

**KANSAS
HERPETOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**



NEWSLETTER

Number 5

February 1975

FIRST 1975 KHS MEETING HELD IN LAWRENCE

On 25 January KHS members gathered in Dyche Auditorium at the KU Museum of Natural History for the first meeting of 1975. After a welcoming address by new KHS President George Pisani, a program with a conservation theme was presented.

E. Raymond Hall, distinguished mammalogist and director emeritus of the KU Museum of Natural History, opened the program with a brief talk about SOIL (Save Our Invaluable Land -- for more information check KHS Newsletter # 4 on page 2). SOIL is an organization attempting to prevent construction of the proposed Hillsdale Reservoir by the Army Corps of Engineers. Dr. Hall's presentation was followed by our main speaker, Harvey Lillywhite, assistant professor of physiology and cell biology, who talked on chaparral and fire ecology, and its effects on amphibians and reptiles. Dr. Lillywhite's talk was supplemented by his color slides, and was enjoyed by all in attendance.

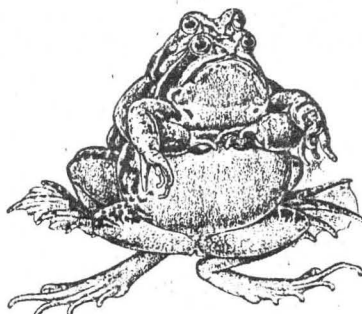
The KHS thanks both Drs. Lillywhite and Hall for sharing their ideas and research projects with us.

NEXT KHS MEETING IN WICHITA

The next meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society will be held on 29 March (Saturday) in the education room at the Sedgwick County Zoo at Wichita. The program will be:

David Grow, Sedgwick County Zoo Keeper
Topic: The new Sedgwick County Zoo Herpetarium
Time: 1:00 pm

All members are urged to attend this meeting. In addition to Dave Grow's presentation, members will be able to tour the zoo and view the many excellent exhibits in the herpetarium and other areas. Persons attending should inform the admission clerk at the zoo's main entrance that they are KHS members in order to gain free admittance.



1974 KHS TREASURER'S REPORT

The following report represents all KHS income and expenditure for the calendar (fiscal) year 1974. The KHS Treasurer's books were audited and approved by Mark B. Adams, Secretary-Treasurer, Midwestern Properties, 703 Massachusetts, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

Income

Membership dues (70 members) \$ 210.00

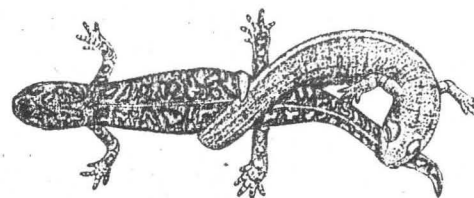
Expenditures

Newsletter #1	5.74	
Newsletter #2	13.07	
Newsletter #3	14.12	
Postage	7.00	
Stationary	38.81	
Refreshments (KHS meetings)	26.63	
Treasurer's supplies	2.74	
Bank charges	1.30 \$ 109.41

Balance on hand (31 December 1974) \$ 100.59

Respectfully submitted

Mary E. Dawson
KHS Treasurer



PERRY NEW KHS NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The KHS Executive Council met on 9 January 1975 with President George R. Pisani presiding. The council unanimously approved Janice Perry as editor of the KHS Newsletter for calendar 1975. Joseph T. Collins, editor during 1974, will become associate editor.

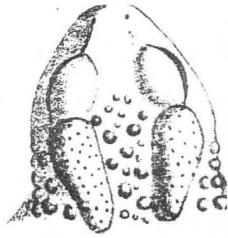
In other KHS Council action, President Pisani appointed Collins as program chairman for 1975 and charged him to plan programs throughout Kansas during the coming year.

CORRECTION

The KHS Newsletter editors extend their apologies to Wally Boles. We incorrectly stated that he had held a job as reptile keeper at the Taronga Zoo. Actually, he applied for the position but did not get it due to a lack of experience in handling venomous elapid snakes.



COLLECTING IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

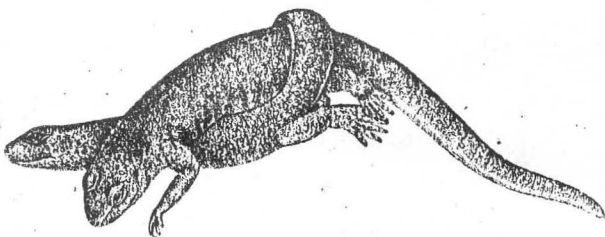


Leaving Enid, Oklahoma, in a torrential rain on Veteran's Day, I headed south for the San Antonio, Texas, area. I was eagerly looking forward to collecting and observing critters in that part of Texas, especially in the Texas hill country. During the evening I spotted the first specimen of the trip -- a Gulf coast toad (Bufo valliceps) at the edge of Leon Creek. I had no further luck that evening, but the following day the same area yielded a small Rio Grande leopard frog (Rana berlandieri) that eluded me with evasive maneuvers in a rainpool. A nearby fisherman gave me a five-inch male Texas slider (Chrysemys concinna) that had found its way onto his hook. While gazing at the creek and its surrounding habitat, I observed two western ribbon snakes (Thamnophis proximus) swim across the stream.

With these discoveries to whet my appetite, I made my first trip towards the hill country on 3 November. Heading west to Castroville and then north to Kempf Creek, I found several hundred rocks to turn. The rocks were interspersed with thorny plants and cactus, and the Opuntia had leaves much larger than its more northerly cousin. Despite the favorable habitat, I caught only one small eastern spotted whiptail (Cnemidophorus sacki gularis). Driving north through Riomadina did not improve my collecting success. I stopped just north of Paradise Campground south of Mico in the oak-cedar woodland of the Balcones Escarpment proper. The Madina River cuts a deep canyon into solid dark-colored rock east of the road at this locality. I saw only a rose-bellied lizard (Sceloporus variabilis marmoratus) among a multitude of rocks, and it escaped beneath a boulder. Amphibians and reptiles were hardly throwing themselves at me, so I called it quits for this trip.

It wasn't until 10 November that I got down to the hill country for a second try at finding critters. Instead of driving past Kempf Creek, I stopped and found a small Gulf coast toad along the stream edge. Several hours later I collected a female southern prairie lizard (Sceloporus undulatus consobrinus) under a large rock. In addition, I dipped some unidentifiable tadpoles (aren't they all!) from the swift, clear stream southeast of the Madina River below Madina Lake Dam.

Approaching Leon Creek at noon on 13 November (my third trip), I observed a 3½ foot ribbon snake crawling slowly up the stream bank to sun itself. When I got too close, it retreated to the water and swam to the other side. Nearby, a hatchling red-eared turtle (Chrysemys scripta elegans) basked on a wood chip near a small dam.

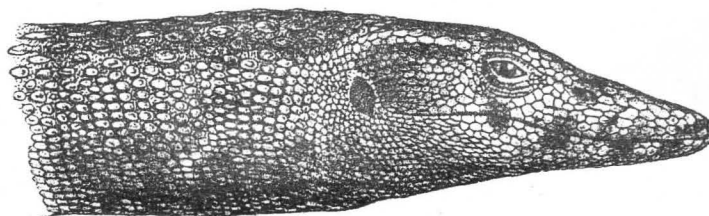


As I wandered along the stream an hour later, I watched a melanistic male red-eared slider feeding just away from stream edge.

From Leon Creek I headed west and north to an "undeveloped" development in Madina County in the hill country. Turning off the main road, I immediately observed a freshly killed Texas patch-nosed snake (Salvadora grahamsi lineata) which had been run over by a car. Hoping for a change in collecting luck in this area, I looked under several hundred rocks -- nothing. So, I contented myself with collecting snails for a friend who was interested in these creatures. After picking up a good sample of these easily caught little beasts, I got in my car and drove no more than 100 yards when a 3½ foot Great Plains rat snake (Elaphe guttata emoryi) crawled onto the pavement. Things began picking up. Further down the highway, just south of the first Madina River crossing, I found a dead male central Texas whip-snake (Masticophis taeniatus ornatus). Later in the afternoon I found a Texas alligator lizard (Gerrhonotus liocephalus infernalis) and an eastern yellow-bellied racer (Coluber constrictor flaviventris), both killed on the highway by cars. Returning to the development east of Riomadina, I decided to quit for the day after discovering a small western diamondback rattlesnake (Crotalus atrox) -- it, too, smashed by a car.

My next visit to the Texas hill country was on a cool and cloudy 16 November. I again returned to Riomadina, but headed west on a different route to Lake Madina. Where the road crosses the Rio Madina, I observed a couple of Blanchard's cricket frogs (Acris crepitans blanchardi) along with a solitary leopard frog. After observing so much carnage to reptiles on my last trip, it was a relief to find a live checkered gartersnake (Thamnophis marcianus) the following afternoon. In addition, I preserved road kills -- a young western coachwhip (Masticophis flagellum testaceus) and a rough green snake (Opheodrys aestivus). Thus ended my fourth trip to the Texas hill country.

My next opportunity to this wilderness area of Texas came on 19 November -- and right on schedule came the road kills. First, a mutilated prairie kingsnake (Lampropeltis c. calligaster) and then . . . a live leopard frog! The unfortunate frog had hopped onto the pavement and was searching in confusion for a damper place to spend the day. In addition, I observed a few bullfrogs (Rana catesbeiana) along the Madina River edge nearby. A little way down the road I stopped to turn some rocks



and saw some Sceloporus (fence lizards) but they escaped. A few moments later I caught a male rose-bellied lizard.

Driving through this hill country was quite pleasant. The presence of faults gave it a very mountainous aspect, similar to the Ozarks or foothills of the Sierras in the fall with shades of green intermixed with various reds, oranges and yellows. The trip was worth it just to enjoy the beauty of the scenery. In fact, the scenery was so fascinating that my chance glance at the road gave me just enough time to swerve the car and straddle a slowly lumbering female stinkpot (Sternotherus odoratus). I stopped to pick her up and noticed that she was covered with light speckles -- more speckled than any other stinkpot I had ever seen. Back in the car and driving further down the highway, I stopped and picked up another Texas alligator lizard, this one alive and squirming, as well as another dead western diamondback rattlesnake -- with its head crushed and rattle missing, sure sign that an ignorant motorist had killed for a "rattle" souvenir. A little further down the road I found a real prize. Sitting on the blacktop was a broad-banded copperhead (Agkistrodon contortrix laticinctus), still exhibiting the greenish-yellow tail of a young specimen. This trip had been most rewarding.

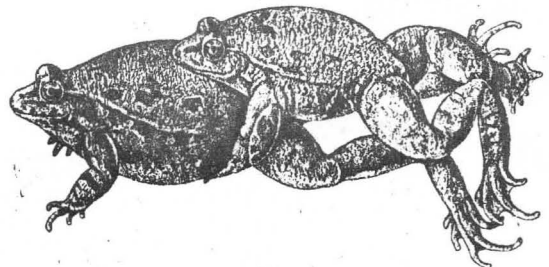
My last visit to hill country was on 20 November, but not much was found -- a small eastern hognose snake (Heterodon platyrhinos) and a Texas spiny lizard (Sceloporus olivaceus). Both were dead on the highway.

Altogether I had observed or collected 24 species of amphibians and reptiles in the Texas hill country -- good enough for any herpetologist.

-- Richard L. Lardie, 1414 Parker Street, Enid, Oklahoma, 73701.

SAVITSKY TO ECUADOR

Alan H. Savitsky, senior curatorial assistant in the division of herpetology at KU's Museum of Natural History, will travel to Ecuador in March for a month. Prime purpose of the trip is to meet with William E. Duellman, curator of the division. Duellman has been collecting in South America since May 1974 and will return to Kansas in the fall of 1975. In addition to bringing specimens collected by Duellman back to the Museum, Savitsky will be engaged in field work and research on his own projects.



THREE NEW HERPETOLOGICAL RECORDS FOR KANSAS

I recently examined the herpetological collection at Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater and discovered two species of reptiles from counties not plotted by Collins on his maps in his 1974 "Amphibians and reptiles in Kansas." The two records are:

- 1) Western painted turtle (Chrysemys picta belli)
OSU # R1496
Locality: Sedgwick County, 4 mi W Wichita
- 2) Texas Long-nosed snake (Rhinocheilus lecontei tessellatus) -- a threatened species in Kansas.
OSU # R1097
Locality: Hamilton County, 1 mi S Syracuse

The Texas long-nosed snake represents the most northern locality in Kansas where this species has been found.

In addition, I recently donated a Missouri slider (Chrysemys floridana hoyi) from my personal collection to the Museum of Natural History at KU in Lawrence. This turtle was taken at the west edge of Fort Scott in Bourbon County, and is the first record of this species from that county.

-- Richard L. Lardie, 1414 Parker Street, Enid, Oklahoma 73701.

CURRENT LITERATURE

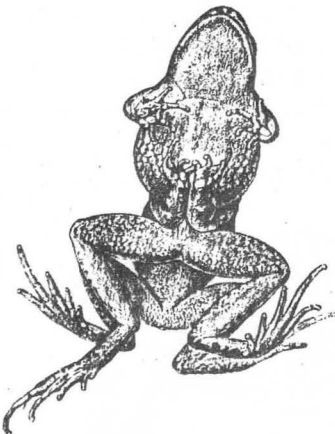
This current literature section has been compiled by Mary E. Dawson, and contains articles of possible interest to KHS members.

Busack, S. D.

1974. Amphibians and reptiles imported into the United States (during 1970 and 1971). USDI, Wildlife Leaflet 506: 36 pages. (Available from U. S. Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.)

Karns, D., R. E. Ashton and T. Swearingen

1974. Illustrated guide to amphibians and reptiles: an identification manual. Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist. Pub. Ed. Ser., 2: 26 pages. (Available for \$1.00 postpaid from Publications Secretary, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence 66045.)



CURRENT LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

Pace, A. E.

1974. Systematic and biological studies of the leopard frogs (Rana pipiens complex) of the United States. Univ. Michigan Mus. Zool. Misc. Publ., 148: 1-140. (Available for \$5.00 from Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 48104)

Switak, K. H.

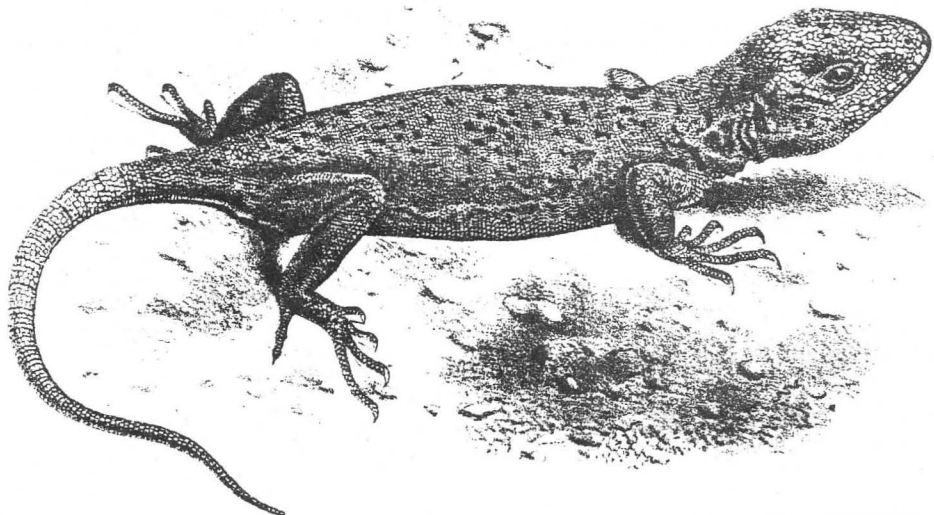
no date. The care of desert reptiles. 26 pages with numerous color photos. (Available for \$1.75 from K. H. Switak, P. O. Box 27141, San Francisco, California 94127)

ZOO magazine

1974. A special issue of ZOO magazine, published by the Topeka Friends of the Zoo, features the Topeka Zoo's new Tropical Rain Forest building. This 30-page publication has numerous excellent photographs (many in color). (Available for \$1.00 from Zoo Magazine, Topeka Friends of the Zoo, 635 Gage Boulevard, Topeka, Kansas 66606)

HERPETARIUM OPEN HOUSE HELD

On 25 January 1975 the Sedgwick County Zoo held an open house to commemorate its new herpetarium. Numerous KHS members attended the open house, among them: Nancy Cherry, Gary Clarke, Robert F. Clarke, Joseph T. Collins, Mary E. Dawson, Vic Eichler, David Grow, Eddie Stegall, and Edward H. Taylor. After a luncheon and opening remarks by Ron Blakely, director of the zoo, those in attendance toured the herpetarium and other exhibits. Two striking exhibits in the herpetarium were the "walk-in" desert which featured lizards in their natural habitat, and the "southern swamp" exhibit which gives a view of swamp night-life, complete with natural frog calls. The same evening those attending the open house were treated to social get-togethers at the homes of various zoo-supporters in the Wichita area. Congratulations to the Sedgwick County Zoo on its excellent new herpetarium.



MEETINGS OF INTEREST TO KHS MEMBERS

- 11 April 1975 - Kansas Academy of Science, KSU, Manhattan.
24-26 April 1975 - Southwestern Association of Naturalists,
Lake Texoma, Oklahoma.
25-27 April 1975 - Kansas Association of Teachers of Science,
Rock Springs Ranch, Junction City.
9-10 May 1975 - Kansas Association of Biology Teachers,
Cimarron National Grasslands, Elkhart.
18-21 May 1975 - American Association of Zoos, Parks and
Aquariums, Central Regional Conference,
Omaha, Nebraska.
11-13 August 1975 - Society for the Study of Amphibians
and Reptiles, California State College,
Fullerton.

QUOTE WITHOUT COMMENT

... from the Enid
Morning News,
2 February 1975.

Area Editors Speak

In Northwest Oklahoma Newspapers

OKEENE SNAKE HUNT

From The Canton Record: The Okeene Jaycees have given the go-ahead sign for the 1975 Rattlesnake Hunt and the dates for the event will be April 11-12-13 in Okeene.

Preliminary committees have been appointed as follows, with other members to be included in the near future:

Publicity — Mike Perkins, chairman; Dave Buchanan, Steve Dungan.

Snake buying and selling — Ralph Westfahl, chairman; Harold Hoffman, Lester Westfahl.

Butcher shop — Kenneth Hill, chairman; Dan Dout.

Concessions — Robert Boeckman, chairman; Doug Boeckman, Duane Boeckman.

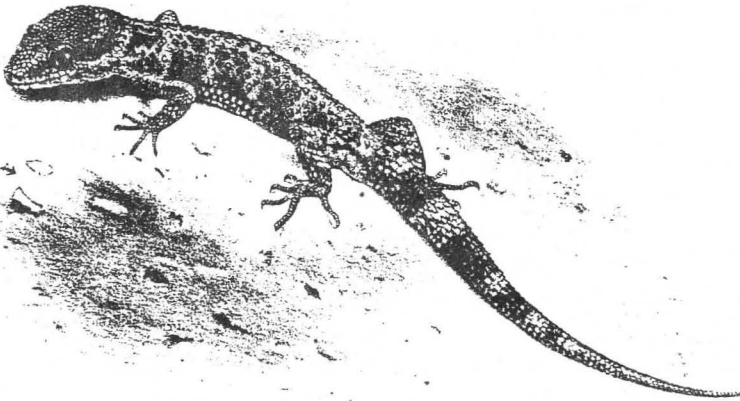
Old Smokey — Mike Haffey, chairman; Jamie Nease, Ralph Westfahl.

Dances — Dean Weigand, chairman; Bob Brickman, Randy Miles, Ronnie Karbs, Freddie Lorenz.

Snake Pit — Mike Buchanan, chairman; Percy Dobrinski.

Guides — Carl Laubach, chairman; Lester Westfahl, Orval Swaim, Jackey Myers.

Carnival — David Felder, chairman.



-- The KHS Newsletter is issued every other month by the Kansas Herpetological Society. EDITOR: Janice Perry, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence 66045, and ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Joseph T. Collins, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence 66045.

ANNOUNCEMENT

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON KANSAS HERPETOLOGY SPONSORED BY THE KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY, THE KU MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND THE KSU 4-H EXTENSION SERVICE.

Where: Topeka -- Extension Offices, County Courthouse
and
Wichita -- County Extension offices

(Note: Exact locations in Topeka and Wichita plus directions will be sent with fact sheet)

When: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on 15 March 1975 (Saturday).

Ray E. Ashton and Joseph T. Collins worked together in developing a study program on Kansas amphibians and reptiles for the state's 4-H organization. The program already has proven to be one of the most popular among 4-H members. There is one problem -- many of the 4-H advisors have had little training or experience in herpetology and are in need of assistance with their local programs. With this in mind, the KHS, KU, and KSU are sponsoring these workshops for KHS MEMBERS, TEACHERS, and 4-H ADVISORS. The workshops will be conducted by knowledgeable herpetologists and will stress identification, conducting field trips, conservation, and the general study of Kansas amphibians and reptiles. Those persons attending the workshops should be willing to act as "advisors" to 4-H members who have undertaken a herpetology project.

If you plan to attend one of these workshops, please fill out the enrollment form below, detach, and send to Ray E. Ashton, director of public education, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

(Note: Registration must be received by 28 February. If less than 10 persons enroll for either workshop, it will be cancelled)

ENROLLMENT FORM

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip code _____

Age: _____

I will attend the (check one): Wichita workshop _____
Topeka workshop _____