk, said.

"If he wants to do it, he's going to have to do it himself," Friend said.

She also said that in the 27 years she has lived in the Elk Falls area, she has seen only one Copperhead and killed two Rattlesnakes.

"I don't think the people here are too enthused," she said. "I don't think he can have it anywhere in the city limits. There's no place large enough for him to have it, and I don't think the people here would let him have it in town."

Parker said some area landowners have told him they thought the roundup was a great idea, while others don't like the idea at all.

"Some of them said to stay a half-mile away from them because they just don't like snakes, and some said they didn't want people on their ground," he said.

In addition to the logistical problems, Parker also faces state and federal wildlife regulations.

Edwin Miller, state Department of Wildlife and Parks non-game wildlife biologist at Elk City State Park, said that the Timber Rattlesnakes found in this part of Kansas are under federal protection [Ed. note: Timber Rattlesnake are not currently under federal protection but are protected under state law.] because of their declining population. He also said populations of some types of Copperheads were also declining in the area.

Richard Harrold, chief of special operations for the department's law enforcement division in Pratt, said that before Parker could have the roundup, he would have to petition the state Wildlife and Parks Commission and ask for an impact study.

"I don't think there would be any way possible to have it all done by this spring," Harrold said. "It would have to be a year from this spring at the earliest if it was approved."

Harrold said large rattlesnake roundups were currently put on each spring in Sharon Springs in westcentral Kansas, as well as Oklahoma and west Texas.

However, the Kansas and Oklahoma roundups are for Prairie Rattlesnakes inhabiting those areas, and the Texas roundups were for both Prairie Rattlers and Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes found in that area. Neither of those types of rattlesnakes are under federal protection.

"There is some concerns from herpetologists that there may be long-term damage from these roundups," Harrold said., "but at least in Sharon Springs, there were complaints from area ranchers about losses to cattle bitten by rattlesnakes."

However, Parker said he intended to do what he could to put on the roundup.

"I can't do it by myself," he said. "But I know it can work."

— Independence Daily Reporter, 30 December 1996
(submitted by Daren Riedle, Independence)

Ed. Note: To the best of our knowledge, no further action has been taken on this proposed roundup. The KHS Executive Council and other KHS members are monitoring the situation and have expressed their concerns to the powers that be.

RARE TURTLE ON ROAD BACK

The reptile wasn't feeling agile. How active would you be after having a fish hook removed from your throat?

The largest Map Turtle ever recorded in Kansas history tucked back as far as she could, recovering from surgery a few days ago.

"She's come out very well," said Eric Rundquist, animal science technician for Kansas University's [Animal Care Unit].

The yelloweyes of the Ouachita Map Turtle [*Gratemys pseudogeographica ouachitensis*] hid deep inside her almost ten-inch shell.

The previous record: just over nine inches.

She has several stitches in her neck, where Lawrence veterinarian Dr. Maguerite Ermerling tucked her fingers and instruments days before to retrieve a hook that had lodged there. Another fish hook passed through the turtle's digestive system.

Using a local anesthetic, Ermerling operated on the turtle for more than an hour.

The hook – which blocked food passage – was removed cleanly, without damage to the turtle's esophagus, said Tamara Wallace, who assisted Ermerling with the operation. Wallace said the crew named the patient "Molly."

Ermerling has treated wildlife for about 10 years.

KU reptile experts Rundquist and [KHS member] Nancy Schwarting said they plan to restore the turtle's appetite and body temperature – ensuring its full recovery – before sending it back to the banks of the Kansas River near Manhattan.

Two months and two hooks ago, Molly was a turtle without a prayer.

Two fisherman along Manhattan's Tuttle Creek Reservoir accidentally hooked the turtle.

"We got the thing with a hot dog," said Steve Seitz, Manhattan.

The hook stuck in the turtle's mouth, and the fisherman – seeking help – took her to a former KU herpetology student [KHS member Kelly Irwin], who brought her to campus.

A radiology exam uncovered a second hook already lodged in Molly's throat. Schwarting said turtles can go several weeks without eating, but eventually Molly began to deteriorate.

"It's unusual for someone to take the time for a reptile," Schwarting said. "People are much more likely to rescue a bunny than a turtle."

Named for their state-like [sic] shell patterns, Ouachita Map Turtles can be found in many parts of the state, including the Kaw River banks in Lawrence.

Ouachita May Turtles are becoming less prevalent, Rundquist said, making one of ideal breeding size even more important to save.

A turtle this size, "has tremendous reproductive output," Rundquist said. "She's very important for the population."

In fact, a record-setting reptile would typically be preserved. Arraignments have been made to instead record the turtle's size with photographs and a ruler, said Joe Collins, herpetologist with the KU Natural History Museum.

Molly will be taking that record back to the wild.

"We got a little excited about it," Seitz said. "Until a bigger one gets caught, my name will be next to it."

— Lawrence Journal World, 8 October 1996
(submitted by Patricia Rundquist, Lawrence)

STATE, FEDERAL, AND PRIVATE GROUPS SIGN AGREEMENTS TO PROTECT THE COPPERBELLY WATER SNAKE

A diverse partnership of State, Federal, and private interests have joined together to help save the Copperbelly Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*), a non-poisonous inhabitant of wetlands and bottomlands, and to protect its dwindling habitat. Landmark conservation agreements signed by three states, the Department of the Interior, and representatives of the coal mining and agriculture industries will keep the snake off the endangered species list in the southern part of its range in western Kentucky, southern Illinois, and southern Indiana.

"These agreements are remarkable because they embody the conservation mandates of three separate states and the Federal government, and they respect the needs of private interests to continue to carry out business," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "When people in other parts of the country are faced with similar challenges, they will look to Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana for answers."

"We can preserve special places like the bottomlands and wetlands that are important to clean water and support the copperbelly and other wildlife, and we can do it in a way that does not threaten our way of life or our livelihoods," said Babbitt.

The move to develop a tri-state conservation agreement was initiated by U.S. Senator Wendell H. Ford in September of 1996. "When the proposal to list the Copperbelly Water Snake as threatened was first made, I knew there had to be a better way to safeguard the snake's habitat without hindering economic growth," said Ford. "That better way turned out to be the Copperbelly Water Snake conservation team which I pulled together back in early September. Once we forged that critical partnership, we were then able to forge a better solution."

In two conservation agreements announced today in Madisonville, Kentucky, Federal, State, and private cooperators agreed on strategies to protect the copperbelly's

southern population. The agreements include commitments by coal companies to avoid or curtail mining in some key snake habitat areas; modify mining practices in other snake habitat; and implement reclamation practices after mining that meet the habitat needs of the snake. Public agencies agreed to protect the snake and its habitat and to place a high priority on projects that benefit the copperbelly.

"The Copperbelly Water Snake conservation agreements begin a new spirit of cooperation among local, state, and Federal agencies; agricultural interests; the coal industry; and interested individuals," said Tom Bennett, Commissioner of Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "The agreements will ensure the continued existence of the species and the wetland ecosystems on which it depends. While the focus of this agreement is on the Copperbelly Water Snake, many other bottomland hardwood and wetlands species will benefit. I hope this is the beginning of cooperative and proactive efforts to maintain healthy ecosystems for all species."

"Protecting the Copperbelly Water Snake's wetland habitat preserves some of the most unique and interesting natural areas of southern Indiana. Not only are we protecting important natural areas for the copperbelly and other species, we preserve wetland areas to help filter and cleanse groundwater and reduce the threat of flooding," said Patrick Ralston, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

"Voluntary protection is the key to the future of many endangered species throughout the United States," said Illinois Natural Resources Director Brent Manning. "We hope this plan is the first of many where the private sector and government work cooperatively for the betterment of the environment."

The Copperbelly Water Snake, named for its bright orange underside, was proposed for listing as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act in 1993, primarily due to conversion or destruction of its wetland habitat. The conservation agreements reduce or eliminate threats to the snake, allowing the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to withdraw its proposal to list Copperbelly Water Snakes under the Endangered Species Act in the southern part of the species' range.

The Service has decided to list as threatened isolated remnant populations in the snakes's northern range, made up of small groups of copperbellies in northeastern Indiana, northwestern Ohio, and southern Michigan. Conversion of the snake's habitat in the north to roadways, building sites and agriculture continues to threaten these populations. It is estimated that these copperbellies would vanish in the next 10 to 20 years without protection. Under the Endangered Species Act, a threatened species is one likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. Copperbellies in the northern range will receive protection under the Act while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

along with its partners develops and implements a recovery plan.

In determining whether an animal or plant should be added to the endangered species list, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers the threats to the species and the existence of other programs and regulations to conserve the species. Conservation agreements, such as those for the Copperbelly Water Snake, are developed to remove the threats to species considered for listing, providing the same conservation benefits as listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The copperbelly historically ranged throughout much of the states of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky. However, loss of its habitat has restricted most copperbellies to pockets of remaining wetlands and bottomlands which overlie coal fields in southern Indiana, southern Illinois, and western Kentucky. Today the largest number of Copperbelly Water Snakes occurs in western Kentucky in 18 isolated populations. Only two of these are considered secure, with the others threatened by conversion of habitat to mining and cropland. In Indiana there are 13 populations, and 5 in Illinois.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release,
January 27, 1997
(submitted by Watt R. Moccasin, Protection)

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PROPOSES ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT PROTECTION FOR BOG TURTLE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing Endangered Species Act protection to conserve the remaining Bog Turtle population, which has seriously declined in the Northeast United States, the Service's Northeast Regional Director Ronald E. Lambertson announced.

"We have an opportunity to recover the northern population of the Bog Turtle if we take this crucial first step of Endangered Species Act protection," Lambertson said.

The northern population of the Bog Turtle, ranging from New York and Massachusetts south to Maryland, would be designated threatened, Lambertson said. The southern population of the Bog Turtle, ranging from southern Virginia to northern Georgia, would be protected with a threatened designation because its physical appearance is similar to the northern population. A species qualifies for threatened protection under the Act if it is likely to become endangered (and face extinction) within the foreseeable future.

Bog turtles are highly prized in the pet trade, bringing high prices from collectors and dealers, according to Lambertson. Many of the Bog Turtles presently in captivity were likely taken from the wild in violation of state

regulations. If the species is designated as threatened, activities such as interstate sale or the export or import of Bog Turtles will be prohibited by the Act.

The northern population of the Bog Turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergi*) has declined by 50 percent, mostly within the past 20 years. Illegal collection, primarily for the national and international pet trade, as well as loss and modification of the Bog Turtle's wetland habitat, have resulted in a reduction of the species' range and a decline in the size of the remaining population.

Currently, Bog Turtles are known to remain at fewer than 200 sites in their northern range. Based on site habitat quality, only 35 of the 165 sites assessed may be capable of supporting a healthy Bog Turtle population in the future unless measures are taken to maintain or enhance Bog Turtle habitat.

Because most Bog Turtle habitat is on private land, Lambertson said representatives of the Service, state wildlife agencies and conservation groups will work cooperatively with landowners to ensure that both the turtles and private landowners "can literally find common ground." Lambertson said appropriate permits for activities such as wetland filling and draining would require further consideration if the turtle is protected by the Act, but added that the emphasis will be "to find alternatives for the landowner that will also protect the turtles." The Service will not designate critical habitat for the Bog Turtle because such designation has the potential for increasing illegal collection.

Since 1975, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has monitored international trade in Bog Turtles, requiring permits for legal trade. However, significant illegal trade in Bog Turtles exists.

The southern Bog Turtle population is separated from the northern population by approximately 250 miles. However, individual Bog Turtles in the southern population closely resemble individuals in the northern Bog Turtle population, causing difficulty in enforcing prohibitions protecting the northern population. Therefore, the Service proposes to designate the southern population as "threatened (similarity of appearance)." This designation will prohibit collecting individual turtles from this population and ban interstate and international commercial trade.

It will have no effect on the land management activities of private landowners in the southern states.

If the species is federally protected, people who now legally possess Bog Turtles would be allowed to retain the turtles, but the Service recommends that individuals contact their state wildlife agency or the Service to obtain a statement indicating that they legally possessed the turtle prior to federal protection. All seven states in its northern range and all five states in its southern range provide varying degrees of protection for the Bog Turtle.

Several agencies and organizations support Endangered Species Act protection for the Bog Turtle, including state wildlife agencies in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Following a 90-day comment period on the proposed listing, Service biologists will review the information and comments received. Then, based on the best available science, Service staff will make a final decision on whether to add the northern population of the Bog Turtle to the federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

— U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release,
March 1997

INTERNATIONAL REPTILE SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO NEARLY 4 YEARS IN JAIL

On January 10, one of the most severe sentences ever handed down in a reptile smuggling case was imposed against a German national for his involvement in an international smuggling ring. In Orlando, Florida, Federal Judge Ann Conway sentenced Wolfgang Michael Kloe, 33, of Rauenberg, Germany, to serve 46 months in jail for his role in a reptile smuggling scheme. Kloe was also fined \$10,000. Simon David Harris, 25, of Blairgowrie, South Africa, and a partner in the smuggling conspiracy, received 3 years probation and 6 months in a community corrections facility for his role in the conspiracy.

Kloe, Harris, and four others, were indicted by a Federal grand jury in August 1996 for participating in an international wildlife smuggling conspiracy. They moved hundreds of protected reptiles from Madagascar through Europe and Canada into the United States. In October 1996, Kloe pleaded guilty to charges of smuggling, conspiracy, Lacey Act violations, money laundering, and attempted escape.

Their most recent smuggling attempt was intercepted at the Orlando International Airport on August 14, 1996, when officials found 61 Madagascar tree boas and 4 spider tortoises concealed in Harris' personal baggage. Harris had arrived on a commercial flight from Frankfurt, Germany, to attend a large commercial reptile trade show. Harris cooperated with the investigators and identified Wolfgang Kloe as a partner in the conspiracy and the intended recipient of the smuggled reptiles. Kloe was arrested 2 days later.

In this case alone, the wildlife had an estimated commercial value of more than \$250,000. The United States is the world's largest importer of wildlife and the demand for live reptiles has increased rapidly in the past few years. During a 2-year period, the individuals involved in this conspiracy smuggled at least 107 Madagascar tree boas

[*Sanzinia madagascariensis*], 25 spider tortoises [*Pyxis arachnoides*], 51 radiated tortoises [*Geochelone radiata*], and 2 Madagascar ground boas [*Acrantophis madagascariensis*] into the United States where they are prized by collectors of exotic reptiles and commercial reptile breeders.

These species occur naturally only in Madagascar. They are each protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international treaty signed by more than 130 nations designed to regulate and monitor the trade of rare plants and animals throughout the world. The radiated tortoise is also classified as endangered on the U.S. Endangered Species list. It is considered one of the most brilliant species of tortoises, with a bright yellow head and high-domed black shell with yellow starburst designs.

Four additional defendants in the case remain outside this country. The United States has begun formal extradition procedures against defendant Enrico Joseph Truant of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. The other defendants not yet arraigned are Frank H. Lehmeyer, Roland Werner, and Olaf Strohmman, all of Germany.

This case was investigated by special agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The prosecution was led by the United States Attorney's Office in Orlando, Florida, and assisted by the Wildlife and Marine Resources Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

— U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release, 23
January 1997

ILLINOIS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO WILDLIFE SMUGGLING; VENOMOUS SNAKES, OTHER REPTILES SENT THROUGH U.S. MAIL

A southern Illinois man today in court admitted his role in an international wildlife trafficking scheme that included smuggling of rare and protected reptiles from Spain, as well as shipping nearly 70 poisonous snakes through the U.S. mail in unmarked packages to avoid detection by authorities.

James P. Zaworski, 31, of Marion, Illinois, pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiracy to smuggle wildlife into the United States and to trade in protected species in interstate commerce. Zaworski, a reptile dealer known for his captive breeding success with small lizards called geckos, entered his guilty plea before Judge J. Phil Gilbert in U.S. District Court in Benton, Illinois, and now faces 5 years incarceration and/or a \$250,000 fine.

The investigation into Zaworski's activities began in 1994 at Kennedy Airport in New York city, where U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife inspectors discovered a mail parcel from Spain addressed to Zaworski. Hidden within

the parcel, were 13 Lilford's wall lizards [*Podarcis lilfordi*], a small blue lizard that inhabits the Balearic Islands off the coast of Spain. These lizards are protected by an international treaty, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), of which both the United States and Spain are signatory countries.

Following the package to its destination in southern Illinois, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Timothy Santel worked with U.S. Postal Inspectors, Illinois Conservation Police officers and other Service law enforcement officers to carry out a Federal search warrant at Zaworski's residence. They found records and documents chronicling 10 years of smuggling reptiles to and from Spain, France and South Africa. Among the reptiles seized at Zaworski's home were the 13 Lilford's wall lizards, European ladder ratsnakes also smuggled from Spain, box turtles illegally collected from a National Wildlife Refuge, venomous massasauga rattlesnakes mailed illegally from Florida, a timber rattlesnake and Great Plains ratsnakes listed as threatened species in Illinois, and two desert tortoises, a species considered threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Zaworski actively solicited and traded reptiles through the mail with Juan Gonzalez, a reptile supplier in Barcelona, Spain. Each would ship parcels containing live reptiles in plastic containers, using fictitious names and addresses. Packages were unmarked and declared as "books" to avoid detection. Search warrants were also served on Gonzalez by authorities in Barcelona, and portions of the investigation are ongoing in Spain and several U.S. states. Additional people may be charged.

Investigators found Zaworski frequently traded venomous snakes, collecting from the wild and subsequently mailing copperheads, timber rattlers, massasaugas, and speckled and diamondback rattlesnakes in violation of U.S. Postal laws. Zaworski was also found to have collected turtles and snakes from national wildlife refuges and national forests. These reptiles were then traded or sold to reptile collectors around the country.

Among the wildlife laws Zaworski violated are the U.S. Endangered Species Act, which prohibits trade in endangered and threatened species; and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which prohibits or restricts trade in listed species among the 134 signatory countries. In addition, Zaworski's trading activities violated the Lacey Act, a Federal statute which prohibits interstate commercialization of wildlife in violation of State laws. Some of the species traded were protected by Illinois state law, including the Dangerous Animals Act which prohibits the possession of dangerous wildlife, including venomous snakes.

This investigation was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney William E. Coonan, Southern District of Illinois and Jonathon Blackmer, U.S. Department of Jus-

tice, Wildlife and Marine Resources Section, Washington, D.C.

In a related smuggling investigation, Robert L. Mitchell, St. Charles, Missouri, pleaded guilty in April 1996 for violations of the Lacey Act. Mitchell was fined \$10,000 for unlawfully importing 18 live Hermann's tortoises through the mail. These protected tortoises were sent by Gonzalez of Barcelona, Spain, in the same manner that Zaworski smuggled reptiles.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release,
March 26, 1997
(submitted by Son O.F. Komarek, Leavenworth)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCES INDICTMENT OF STRICTLY REPTILES, INC

William A. Keefer, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and Jorge Picon, Senior Resident Agent, USFWS, announced that Michael J. VanNostrand and Dale Marantz and Strictly Reptiles, Inc. of Hollywood, Florida were indicted by a federal grand jury in Miami charging them in a 13-count indictment with conspiring to smuggle various reptiles from Argentina into Miami International Airport in violation of the Endangered Species Act and an international agreement known as CITES. Van Nostrand and Marantz were also charged with 4 counts of receipt, sale and facilitating the transportation of two species of smuggled boas, Chaco tortoises and tegu lizards in violation of the smuggling statute, Title 18, USC 545. In addition four misdemeanors are charged against each of the defendants under the Endangered Species Act for their activities involving trade in protected species. Finally the grand jury brought four felony charges against each defendant for violation of the federal Lacey Act, a conservation statute that permits the United States to assist other countries and the international community by giving effect to their wildlife protection laws in the U.S.

According to the allegations of the indictment, the defendants engaged in a protracted effort to secure wildlife illegally from Argentina over the period November 1990 through April, 1992. The indictment identifies six different species of wildlife allegedly smuggled into the U.S. by the conspirators totaling over 750 specimens of boas, tortoises, turtles and lizards. Because these animals are species of wildlife listed on CITES Appendices I and II, they are prohibited from importation into the U.S. without first obtaining a valid CITES permit from the exporting country.

According to the allegations of the indictment, at all relevant times, the three defendants failed to obtain or possess the required permits or certificates to engage in their trading and sales activity with respect to the speci-

mens identified in the charges. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Watts-Fitzgerald, Chief of the Environmental Crimes Section and Special Attorney Peter J. Murtha of the Dept. of Justice Wildlife and Marine Resources Section.

— U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release,
March 1997

HEARING WITHOUT EARS

When it comes to communication tools, the Panamanian Golden Frog [*Atelopus zeteki*] is proving to be surprisingly sophisticated. Although it lacks an outer and middle ear, the endangered amphibian can detect and respond to noise, Ohio State University scientists recently reported.

To test the frogs' hearing, researchers first set up speakers in their study subjects' habitat along remote mountain streams and played recordings of frog calls. The endangered animals – prized by illegal collectors for their brilliant yellow color – turned toward the speakers and returned the calls. "Not only can they hear, but they likely can also localize sounds," says zoologist Erik Lindquist. The creatures do have inner ears typical of amphibians. Apparently the frogs detect noise through their lungs, which are close to the surface and vibrate in response to sound waves, acting as eardrums.

The study also found that frogs wave their forearms in a sort of sign language. Males, for example, wave at rivals to indicate aggression. Two frogs may wage a waving contest to determine which one is dominant. If one does not back down, the two may wrestle until one wins. Females also wave at males, apparently in warning. If a male approaches despite the signaling, he may succeed in mating. "The female may be testing the resolve of the male," says zoologist Thomas Hetherington.

Only a handful of other frog species use such sign language, and all of them live along torrential streams where the water drowns out most other noises. Says Lindquist, "It may be that in noisy habitats, visual signaling is just more reliable."

— National Wildlife, June/July 1997
(submitted by Richard Rundquist, Lawrence)

FEATURE ARTICLES

REPORT ON A CLUTCH OF RAT SNAKE EGGS (*Elaphe obsoleta*) FROM KANSAS

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On 19 July 1994, Helen Kiefer of rural Baldwin, Kansas, brought to the Natural History Museum a clutch of snake eggs that she found while cleaning out a planter on her patio. She reported finding a total of 15 eggs, one of which she had opened to determine what was inside.

The eggs were brought to the museum in a large tin can, and were showing signs of dehydration (severe dimpling of the surface, very dry to the touch) at the time they were received in the museum. Paper towels moistened with distilled water were immediately placed in the container with the eggs to rehydrate them. The eggs were transported to my home a few hours later, and set up for incubation in a gallon jar, following the technique recommended by Tryon (1975). The gallon jar was placed on its side in a frame to prevent movement. A volume of approximately 800 ml of vermiculite (sold for use as a potting soil) and distilled water was added. The eggs were placed on top of the vermiculite, slightly pressed down so that they would not roll around, and the jar lid tightly closed. The eggs were incubated in an unairconditioned, second floor room with no additional external heat source. During incubation, the jar was opened every few days, fresh air fanned in for a few moments, and reclosed.

The first group of seven young hatched between 2 September 1994 and 4 September 1994; the remaining seven young hatched on 17 September 1994 (Table 1). Upon hatching, the young were identified as rat snakes, *Elaphe obsoleta* (identification confirmed by Joseph T. Collins). The empty egg shells (KU 221788) and one of the young (KU 221789) were cataloged in the collection of the Division of Herpetology of the Natural History Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, as vouchers. The remaining snakes were released within a day of hatching in a

protected area of appropriate habitat.

According to Collins (1993), mating activity in this species usually takes place in late April or early May, although it has been observed in the fall (Fitch, 1970). Eggs are laid in June or July, and hatch late August through October (Fitch, 1970). Collins (1993) reports that clutch size for *Elaphe obsoleta* ranges from 6-44 eggs. In Kansas and Missouri, Fitch (1985) reports that clutch size ranges from 6-27, with an average clutch size of 11.2 eggs.

Due to the gap between times of hatching (Table 1), it is possible that this clutch was composed of the eggs of at least two females, who happened to choose the same egg deposition site. Communal nesting in *Elaphe obsoleta* has been reported in Indiana by Lynch (1966).

The total length of the young at hatching ranged from 281 mm to 558 mm, with an average length of 330.6 mm. The measurements of the hatchlings are given in Table 1.

Despite being a common snake in the midwest, there are few detailed reports of clutch size in this species, and little information about the size of hatchlings in the literature. In fact, there is little of this kind of information for most midwestern snakes. Whenever KHS members have the opportunity to hatch wild-caught reptile eggs, the young should be measured prior to release, the identification verified by a second observer, and the information reported to the KHS Newsletter. It is only by the gradual accumulation of small bits of information that we can reach a comprehensive understanding of Kansas herpetology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Helen Kiefer for bringing the eggs to the Natural History Museum; Ligia G. Simmons for her assis-

tance in caring for the incubating eggs, measuring the hatchlings, and releasing the young; Joseph R. Mendelson III for measuring and releasing young while I was out of the country; and Joseph T. Collins for verifying the identification of the species and for reviewing this paper.

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Table 1. Date of hatching and size of hatchlings in mm.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date of Hatching</u>	<u>Snout-Vent</u>	<u>Tail Length</u>	<u>Total Length</u>
1	02-03 Sep 1994	275	55	330
2	02-03 Sep 1994	284	58	342
3	02-03 Sep 1994	287	63	350
4	02-03 Sep 1994	273	59	332
5	02-03 Sep 1994	252	58	253
6	02-03 Sep 1994	247	58	558
7	04 Sep 1994	261	54	315
8	17 Sep 1994			310
9	17 Sep 1994			343
10	17 Sep 1994			291
11	17 Sep 1994			305
12	17 Sep 1994			281
13	17 Sep 1994			328
14	17 Sep 1994			290
Average snout-vent length (N=7) = 268.4				
Average tail length (N=7) = 57.9				
Average total length (N=14) = 330.6; SD 65				

RESULTS OF THE NINTH ANNUAL KHS HERP COUNTS HELD 1 APRIL-31 MAY 1997

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The ninth 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 1997. A total of 20 counts were conducted this year and are reported herein, demonstrating various approaches to censusing amphibians and reptiles. Two counts were sponsored by the Society and held in May. Common names are those standardized by Collins (1997).

Following my previous position statement (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.

MIAMI COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was held in the northern two-thirds of Miami County on 5 April from 0830-1730 hrs. There was rain in the morning and partly sunny skies in the afternoon. Suzanne L. and Joseph T. Collins were the participants.

American Toad	±50
Northern Cricket Frog	1
Western Chorus Frog	±500
Gray Treefrog	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	1
Ringneck Snake	3
Eastern Rat Snake	2
Western Ribbon Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	1

Brown Snake 1

Total

11 species ±562 specimens

1ST SHAWNEE COUNTY HERP COUNT

Joe Collins conducted a herp count north of U. S. rt. 24 in the northern one-third of Shawnee County on 19 April from 1100-1500 hrs. Observers were Suzanne L. and Joseph T. Collins.

Western Chorus Frog	±25
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	10
Common Garter Snake	2

Total

4 species ±38 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

2ND SHAWNEE COUNTY HERP COUNT

Joe Collins led a herp count at the H. R. Green Wildlife Refuge in Shawnee County on 19 April. Weather conditions were sunny and warm and the count lasted from 1300-1400 hrs. Suzanne L. and Joseph T. Collins were the participants.

Western Chorus Frog (calling)	3
Gray Treefrog (calling)	1

Total

2 species 4 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

1ST LINN COUNTY HERP COUNT

Joe Collins led a herp count at Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge on 24 April in Linn County. Skies were partly cloudy and the count lasted from 1215-1330 hrs. Observers were Jean Hays and Joseph T. Collins.

Eastern Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	2
Slider	20
Ringneck Snake	19
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	3

Total

6 species 46 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

8TH ANNUAL COWLEY COUNTY HERP COUNT

Al Volkmann conducted his annual Cowley county count on 29 April from 1030-1530 hrs at 13 mi E of Winfield. As in previous years, this survey covered the same area as in the original 1989 survey. The mid-survey temperature was 61°F. Water temperature was 55°F. The sky was overcast with a north wind at 10-15 mph. The area had been partially burned this year. Intermittent streams on the area were flowing and the pond was full. Participants were Lisa Kellerby, Joyce Lent, Kristen Mefford, Robert Previtera, Al Volkmann, Todd Volkmann, and Stan Wiechman.

Northern Cricket Frog	39
Plains Leopard Frog	1
Snapping Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Slider	1
Collared Lizard	4
Great Plains Skink	5
Western Slender Glass Lizard	7
Ringneck Snake	41
Flathead Snake	9
Racer	8
Great Plains Rat Snake	5
Common Kingsnake	1
Milk Snake	1
Gopher Snake	1
Western Ribbon Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	1

Total

18 species 129 specimens

1ST KHS FIELD TRIP HERP COUNT (CHASE COUNTY)

The first KHS Spring Field Trip was held at the Z-Bar Ranch Prairie Preserve on 3-4 May. Surveys were conducted from 1000-1700 hrs on 3 May and from 0900-1300 hrs on 4 May. Skies were clear with strong south winds and the high temperature was 73°F. Participants were Michael Moriarty; Nick Vaughan, Damon Mar; Bill, Anna, Colin, Gen, Larry, Jackie, and Walker Busby; Rex, Gregory, and Jason Gammer, C. J. Russell; Henry Hall; Eric Kessler; Stanley Rasmussen; Andy Burr; Dan Murrow; Glenn Manning; Ron Klataske; Kirk Setsa; George Cunningham; Susanne Hickey; Karen Graham; Trey Harrison; Daren Riedle, Les and Paul Shipman; Chris Wilkinson; Dan and Shelbi Carpenter; Caleb and Olin Karch; Matt Combs; Greg Sievert, Eric and Ann Rundquist, Chris Mammoliti and family (4); Stan and Jan Roth; Dave, Allison, and Tabby Reber; Dan Watson; Dee Payne; Jim and Marla Gubanyi; Barbara and Scott Wilhousen, Karen Toepfer, John Lokke, and Mary Kate Baldwin.

Woodhouse's Toad	3
Northern Cricket Frog	43
Western Chorus Frog	35
Plains Leopard Frog	15
Bullfrog	107
Common Snapping Turtle	11
Ornate Box Turtle	7
Painted Turtle	50
Slider	9
Collared Lizard	104
Texas Horned Lizard	3
Great Plains Skink	197
Ringneck Snake	22
Flathead Snake	45
Racer	8
Great Plains Rat Snake	7
Common Kingsnake	7
Milk Snake	7
Common Garter Snake	8
Northern Water Snake	3
Lined Snake	5

Total

21 species 696 specimens

Verifiers were Karen Toepfer, Eric Rundquist, Daren Riedle, John Lokke, and Stan Roth.

2ND COWLEY COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was held at T35 S, R4E, Sec. 1 and T35S, R5E, Sec. 6 on 3 May in Cowley County from 0930-1530 hrs. Participants were Jim Marlett, Chris Marlett, Bill

Langley, and 12 Wichita Audubon Society members.

Woodhouse's Toad	1
Northern Cricket Frog	2
Western Chorus Frog	2
Gray Treefrog complex	1
Bullfrog	1
Plains Narrowmouth Frog	8
Collared Lizard	3
Ground Skink	3
Western Slender Glass lizard	1
Ringneck Snake	6
Racer	2
Eastern Rat Snake	2
Copperhead	5

Total

13 species 37 specimens

Verifier was Jim Marlett.

3RD COWLEY COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was held on 4 May at T34S, R6E, Secs. 7, 8, 18 in Cowley County from 0930-1130 hrs. Participants were Jim and Patty Marlett, Eddie Stegall, and six members of the Wichita Audubon Society.

Flathead Snake	2
Racer	1
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Prairie Kingsnake	1
Brown Snake	1
Plainbelly Water Snake	2

Total

6 species 8 specimens

Verifier was Jim Marlett.

2ND LINN COUNTY HERP COUNT

Joe Collins led a herp count at the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Management Area in Linn County on 10 May from 1230-1500 hrs. Observers were Suzanne L. and Joseph T. Collins.

Common Snapping Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	32
Slider	38
Rough Green Snake	1
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	2

Total

6 species 75 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

3RD LINN COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was held on 10 May at the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Refuge in Linn County from 1500-1800 hrs. Participants were Suzanne L. and Joseph T. Collins.

Northern Cricket Frog (daylight choruses)	± 100
Eastern Box Turtle	1
Ringneck Snake	36
Racer	1
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Common Garter Snake	2
Plainbelly Water Snake	3

Total

7 species ±143 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

DOUGLAS COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was made in Douglas County in the vicinity of Lawrence Municipal Airport on 17 May 1997 from 2030-1145hrs during a wind and lightning storm with moderate rainfall. Observers were Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins.

Eastern Tiger Salamander	1
Woodhouse's Toad	18
Northern Cricket Frog	±200
Western Chorus Frog	±15
Gray Treefrog	15
Plains Leopard Frog	1
Bullfrog	5
Prairie Kingsnake	1

Total

8 species ±256 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

TREGO COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was conducted in Trego County on 17 May at the south shore of Cedar Bluff Reservoir from 0700-1000 hrs. Participants were Neil Bass and Phil Briney.

Plains Leopard Frog (calling)	13
Racer	1
Ringneck Snake	15
Great Plains Rat Snake	1

Total

4 species 30 specimens

Verifier was Neil Bass.

4TH LINN COUNTY HERP COUNT

Joe Collins held a herp count at Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge, Linn County on 18 May from 1030-1200 hrs. Conditions were sunny and warm. Observers were Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins.

Southern Leopard Frog	1
Common Snapping Turtle	4
Common Musk Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	8
Slider	12
Ringneck Snake	9
Rough Green Snake	2
Racer	1
Common Garter Snake	1
Plainbelly Water Snake	3

Total

10 species 42 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

5TH LINN HERP COUNT

A herp count was held at Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Management Area, Linn County on 18 May from 1200-1530 hrs under sunny and warm conditions. Observers were Suzanne L. Collins and Joseph T. Collins.

Northern Cricket Frog	2
Bullfrog	2
Southern Leopard Frog	1
Common Snapping Turtle	1
Eastern Box Turtle	1
Painted Turtle	1
Slider	15
Rough Green Snake	2
Racer	1
Common Garter Snake	1
Plainbelly Water Snake	2
Northern Water Snake	1

Total

12 species 30 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

PRATT COUNTY HERP COUNT

A brief herp count was conducted on 24 May at 2320 hrs at approximately 5 mi S of Pratt, Pratt County on U. S. rt. 281. The only participant and verifier was Eric Rundquist.

Woodhouse's Toad (calling)	3
Spotted Chorus Frog (calling)	±10
Western Chorus Frog (calling)	±30

Total

3 species ±43 specimens

6TH ANNUAL BARBER COUNTY HERP COUNT

Eric Rundquist conducted his annual herp count at several sites on the Alexander Ranch in Barber County on 24-26 May. Conditions on 24-25 May were warm (high 86°F) with strong south winds and evening thunderstorms (.30 in). The high temperature 26 May was 72°F with N winds at 11 mph. Ann and Eric Rundquist were the observers.

Red-spotted Toad	3
Northern Cricket Frog	3
Bullfrog	1
Ornate Box Turtle	1
Collared Lizard	7
Texas Horned Lizard	1
Prairie Lizard	1
Great Plains Skink	2
Southern Prairie Skink	1
Ground Skink	1
Glossy Snake	1
Great Plains Rat Snake	1
Eastern Hognose Snake	1
Night Snake	2
Common Kingsnake	1
Coachwhip	1
Ground Snake	3
Lined Snake	5
Texas Blind Snake	3
Western Rattlesnake	1

Total

20 species 40 specimens

Eric Rundquist was the verifier.

KHS RED HILLS HERP COUNT

The second KHS spring field trip was held in Barber, Clark and Comanche Counties on 23–26 May from Clark County State Lake east to Medicine Lodge, generally in the southern half of the counties. There was a thunderstorm on evening of 24 May and skies were sunny to partly sunny during days. Participants were Mary Kate Baldwin, Damon Boeck, Keith Coleman, Joseph T. Collins, Suzanne L. Collins, Nichole Grim, James Gubanyi, Olin Karch, Larry L. Miller, Suzanne L. Miller, Andrew Moriarty, Annie Moriarty, Carolyn Moriarty, Emily Moriarty, Michael Moriarty, Jerrod Pearce, Mike Pearce, Ann Rundquist, Eric Rundquist, Byron Shaw, Caden Shaw, Kendall Shaw, Liz Stein, Nick Vaughn, and Jami Wyatt.

Plains Spadefoot	2
Great Plains Toad	16
Red-spotted Toad	3
Woodhouse's Toad	16
Northern Cricket Frog	±40
Spotted Chorus Frog	±10
Plains Leopard Frog	3
Bullfrog	3
Plains Narrowmouth Toad	2
Common Snapping Turtle	3
Yellow Mud Turtle	4
Ornate Box Turtle	9
Painted Turtle	3
Slider	1
Collared Lizard	6
Lesser Earless Lizard	4
Prairie Lizard	2
Texas Horned Lizard	3
Great Plains Skink	1
Southern Prairie Skink	1
Six-lined Racerunner	23
Western Slender Glass Lizard	23
Western Hognose Snake	2
Eastern Hognose Snake	2
Ringneck Snake	2
Racer	5
Coachwhip	3
Great Plains Rat Snake	2
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Bullsnake	10
Prairie Kingsnake	5
Common Kingsnake	1
Longnose Snake	1
Ground Snake	1
Western Ribbon Snake	2
Common Garter Snake	2
Plainbelly Water Snake	3
Massasauga	5
Western Rattlesnake	7

Total

39 species ±232 specimens

Verifier was Joseph T. Collins.

SOUTHCENTRAL KANSAS ROAD COUNT

Eric Rundquist conducted a road count from approximately 8 mi W of Medicine Lodge to Wichita on U.S. Rt. 160 and Ks. Rts. 2/42 from 1130-1330 hrs on 26 May. Total miles traveled were 89. Eric and Ann Rundquist were the observers.

Woodhouse's Toad	1
Bullfrog	2
Ornate Box Turtle (2 AOR)	8
Yellow Mud Turtle	1
Eastern Rat Snake	1
Gopher Snake	2
Common Garter Snake	1

Total

7 species 16 specimens

Eric Rundquist was the verifier.

KANSAS TURNPIKE ROAD COUNT

A road count was conducted on the Kansas Turnpike between the Andover and South Topeka exits on 26 May from 1550-1730 hrs. Road traffic was heavy. Total miles traveled were 117. Eric and Ann Rundquist were the participants.

Common Snapping Turtle	1
Racer	1
Diamondback Watersnake	1
Gopher Snake	1

Total

4 species 4 specimens

Eric Rundquist was the verifier.

GRAHAM COUNTY HERP COUNT

A herp count was held on 31 May in Graham County at T8s, R21W, N 1/2 Sec. 10 from 1230-1530 hrs. Neil Bass was the only participant and verifier.

Woodhouse's Toad	3
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Plains Leopard Frog	1
Common Snapping Turtle	1
Six-lined Racerunner	6

Total

4 species 11 specimens

A grand total of 69 species and 2383 specimens were observed during this year's counts.

Literature Cited

- Collins, J. T. 1997. Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians and Reptiles. SSAR Herpetol. Circ. X: iv + X pp.
- Rundquist, E. M 1994. Results of the sixth annual KHS herp counts held 1 April-31 May 1994. Kansas Herpetol. Soc. Newsl. 97: 5-14.

OBSERVATIONS ON AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN THE APALACHICOLA REGION OF FLORIDA

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From 22 to 27 December 1996, we had the opportunity to visit and conduct a count of amphibians and reptiles observed on the Gulf Coast of Florida in the vicinity of Apalachicola. Accompanied by Kelly J. Irwin (Texas A&M University), we explored promising habitats on St. George Island (Franklin County) and the area just northeast of East Point (Franklin County). Weather during the entire trip was partly cloudy to sunny, with one day of rainfall. We observed the following (F = mainland Franklin County; SG = St. George Island, Franklin County):

Plethodon grobmani
(Southeastern Slimy Salamander) 2 (F)
Bufo terrestris (Southern Toad) 8 (F, SG)
Gastrophryne carolinensis
(Eastern Narrowmouth Toad) 1 (F)
Hyla squirella (Squirrel Treefrog) 2 (F, SG)
Pseudacris crucifer (Spring Peeper) 1 (F)

Pseudacris nigrita (Southern Chorus Frog) ± 50 (F)
Rana sphenoccephala (Southern Leopard Frog) . 4 (F, SG)
Anolis carolinensis (Green Anole) ± 15 (F, SG)
Scincella lateralis (Ground Skink) 4 (F, SG)
Alligator mississippiensis (American Alligator) ... 1 (SG)

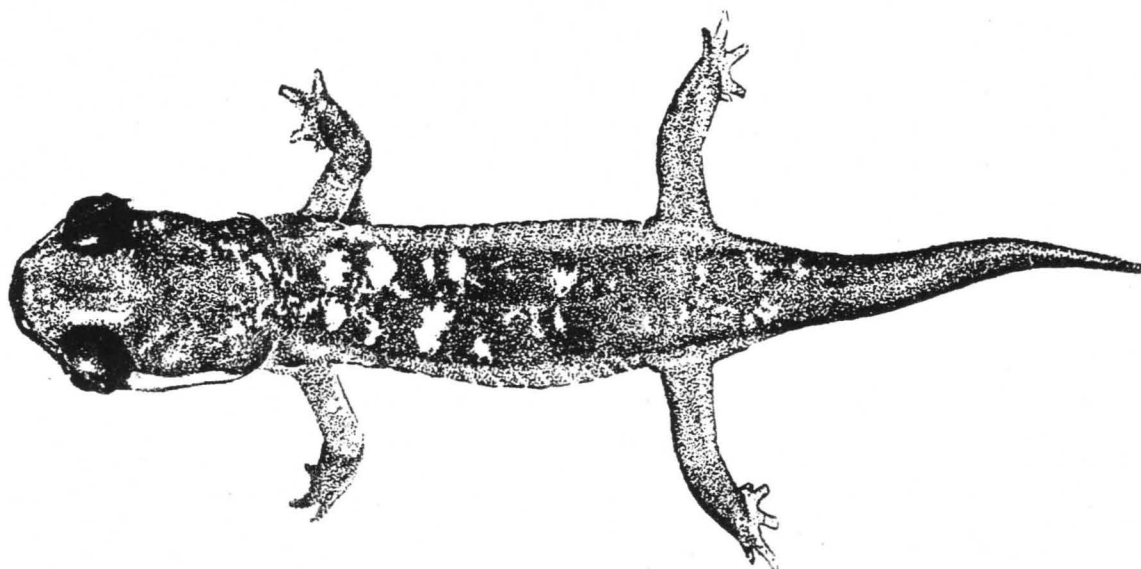
Total

10 species 88 specimens

All common names are those standardized by Collins (1997).

Literature Cited

Collins, J. T. 1997. Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians and Reptiles. Fourth Edition. SSAR Herpetol. Circ. 25: 1-40.



SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Another Western Diamondback Rattlesnake in Kansas

A male Western Diamondback Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*) was found on 16 October 1996 in northern Lyon County at the junction of Ks. rt. 99 and U.S. rt. 56. The snake was 124.5 cm (49 in.) SV length with a 5.1 cm (2 in.) rattle. Although the snake was alive when found, it had been recently hit by a vehicle and was in poor health. It is unknown whether the specimen was a released captive and had been inadvertently been carried by vehicle from its normal range. The surrounding area at the collection site is riparian habitat with wooded hillsides graduating into upland prairie. Several houses are located within 500 yards of the location. The snake has been deposited in the herpetological collections of the Natural History Museum at the University of Kansas, Lawrence (KU).

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Mid-winter Herp Activity in Kansas

En route to Douglas County State Lake on 1 January, 1997 at about 1400 hrs, I was surprised to encounter a Prairie Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis calligaster*) crossing a dirt road one mile E of the lake (T14S, R20E, center of Sec. 25). The 50.8-61.0 cm (20-24 in.) snake was active and appeared to be in good health. The weather had been foggy early in the morning and was partly cloudy and mild with a light W wind in the afternoon. The high temperature in Lawrence this date was 58°F, and the previous day's high and low were 36° and 24°F, respectively. There had been no recent rain, although soil moisture was unusually wet. One amphibian, a single Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*) was also observed later that day. It was found along an ice-bordered creek that drained into the E side of Douglas County State Lake.

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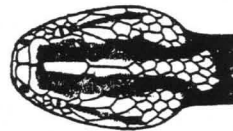
Bullsnake Combat in Sedgwick County, Kansas

On 10 May, 1997, I observed two Bullsnakes (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*) in combat at 1327 hrs at the Sedgwick County Zoo. The snakes were initially heard in artificially restored tallgrass prairie habitat at the SW apex of an earthen berm between the Herpetarium and the Jungle Building. The snakes emerged from a large clump of bluestem grass (*Andropogon* sp.) and traversed south. The snakes continued in vigorous combat until 1341 hrs, when they literally ran into my right foot, being obviously unaware of my presence. At this point, both animals attempted to flee. I subsequently captured both snakes to positively determine their sex and subjectively gauge their size.

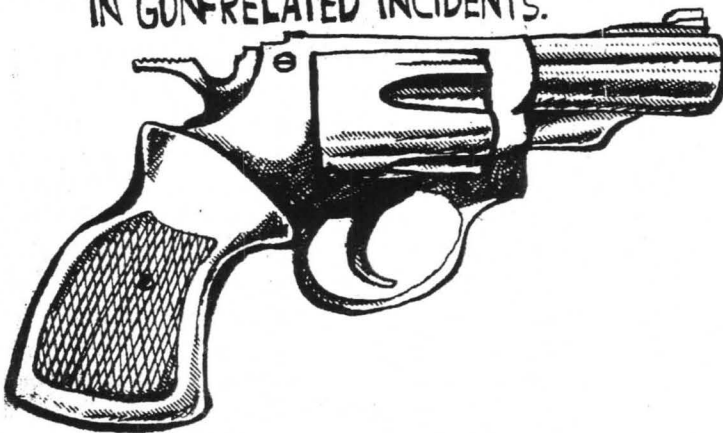
Both specimens were well-fleshed males of approximately equal size, about 1.22-1.37 m (4-4.5 ft.) in TL. Although agitated, neither specimen attempted to strike or bite. On release, one animal fled overland in a NE direction. The other snake, however, made its way to a clump of grass and began what appeared to be searching attempts. It located a small mammal burrow within 15 sec and disappeared down the burrow in a matter of seconds. This snake appeared to have prior knowledge of this burrow.

Skies were clear with a temperature of approximately 65°F. The observed combat was typically colubrid, with coiling and wrapping of the lower 1/3-1/2 of the body and vigorous topping attempts. Both snakes hissed loudly and relatively continuously during the fight but neither attempted to bite the other.

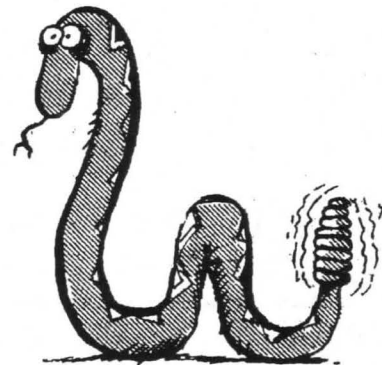
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IN 1994, THE MOST RECENT
YEAR WITH AVAILABLE STATISTICS,
340 KANSANS DIED
IN GUN-RELATED INCIDENTS.



DEATHS FROM
RATTLESNAKES: 0



GUESS WHICH OF THESE THE KANSAS LEGISLATURE
WANTS "ROUNDED UP" and WHICH IT WANTS MORE OF.

CROWSON
1997
THE WEEKLY EAGLE
4-24