

THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
of the
Kansas Herpetological Society
29-30 October 1988
in the
Cora Downs Auditorium
of the
Museum of Natural History
The University of Kansas
Lawrence

PROGRAM

Saturday, 29 October 1988

- 8:30am** **COFFEE and REGISTRATION** in lobby of Downs Auditorium, **Mara Wallace**, (KHS Registrar, Lawrence). Registration is \$2.00 per person, to defray the cost of audio-visual equipment. NOTE: In addition to the live "Kansas Snake Exhibit," there is a new "Amphibians in Kansas" photographic exhibit by **Suzanne L. Collins** and **Joseph T. Collins**. Both may be viewed on the 6th Floor of the Museum.
- 9:30am** **WELCOME**, introduction of KHS officers, and announcements by KHS President **Jeffrey Whipple**.
- 9:45am** **DOMINICAN LIZARDS**, **Robert Powell** (Avila College, KCMO) & **Donald D. Smith** (KU Medical Center, KCK).
- 10:05am** Group photograph on front steps of Museum.
- 10:15am** **BREAK** (Goodies available next door in Kansas Union).
- 10:35am** **CAPTIVE HUSBANDRY OF GILA MONSTERS**, **Eric M. Rundquist** (Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita).
- 11:05am** **KANSAS NONGAME AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE PROGRAM**, **Larry Zuckerman** (Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Pratt).
- 11:25am** **BLACK RAT SNAKE HUSBANDRY**, **Jeffrey Whipple** (KU Animal Care Unit, Lawrence).
- 11:45am** **LUNCH**. Meeting participants are expected to forage independently, or in large groups if this provides leverage. Hot food is available next door in the Kansas Union, or there are many other fine restaurants throughout Lawrence.
- 1:00pm** **KHS BUSINESS MEETING & Election of Officers for 1989**, KHS President **Jeffrey Whipple** presiding.
- 1:30pm** **IGUANID LIZARD FAMILIES: A BRAVE NEW WORLD**, **Darrel Frost** (KU Museum of Natural History, Lawrence).

- 2:00pm PHOTO SESSION with and display of "Fred the Frog." Gather in Downs Auditorium entrance, and **John Wiens** (KU Museum of Natural History, Lawrence) will lead the way to see the only black-and-white bullfrog in the world.
- 2:30pm SNAKES OF THE SAND PRAIRIE, **Dwight R. Platt** (Bethel College, North Newton).
- 2:50pm BREAK (Goodies available next door in the Kansas Union).
- 3:15pm SNAKES OF NEBRASKA, **John F. Lokke** (Nebraska Herpetological Society).
- 4:10pm GOPHER SNAKES IN NEW MEXICO, **David Kizirian** (KU Museum of Natural History, Lawrence).
- 4:30pm FREE-FOR-ALL HERP SLIDE SHOW! Bring your best ten (10) color slides and be prepared to tell us about them.
- 5:00pm **DINNER.** Meeting participants are again expected to forage, this time with greater skill because of their lunch-time experience.
- 7:00pm **SOCIAL AND AUCTION** in Big Eight Room of the Kansas Union (next to the Museum of Natural History). Please bring items to auction. We need photos of herps and herpers, artwork, cages, snake sacks, snake sticks, books on herps, hide boxes, herp reprints, T-Shirts, color slides, herp badges & bumper stickers, etc. Items should be herp-oriented!

Sunday, 30 October 1988

- 8:00am Coffee in Cora Downs Auditorium, **Mara Wallace** (KHS Registrar).
- 8:45am THE 1988 KHS FIELD TRIP TO CLARK COUNTY, **Larry Miller** (Caldwell).
- 9:15am CASE HISTORIES OF HERPS, **Nancy Schwarting** (KU Animal Care Unit, Lawrence).
- 9:45am KHS FIELD TRIP VIDEOS (Rated R), **Olin Karch** (Emporia).
- 10:15am BREAK (Kansas Union closed — coffee will still be available nearby).
- 10:45am RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUPS IN OKLAHOMA, **George Pisani** (KU Department of Biological Sciences, Lawrence).
- 11:15am COSTA RICAN HERPS, **Martin Capron** (Oxford).

ADJOURNMENT AT NOON (Have a good trip home, and drive carefully).

REMEMBER

THE KHS FALL FIELD TRIP IN CLARK COUNTY, 1 & 2 OCTOBER 1988

BE THERE, OR BE SQUARE

September, 1988

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KHS Fall Field Trip Planned for Clark County, Kansas

A Fall 1988 field trip will take place the first weekend in October in Clark County, Kansas, at Clark County State Lake, 25 miles from Ashland. For details, see KHS Newsletter No. 72, or contact Richard Stein at (316) 635-2285 (office) or 635-2563 (home).

Studies on Chinese Salamanders

A new book due out soon will be the first complete account of the salamanders of China ever published in English. The 34 species and 12 genera in three families of salamanders will be covered in the books 80 pages, 16 figures, 19 tables and seven plates including 10 full color photographs of salamanders and their habitats.

The four sections of the book are: "Studies on Chinese Tailed Amphibians," by Ermi Zhao and Qixiong Hu; "Taxonomy and Distribution of Batrachuperus," by Ermi Zhao and Yaoming Jiang (including a key to species); "Taxonomy and Evolution of Hynobiiidae in Western China, With a Description of a New Genus," by Ermi Zhao and Qixiong Hu; and "A Checklist of Chinese Salamanders, with Comments on Recently-Described Taxa," by Ermi Zhao.

The book is clothbound and measures 7 x 10 inches. Price (including postage) is just \$12. Send check or money order payable to "SSAR" to:

Douglas H. Taylor
Department of Zoology
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056

The Rozella Smith Fellowship Fund

Rozella Pearl Blood Smith, a well known figure among herpetologists, died 15 December 1987, after a protracted illness.

Diversely talented, Rozella Smith, who was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1911, was an outstanding expert in many fields of thought and endeavor--she was a most catholic scholar with many skills. Her quick wit, articulate expression, energy and vivacity made memorable every association with her. In every way she was a very special person.

Rozella Smith's manual dexterity and logical, mathematical mind were phenomenal, and were applied in many ways. Although her direct and indirect contributions to knowledge were many, through numerous associates, certainly her greatest impact was

upon herpetology, in which field she contributed some 72 articles and books (see the Great Basin Naturalist, 1988, 48:180-187); others are in press or in final stages of preparation.

Dr. Smith (she received an honorary D.Sc. degree from the University of Colorado in 1982) developed probably the most effective data-retrieval system ever utilized in herpetology or related fields, and applied it with great originality, enthusiasm, and energy to the massive files accumulated by her husband on the herpetofauna of Mexico. Only through her diligent and innovative manipulation of some 150,000 basic index cards derived from about 11,000-12,000 works were the six volumes of the Synopsis of the Herpetofauna of Mexico produced from 1971 to 1980. In that process she prepared literally millions of punch cards; many analyses were never published or used. Her system was applied in a few other contexts, but its full potential was never realized because her deteriorating health coincided with the demise of punch cards, which were the primary vehicle for her system.

Rozella was probably handicapped during her life, in realization of and recognition for her capabilities, through the same social structure that limits many talented women. Therefore, a unique and perpetual academic memorial to Rozella Smith has been established at the University of Colorado. This memorial, which consists of a named graduate fellowship, will be administered by the University of Colorado. In harmony with Rozella Smith's own principles and achievements, this Fellowship will be dedicated to academic excellence. Commitment of institutional and private funds has already been substantial, and promises to make the Rozella Smith Fund the largest and most prestigious of endowments in environmental biology at the University of Colorado.

We solicit contributions to the Rozella Smith Fund from friends and admirers of Rozella Smith, or from those who would support this worthy project. Contributions can be sent to the Rozella Smith Fund at the address give below:

Rozella Smith Fund Committee
Department of Environmental, Population and
Organismic Biology
122 Ramaley
Campus Box 334
Boulder, Colorado 80309

All Wet in a Dry State

The Kansas Natural Resource Council, a private, nonprofit organization, is making available in booklet form its excellent 12-part series, Water and the Making of Kansas. It tells the story of the struggle to adapt and control the state's rather unpredictable water supply, and examines how our attitudes toward water have shaped Kansas history. The booklet has 64 pages and 23 photographs. It is available for \$2 per copy to cover postage and handling from:

Kansas Natural Resource Council
1516 SW Topeka
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(913) 233-6707

Reptile Breeding Foundation in Crisis

The Reptile Breeding Foundation of Picton, Ontario, was founded in 1975. For the past 17 years, the facility has been maintained through the generosity of its founder, Dr. Geoffrey Gaherty. Unfortunately, more money is now needed to maintain the work of the foundation. They have a modest annual budget of \$150,000 a year and five employees. They have recently initiated a membership drive and fund raising program. They publish a newsletter, Scales and Tails, and numerous scientific publications. For further information on both the foundation and how you can participate in their membership and fund raising drive, write:

The Reptile Breeding Foundation
P.O. Box 1450
Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0
CANADA

Have a Wild Time in Your Yard

A long-awaited book designed to help midwestern residents attract wildlife to their yard, farm or woodlot is now available from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. It shows how landscaping for wildlife can be simple, fun, inexpensive and appropriate for urban and rural areas.

Landscaping For Wildlife is available for \$6.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Ask for stock number "9-15" and send your check or money order to:

Minnesota Documents Division
117 University Avenue
St Paul, Minnesota 55155

New Oklahoma Reptile Publication

A new field guide for the identification of Oklahoma's reptiles was published in March 1988 by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Nongame Program. A Field Guide to Reptiles of Oklahoma by Gregory and Lynnette Sievert has 96 pages, color photographs, range maps and species accounts for 16 turtles, 17 lizards, and 44 snake species. Proceeds from the sale of this booklet support the Oklahoma Nongame Program. Send check or money order for \$5.00 (which includes postage) payable to "Oklahoma Nongame Program" to:

Reptiles of Oklahoma
Department of Wildlife Conservation
1801 N. Lincoln
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

New Publication on Herpetology from California

The Southwestern Herpetologists Society has announced that in the fall of 1988, they will publish the Proceedings of the

Conference on California Herpetology. The volume will be approximately 180 pages with three color plates. A partial list of contents includes "Habitat Destruction in California with Special Reference to Clemmys marmorata" (Bayard Brattstrom); "The Natural History of the Night Lizards, Family Xantusiidae" (Robert Bezy); "Notes on the Natural History of the Barefoot Banded Gecko Coleonyx switaki" (L. Grismer and D. Edwards); "Natural History of the Desert Iguana (Dipsosaurus dorsalis)" (Jeffrey Howland); "Natural History and Decline of Native Ranids in California" (Mark Jennings); "Natural History of the California Mountain Kingsnake, Lampropeltis zonata" (Brian McGurty); "An Overview of the Life History and Current Status of the Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander" (Stephen Ruth); and "The Geographic Variability Within the Genus Lichanura with a Description of a New Subspecies" (David Spiteri).

Price is \$18.00 plus \$1.50 postage from:
Southwestern Herpetologists Society
P.O. Box 7469
Van Nuys, California 91409

European Herpetofauna News

A publication from the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society of Europe, Herpetofauna News, is likely to be of interest to many KHS members. This newsletter reports on conservation efforts with reptiles and amphibians and other herpetological topics from Europe and other places around the world. A recent issue covered a tortoise breeding facility in France, Bolson tortoise conservation in Mexico, conservation of rare frogs in South Africa, the upcoming First World Congress of Herpetology, and many other topics. It has a circulation of 4,000 which makes it one of the largest circulation herpetological newsletter in the world. For information on receiving this publication, write to:

Fauna and Flora Preservation Society
c/o Zoological Society of London
Regent's Park
London NW1 4RY
ENGLAND

Garter Snakes and Hibernation

Jon P. Costanzo, a doctoral student in the Department of Zoology at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, is doing research on several aspects of the physiological ecology of garter snakes, particularly a behavioral peculiarity exhibited by several snake species during hibernation.

Some snakes, reports Costanzo, are known to occupy hibernacula which are flooded prior to their entering them in autumn, or which become flooded during winter. Inside the dens, the snakes may be positioned deep underwater or relatively close to the surface. Some apparently remain completely submerged for extended periods of time. In addition, investigators have noted that some snakes submerge their bodies and heads inside water bowls

during simulated hibernation in the laboratory.

Costanzo asks any KHS member with information on this behavior to complete a questionnaire he will provide. This is a good opportunity to help make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of snake behavior. Copies of the questionnaire are available from the KHS Newsletter Editor or from:

Jon P. Costanzo
Department of Zoology
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056

New Publisher for Snakes: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

The excellent and very useful volume, Snakes: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, published in 1987, is now available from a different publisher in a second printing. Edited by KHS members Richard Seigel, Joseph T. Collins and Susan S. Novak, the book is a unique and up-to-date text/reference on the growing field of snake ecology and evolutionary biology. It contains sections on Systematics and Morphology, Methods and Techniques, and Life History and Ecology. The book contains 529 pages, and is available for \$57.95 plus \$3.00 postage and handling from:

McGraw-Hill Publishing Company
Attn: Robert S. Ryan
11 West 19th Street
New York, New York 10011

or by calling the 24 hour toll-free number 1-800-2MC-GRAW.

Midwestern Herpetological Conference

The Chicago Herpetological Society is sponsoring the Fourth Annual Midwestern Herpetological Conference from 21-22 October 1988 at the Chicago Midway Airport Inn, 5400 S. Cicero Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60638. Speakers will include H. Bernard Bechtel, a pioneer in the breeding of albino and aberrant-patterned snakes; Dale Bertram, founder of the International Society for the Study of Dendrobatid Frogs; Richard S. Funk, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee; and Ray Pawley, Curator of Reptiles at the Brookfield Zoo. Registration is \$20 with a banquet on Saturday evening for an additional \$15. A special room rate of \$39 for occupancy from 1 to 4 persons is available if you make your reservations immediately. Call the motel toll-free at (800) 621-0127 [within Illinois at (800) 238-0638] or directly at (312) 581-0500. You MUST specify that you are attending the Midwestern Herpetological Conference to receive the special rate. Registration begins at 5 pm on Friday, with an ice-breaker that evening. The conference will be 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturday.

For questions, please call Joan Moore at (312) 528-4631 or Mike Dloogatch at (312) 782-2026 days, (312) 588-0728 evenings.

Herpetology On The Line

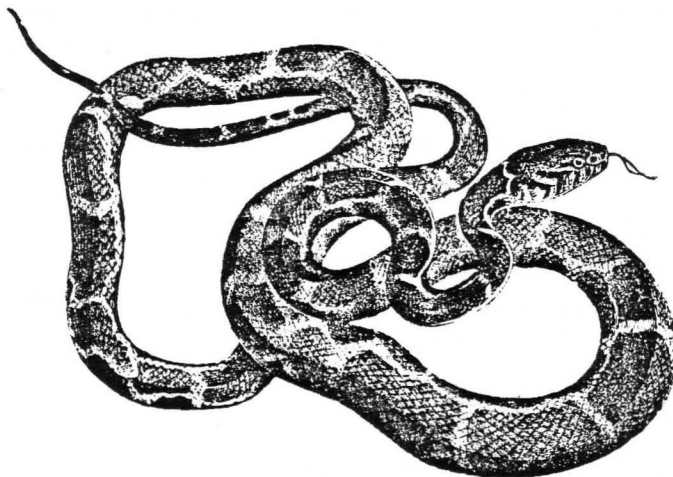
The Herpetological On-line Network has been established in Philadelphia as the first computer based messaging system to connect the herpetological community. Any communicating computer or terminal can connect with one of Herp-Net's six lines by dialing the primary access number: (215) 464-3562 24-hours per day. There are no fees required to access Herp-Net.

Those interested in the study, breeding or conservation of reptiles or amphibians can meet others on-line, ask questions, discuss the current literature, and exchange files. It is a great way to learn what others are doing and make new friends.

If you need help in selecting a computer, modem, or getting on-line, write for the free booklet, "Connecting to Herp-Net."

For more information or submission of news, please write:

Herpetology On-Line Network
P.O. Box 52261
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19115



ALL THE ZOOS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

The following news items are all from the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) Newsletter, and were supplied by Ruth Gennrich (Lawrence).

From AAZPA Newsletter 29(6), June 1988:

SSP Report: Dumeril's Ground Boa

The past year has seen the continued expansion of the SSP [Species Survival Plan] program for Dumeril's ground boa as the captive population steadily grows toward its carrying capacity of 300 specimens. Breeding recommendations made in 1986-1987 yielded 33 offspring, of which 28 were retained for the program. The majority of these breedings were likewise beneficial in the equalization of founder representation, as they represent progeny from underrepresented bloodlines.

The current captive population of Dumeril's boa is 90.92.0 (182) and is distributed in Canada, South Africa, Sweden, and the

United States. Specimens committed to the SSP program now number 59.64.0 (123), the vast majority of which are located in North American institutions. The 6 broods produced in 1987 comprised 18.17.2 progeny, of which 18.15.0 survived; of these, 16.12.0 were retained for the SSP.

From AAZPA Newsletter 29(7), 1988:

Third Birth of Jackson's Chameleon at Oklahoma City Zoo Announced

Thirty-three Jackson's chameleons (Chameleo jacksoni) were born on 23 April at the Oklahoma City Zoological Park. While it is the first birth for this female, it is the third birth of this species to recently occur at the zoo. A second female gave birth to 30 young on 8 September 1987 and 34 on 4 March 1988. The young have averaged 27.1 mm SVL and 1.1 grams at birth. The mortality rate of offspring that have remained at the zoo has been just under 33%. At one month old, mortality dropped to nearly zero. The program has been a low-tech activity carried out indoors.

Venezuelan Sliders and Dumeril's Monitors Hatched at Buffalo Zoo

On 12 May 1988, after a 57-day incubation period, eight Venezuelan sliders (Pseudemys [=Trachemys] scripta chichiriviche) were hatched at the Buffalo Zoological Gardens. A newly described subspecies, 1/5 of these turtles were imported in May 1987 by Bruce Chumra and subsequently placed on breeding loan with the zoo. An average weight of 11.5 grams and carapace length of 35 mm were recorded for the hatchlings. Additional clutches of 14, 14 and 17 eggs are currently being incubated. It is believed that this subspecies has never before been exhibited in a North American zoo. This captive reproduction represents the seventh species of chelonian reproduced at Buffalo.

After a 6 1/2-year effort, the Buffalo Zoological Gardens has successfully reproduced Dumeril's monitor (Varanus dumerilii). A male obtained from the USDI/FWS in 1980 and a female obtained from a Florida animal supplier in 1981 produced a clutch of 14 eggs in October 1987. A total hatch of five neonates occurred after a 215-day incubation period using variable incubation temperatures of 26.5-30 C. The average weight of each neonate was 16.2 grams with a SVL of 83 mm.

From AAZPA Newsletter 29(8), 1988:

Green Sea Turtles Hatched at Sea Life Park

During the evening of 27 June, 79 green sea turtle hatchlings emerged from the artificial beach located adjacent to the Turtle Lagoon at Sea Life Park, Honolulu, Hawaii. This first clutch of hatchlings for 1988 makes the third consecutive year of

successful breeding at the Park. Limited numbers of hatchling turtles will be made available for loan to qualified institutions.

Emperor Valley Zoo Reports Its First Hatching of the Orinoco River Turtle

A breeding program utilizing a specially built enclosure with an artificially created sand bank resulted in the first hatching of the Arrau (Orinoco River Turtle) at the Emperor Valley Zoo, Port of Spain, Trinidad. Over the past three years, zoo staff carefully monitored food intake, water depth and temperature of the 1/3 Orinoco River turtles, the Arrau (Podocnemis expansa), and a clutch of eggs, laid on 20 February after 82 days of natural incubation, hatched in batches of three, four, three and finally twenty-seven between 25 April and 9 May. The parents have been in captivity in Trinidad, possibly since the 1920's, and have been at the Emperor Valley Zoo since its inception in 1952.

From AAZPA Newsletter 29(9), 1988:

Fort Worth Zoo Announces Significant Reptile Breedings

Three Mexican lance-head rattlesnakes (Crotalus polystictus) were born on 2 June at the Fort Worth Zoological Park. The parents, a wild-caught male and a captive-raised female, were temperature cycled together from December-February, with an average daytime high of 23.8 C and an average nighttime low of 20 C. Basking spots were available during the day in conjunction with frequent cage mistings. Copulation occurred during this cooling period but was never observed. Though this represents a first breeding at Fort Worth, at least two other U.S. zoos have successfully reproduced this species previously.

Sixteen Malagasy tree boas (Sanzinia madagascariensis) were born on 1 July, representing a possible record brood number for this taxa in captivity. Both parents were captive born and had produced a brood of nine in May 1986, making this the second full second-generation breeding of this species to occur at the Zoo.

Two Indo-Chinese serrated turtles (Geomyda spengleri) hatched on 6-7 July after a 67-day incubation period at 30 C. Breeding activity was frequently observed in April, and the clutch of two eggs was laid on 1 May. Both parents were wild-caught and obtained in 1986. This is believed to represent a first captive breeding for this little known species in North America and possibly worldwide. Anyone with additional information regarding the reproductive history of these three taxa is urged to contact the Fort Worth Zoo's reptile department at (817) 870-7072.



Body of A Giant Sea Turtle Found

SANTA ROSA ISLAND, CALIFORNIA--A rare, 700-pound leatherback sea turtle has been found on this island, 30 miles off Santa Barbara, where it died apparently after going ashore to eat [more likely to nest--Ed].

The creature, which measured over six feet in length, is only the third leatherback that has been found on Southern California beaches in the last 15 years. All three were dead.

The discovery, made Monday by Bill Ehorn, Channel Islands National Park superintendent, has marine biologists abuzz. Leatherbacks are an endangered species and are rarely seen by humans.

Davis removed the skull and bones Thursday and took them to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, where they will be held and made available to scientists for study.

Leatherbacks spend their entire lives--believed to be as long as 100 years--swimming in the oceans, roaming as far as hundreds of miles off shore. They can weigh as much as a ton and are rarely seen by humans, said Karen Bjorndal, director of the Sea Turtle Research Center at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

"Prints in the sand indicate this female leatherback turtle crawled ashore and died not too long before being discovered," said Gary Davis, 43, marine biologist for the national park. Davis conducted an autopsy and could find no eggs or indication of any injury. He was unable to determine the cause of death.

The leatherback is the only one of the seven species of sea turtles without a hard shell. It also has the greatest range.

Leatherbacks nest on remote beaches in southern Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Indonesia and French Guiana, then swim hundreds and thousands of miles in colder waters as far north as Nova Scotia in the Atlantic and British Columbia and Alaska in the Pacific, feeding on jellyfish, Bjorndal said.

Bjorndal noted that although all sea turtles are endangered species, in Indonesia and elsewhere leatherbacks are taken at sea by fishermen. The extremely oily meat is relished as a delicacy.

In Mexico, Indonesia, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, leatherback turtle eggs are eaten as an aphrodisiac.

--The Kansas City Times, 21 May 1988
(submitted by Suzanne L. Collins, Lawrence)

Ancient Amphibians Found

The oldest cache of fossil land animals found in North America, including amphibians never seen before, has been discovered in Iowa, researchers reported last week in the British journal Nature.

Among the creatures discovered in the quarry was a still-unnamed amphibian 335 million years old that probably looked like

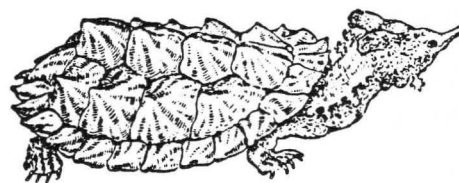
a giant, 6-foot salamander. The creature was among the first to walk the North American continent, at a time when most of the continent was under water and the land would have been more like a tropical island than present-day Iowa.

More than 500 fossils of fish and amphibians have been dug out of the unused limestone quarry in southeastern Iowa near the farming town of Delta, in what probably is the biggest collection of land animals found from the Mississippian period of about 330 million to 360 million years ago.

The fossilized bones are of particularly high quality and include specimens such as sharply detailed jaws and whole skeletons.

The site was opened two years ago by John Bolt of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and Patrick McAdams of William Penn College in Iowa.

--The Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 26 June 1988
(submitted by Jack Shumard, Wichita)



Boy Serious After Accidental Shooting

A Woodson County [Kansas] boy was listed in serious but stable condition Friday at Stormont Vail Hospital and Regional Medical Center in Topeka with injuries from an accidental shooting outside his home Thursday night.

A hospital spokesman said Kerry King, 8, was being treated in the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit for a gunshot wound to the chest.

Woodson County Undersheriff Howard Kahler said the shooting occurred while the boy was shooting turtles at the family's pond with his 13-year-old brother. The family lives in a rural area outside Yates Center.

Kahler said that the older boy was shooting at turtles with a .22-caliber rifle when a bullet ricocheted off the pond's surface and struck the younger boy who was standing on the bank.

Kahler said the boy's parents took him to the Coffey County Hospital at Burlington. He was later transferred to the Topeka facility by LifeStar Air Ambulance.

--The Topeka Capital-Journal, 21 May 1988
(submitted by Suzanne L. Collins, Lawrence)

Movie's Turtle Soup Gets Restaurant in Hot Water

NEW YORK--A swanky Manhattan restaurant that decided to offer the same elaborate meal, including turtle soup, seen in the Oscar-winning Danish film "Babette's Feast" is in hot water with animal rights activists.

Mike Weber of the Center for Environmental Education complains that the Petrossian restaurant is encouraging people to eat turtles, some of which are endangered.

"It's turtle exploitation," said Jim Van Abbena of the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society.

Petrossian, however, says its "Potage a la Tortue," is made with the common freshwater snapping turtle, not the endangered sea turtles used in the movie's soup.

The soup is the first course in the \$125-a-head dinner, which also comes with four wines.

--Las Cruces New Mexico Sun Times, 15 June 1988
(submitted by Jack Shumard, Wichita)

Witch Doctor Catches 397-Pound Crocodile

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia--A witch doctor using a monkey as bait captured the companion of a notorious man-eating crocodile, but the 200-year-old killer crocodile remains at large, a newspaper said today.

Bujang Sudin, a 16.4-foot long specimen weighing 397 pounds, was pulled from a river August 20 and sold to a nearby crocodile farm, the New Straits Times said.

The newspaper said the witch doctor, Bakir Alias Yeop, lured the crocodile with the monkey and chanted "Bujang Sudin come." It said two other men then helped haul the crocodile from the river.

The report quoted Abang Adris Abang Suhai, a police official in Sarawak state, 540 miles southeast of Kuala Lumpur.

Police said the people of Sungai Sadong village in Sarawak had been complaining that a crocodile was troubling and chasing them as they walked along the river bank. They wanted it caught.

Police said they did not know if Bujang Sudin had eaten any humans. The crocodile's companion has, however, and has been the subject of massive police hunts.

He is Bujang Senang, which means "easy-going bachelor" in Malay, and he is believed to have been born about 200 years ago. Bujang Sudin means "bachelor Sudin."

In 1984, Bujang Senang became famous in Malaysia when he killed a 51-year-old man who was in a boat near his home. On Aug. 2, 1982, the crocodile killed an 86-year-old man.

Police sharpshooters scoured the rivers in an effort to track down the crocodile. Authorities called witch-doctors from as far away as Indonesia to help.

Police have stopped looking for Bujang Senang, although there have been occasional reports of him being sighted along various rivers.

--University Daily Kansan, 29 August 1988
(submitted by Irving Street, Globe)

'Alien' Toads Could Be Problem for Animals and Humans

As if Southern Florida and Miami didn't have enough drug problems, now comes word that a toad that is prevalent there is being used in Australia as a source for hallucinogenics.

Although there is no evidence that the toad is being used for such purposes in Florida, herpetologists say it is only a

matter of time before it will be.

"We think sooner or later it will happen," says J.T. Collins, a zoologist with the University of Kansas Natural History Museum in Lawrence, Kan.

The result could be death for anyone who uses the toad for this purpose, he says.

Collins has seen reports from Australia on the wire services and in the Wall Street Journal and other magazines about the cane toad being used as a source for hallucinogenics. However, he says, the cane toad in Australia is the same as what is called the giant toad in southern Florida. The scientific name is Bufo marinus.

"The toad has been looked upon as a nuisance in southern Florida," says Collins, who has written several articles on amphibians and reptiles for national publications.

Two large glands behind the toad's eyes secrete a foul tasting and smelling fluid that is used as a defense against predators. Dogs that attack the toads have died as a result of an overdose of this white, sticky fluid, Collins says.

Collins cited an Associated Press article from Sydney, Australia, that reported that people seeking highs were boiling the toads to obtain the fluid that gives a high similar to that caused by LSD.

The AP story said the extent of the use of this bufotenine is not known. There were no reports of deaths; however, the substance can be fatal.

The use of the toxin as a hallucinogen was also reported in a film called "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History" produced by Film Australia.

Collins says the giant toad occurs naturally in northern South America, Central America and along the Mexican Gulf Coast up to Brownsville, Texas. The giant toad population in Florida is an alien one that apparently was introduced there in the mid-1950s.

"The first articles about its appearance began to appear in 1957," he says.

The giant toad is now found from Palm Beach to the Florida Keys and around Tampa and Miami, Collins says.

Collins says the presence of potentially dangerous giant toads should focus attention on the problem of alien animals being let loose in the United States.

"Maybe we need to start looking at what wildlife we let come into the United States and who handles it and under what conditions," he says.

The introduction of alien animals has long been considered to have potential environmental impact because of possible disease, for example. Also, native animals may be run out of their natural habitat by these immigrant critters.

But that problem has escalated with the news of the cane toad's hallucinogenic and lethal properties.

Collins says, "Now it has a potential sociological impact."

--The Tulsa Tribune, 7 September 1988

BOOK REVIEWS

Snakes & Lizards. Their Care and Breeding in Captivity, by John Coborn. 1987. Ralph Curtis Books, Sanibel Island. 208 pages, 31 color photographs, 65 black & white photographs, 14 line drawings. PRICE: \$39.50, hardcover. AVAILABLE FROM: Ralph Curtis Books, P.O. Box 183, Sanibel Island, Florida, 33957. Phone (813) 472-5490.

This is a very well thought-out book, covering all aspects of the care and breeding of many snake and lizard species in captivity. It begins with a chapter dealing with ethics and the law, followed by a chapter which briefly discusses the order Squamata. Chapters three and four are concerned with housing and care of animals, the remaining chapters on breeding, lizards, and snakes of the world. There is an appendix of herpetological societies, a glossary, bibliography, and both an index to scientific names and a general index.

One of the first things one notices about this book is how well made it is, from the arresting color photograph on the jacket of a Tokay gecko's threat gesture to the quality of the pages and binding. It was printed in Great Britain, where standards are much higher than ours (of course, so are the prices).

I was particularly impressed with Coborn's very balanced view of zoos and the problems they have in attracting the public, and also his mention of Ditmars. It is just not fashionable to credit Raymond Ditmars with being influential in herpetology, primarily because he did not publish much in the way of scientific papers, and in fact did not have a science background at all. However, I think it is reasonable to say that a good number of the herpetologists around today got their first inspiration from reading Ditmars' very accessible, exciting, and accurate popular books. I know I certainly can trace my serious interest in herpetology directly to a public library full of wonderful books by Ditmars. It is nice to see Ditmars get some of the credit due him in print.

Coborn also mentions that herpetological meetings are now common ground where "both amateur and professional herpetologists get together in order to share information through the reading of papers and to discuss points of mutual interest." His section on legislation is short, but to the point. American readers will be particularly interested in reading about the legal restrictions on keeping reptiles in England.

It seems obligatory for authors of books of this sort to try to "briefly" cover the evolution and biology of reptiles. Unfortunately, these are not subjects that can be covered briefly. This section is weak and over-simplified. The reader will do better to skip it here and instead turn to Halliday and Adler's The Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians [see KHS Newsletter No. 65, page 20] for this information.

Good, simple instructions are provided for building enclosures of glass and wood, ranging from desk-top terraria to green houses with fake rocks. Curiously, he does not mention indoor/outdoor carpeting as a substrate, only gravel and other soils. He does provide a good list of recommended live plants for ter-

rariums, something I have been trying to locate for a long time. This list should be helpful to even the most experienced herp keepers.

The chapter on general care covers selecting and buying animals, shipping, and handling. His suggestions are very reasonable, with equal caution for the health of the animal and the health of the handler. He prefaces his comments on handling hot snakes with the caution to "serve a short apprenticeship with somebody who is experienced with such reptiles." He does not mention a safety technique that is very common in the United States--"tubing" of venomous snakes when they must be handled. Still, the discussion of handling techniques is well-illustrated with photographs, which are very helpful.

Coborn also recommends a post-mortem exam for dead animals. This is easier said than done. Finding a lab to do the tissue analysis can be very difficult.

Chapter Five, Captive Breeding, has a few overly simplified, rather sweeping generalizations or downright misleading statements in it. For instance, he states that "one or two lizard species are suspected of practising parthenogenesis," when actually parthenogenesis is very well documented in at least two genera of lizards, Cnemidophorus and Lacerta. He also writes that courtship "...is a combination of the correct environmental conditions and a chance meeting with a member of the opposite sex." To some degree this is true, but it does not take into account the recent discoveries of the role of scent-trailing in snakes, for instance. In general, this chapter is a good overview for the beginning reptile breeder, but it does not contain much useful advice for particular species of snakes or lizards. His instructions for incubating eggs and record keeping are very good.

The chapters on lizards and snakes of the world are in a fairly traditional format: the distribution, habits and reproduction of selected species are discussed and what little is known about keeping them in captivity is added. The frustration here is that it seems the information you want is never included. Unfortunately, this is because it is usually not known. For those species that I am familiar with, my impression is that Coborn did an excellent job of providing as much accurate information as he could. Much of the information in these sections will be useful for people who acquire animals they are not familiar with. Coborn's recommendations regarding housing, heating and lighting will be particularly appreciated, and the "community" section, which tells you how many of each species you should try keeping together is something I have not seen in any books on captive maintenance before.

As mentioned earlier, Coborn does address keeping venomous snakes, after a very good introductory section warning the reader not to. I was particularly glad to see he suggested alerting the local medical facility of the kind of snake you keep in advance of your being bitten by it, and his caution to put adequate warning labels on enclosures housing venomous snakes.

The glossary is very good with straightforward, simple definitions of words, and the bibliography better than average.

With a few exceptions as I noted, this is a good, solid

book. It will be of great use to the beginning reptile keeper, but there is certainly enough detailed information that it should be in the library of experienced herpetologists interested in keeping snakes and lizards in captivity, too. It is generally well-written, clear, and has excellent illustrations. The cost is a bit steep for a book of its length, but the physical quality of the paper, printing, color reproduction and binding are well worth it.



--John E. Simmons
Lawrence, Kansas

Exotic Pets. A Delightful Guide to Buying, Caring for and Loving: Lizards, Snakes, Turtles, Parrots, Amphibians Tropical Fish, by Arthur Rosenfeld. 1987. Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York. 296 pages, 16 color photos, 16 black & white photos, over 50 drawings. PRICE: \$21.95, hardcover. AVAILABLE FROM: Simon & Schuster Building, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

"A pet, I concluded, is any animal that depends on you." Following this rather sweeping definition (do you really want to think of small children as pets?), Rosenfeld goes into a lengthy and rather interesting discussion of what you can gain from the companionship of an animal--especially an exotic, cold blooded animal. It is really unfortunate that he chose to use the word "pet" in the title, for he is quick to point out that the exotics covered in this book do not respond to you like a dog or cat. They cannot even be replacement organisms for dogs and cats.

This book is intended for beginners, and the author states early on that he does not intend to cover the topics of breeding animals nor "animal medicine," as these subjects require entire books themselves. It is written in a chatty, personal style, so much so that at times I wondered if the entire thing was transcribed from spoken tapes. Although this writing style is probably intended to make the material more accessible, at times I found it irritating or downright insulting ("Reptiles respond in amusing ways to changes in temperature"). In being chatty, the author also makes some rather obvious blunders ("When a snake opens his mouth, he actually unhinges his jaw").

On the other hand, this style is very different from other recently published herp-care books, and so Rosenfeld will probably be able to communicate some information to his readers that they would overlook in other books (such as all the dull stuff about how much care reptiles and amphibians require).

For purposes of this review, I will only consider the parts of this book dealing with reptiles and amphibians, as I have no personal experience with parrots or fish in captivity.

The basic housing requirements are covered in a clear, direct fashion. Drawing heavily on his own extensive experience with captive reptiles, Rosenfeld stresses many aspects of reptile care for beginners that are easily overlooked in your enthusiasm to acquire your first captive snakes, such as the ever-increasing

cost of feeding a snake on pet store mice. Without being negative, he presents very sound, logical limitations for those just starting out to keep reptiles.

As for acquiring reptiles, Rosenfeld recommends the local pet shop as the best option. Especially for beginners, I think this is wrong. The first few reptiles you get should be locally caught animals. If you decide reptile raising is not for you, you have the option of releasing the animals before they become sick and die. Beginners should NOT start with exotics.

The list of recommended snakes is generally good, though there are a few on it that I think are a bit tricky for a beginner to successfully keep, or are protected (such as the Trans-Pecos Rat Snake, Elaphe subocularis).

The section on lizard housing requirements is similar to that for snakes. For both groups, the author recommends newspaper as a good substrate. Plain newsprint is probably okay, but newspaper ink comes off readily on the animal in the cage, and who knows what toxins they absorb into their bodies from it? Ink includes a lot more than just carbon dyes--it also has drying agents and so forth in it.

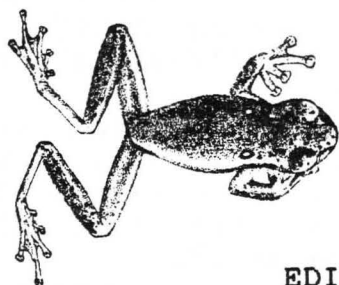
His list of recommended lizards and turtles is generally good, but again, he includes some protected animals with no mention of the difficulties of acquiring them legally.

The amphibian care sections of this book are similar to those for reptiles--well planned for the beginning herp keeper. The author includes some wise cautions ("Prepare the cage THEN purchase the beast," and "There is one major tip concerning the handling of salamanders and frogs, and that is: Don't!") which if followed will get you on the right track from the beginning.

The "Recommended Reading" list is good, though a page layout error makes it appear that John Coburn is the author of So Excellent a Fish instead of Archie Carr.

In general, this book contains good, solid information for the beginning reptile and amphibian keeper. The writing style is very different for books of this type, and some readers are likely to find it distracting. However, it is refreshing to see a new approach taken to this subject, and the original style may well reach an audience of readers other books have neglected.

--John E. Simmons
Lawrence, Kansas



EDITORIAL: THREE GOOD CAUSES

The Snake Has All the Lines

A few issues back, Larry Miller brought to our attention the inappropriate use of a snake as a symbol for evil in some anti-drug abuse literature for children (KHS Newsletter No. 70:17-18). Well, KHS President Jeff Whipple, has turned up another one.

This time, the snake is shown slithering across the cover of a pamphlet titled "Planned Parenthood Must be Stopped," published by the American Life Lobby, Inc. In case the reader misses it on the cover, the snake appears again inside and on the back cover, too. Again, as with the previous use of the snake, the subject matter of the pamphlet is irrelevant. What is important is the absurd reinforcement of the snake as EVIL. Snakes are not inherently bad. By continually portraying them in a negative light, fear and superstition are encouraged, and snakes will die as a direct result. We have all encountered the kind of person who will kill any snake under the assumption that it is necessary to do so to be sure you get the "bad" ones.

WRITE to tell them what you think of their choice of symbols:

American Life Lobby, Inc.
P.O. Box 490
Stafford, VA 22554

Is This Any Way to Divide a Highway?

Dr. Lee Boyd of the Department of Biology of Washburn University, Topeka, recently wrote to the Kansas Turnpike Authority concerning the concrete dividers being erected in the median strip of the turnpike. These barriers are so low to the ground, pointed out Dr. Boyd, that they "will impede normal movement patterns of terrestrial animals and greatly increase the number of road kills."

The reply Dr. Boyd received from the Kansas Turnpike Authority was far from satisfactory. They responded that the medians are designed to save lives--human lives, that is. Perhaps the most startling thing in their letter was the statement that "our maintenance crews who remove dead animals from the roadway have not noticed an increase in wildlife deaths because of the median barrier." Ever wonder why you saw so few dead animals on the turnpike? It's because the mess is cleaned up. Of course, the letter does not report any actual figures of how many dead animals the crews pick up. Also, only a small stretch of turnpike has the barriers so far. More importantly, the KTA letter ends by saying "We recognize that there are legitimate concerns and some disadvantages but they are generally insignificant when compared with the proven life-saving benefits that the barrier provides." This ignores the rather obvious position taken by Dr. Boyd, that a simple redesign of the barrier would enable most animals to cross under them while not affecting their usefulness for saving human lives.

Dr. Boyd was most concerned, as was I, at the attitude taken by the KTA concerning the loss of wildlife on the highways. She wrote that the KTA position "reflects the all too pervasive phenomenon of anthropocentrism. Surely there must be some compromise that would meet the needs of wildlife while improving human safety?"

This is not a trivial issue. Wildlife in Kansas, including reptiles and amphibians, is being assaulted from all sides.

Habitat is being converted into housing developments and shopping malls. Pesticides and fertilizers are polluting the water and poisoning the land. Commercial dealers strip populations of their prime breeding stock. Why add to this toll the numbers of animals that may be killed on our highways because of the design of these barriers? It is a problem that could be easily fixed.

Please WRITE to the KTA today and request that these median barriers be designed to accomodate wildlife crossing the turnpike. The drainage slots could be larger, or there could be breaks in the barriers more often than the present one every two miles. Voice your opinion and send your suggestions to:

R.D. Fogo, P.E.
Chief Engineer-Manager
Kansas Turnpike Authority
Box 780007
Wichita, KS 67278

It wouldn't hurt to drop our Governor, Mike Hayden, a line about this situation, either. He not only has a degree in conservation biology, he plans to build a lot of highways in the near future. His address is:

Governor Mike Hayden
State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612-1590
Phone: (913) 296-3232

The Last Round-Up?

Several groups and individuals are now working to try to get rattlesnake round-ups either stopped or at least controlled. Usually the round-ups are sponsored by well-intentioned groups and attended by well-intentioned people. This does not make what happens at a round-up good. Large numbers of snakes are still being caught, tortured, and killed for "sport" across the nation each year.

KHS members Gary and Karen Schroeder, of Amarillo, Texas, recently sent some rattlesnake round-up propaganda to the KHS to show what sort of things are going on:

---from the Shortgrass Rattlesnake Association in Mangun, Oklahoma, a pamphlet that explains that "snakes are a genuine hazard to both livestock and humans. Western Diamondbacks are not an endangered specie [sic]." Well, not yet, but keep working at it, boys. It goes on: "A Rattlesnake Round-up is a fun event, one to be enjoyed by all... Round-ups help educate the public." The pamphlet also repeats the old lie that the venom of the snakes collected during the round-up is used for "research." Curiously, the author of these falsehoods is unable to provide the name of any researcher or company who is doing it. The pamphlet concludes with perhaps its most preposterous untruth of all: "Environmentalists who once considered Round-ups as a danger of complete extermination of the rattlesnakes have begun to realize that no such danger exists."

---The Schroeders also sent a clipping about Dr. Rodney Cate of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. Dr. Cate

studies the enzymes in snake venom. And does he get his supply of venom from round-ups? No. It must be freeze-dried immediately upon extraction from the snake under carefully controlled laboratory conditions. He buys his from a snake-farm that has the necessary equipment to produce it--at a cost of \$80 a gram.

---From the Waynoka Rattlesnake Round-up, an ad for the ultimate macho trip. You can now "for the first time ever, bring the excitement home to your friends!" by buying the VIDEO of the 42nd Annual Waynoka Rattlesnake Hunt. They assure you that the tape will include the award ceremony, butcher shop, "mean snakes," and entertainment. Don't wait for this one to show up on PBS.

In case any of you think that round-ups are now out-dated events, I received a petition that the New Mexico Herpetological Society was circulating from Jim Stuart, NMHS President. earlier this year. It reads, "To Help Conserve New Mexico's Native Rattlesnake Populations, We, the undersigned, oppose the announced 'First Annual Wild West Rattlesnake Roundup' to be held in Alamogordo, New Mexico, during the period of April 15-17, 1988. Furthermore, we oppose any similar event which negatively affects the native rattlesnake populations of New Mexico or allows for the commercialization of the native fauna of New Mexico." Stuart also sent along some of the Alamogordo "literature" about the hunt. Guess what? Several of the pages were exactly the same as those sent from the Mangun, Oklahoma hunt. Only the place-names were changed to protect the guilty. Don't think rattlesnake round-ups are big business? Big enough to have a central supplier of "information" for your local hunt...

To wrap this up, let me mention another pamphlet, this one from the North Texas Herpetological Society which very clearly and succinctly lists some reasons why the hunts should be stopped. They point out that the round-ups:

- endanger human lives (by encouraging stupid stunts)
- violate public health standards (frequently the snakes that were slaughtered, cooked and sold were exposed to leaded gasoline to get them out of their dens, not to mention the frequently unsanitary conditions of the hunt butcher shop and kitchen)
- are hazardous to communities, by encouraging people to keep snakes in anticipation of the hunt
- may cause outbreaks of disease by allowing explosive growth of rodent populations
- create needless fear of snakes
- perpetuate dangerous myths, including inaccurate first aid information
- are unscientific (the "lecturers" rarely know what they are talking about)
- disrupt ecosystems by eradicating an important predator
- kill wastefully and indiscriminately by using gasoline in dens which are inhabited by other animals as well as rattlesnakes
- threaten our farms and ranches by environmental tampering
- are unsportsmanlike (no limits on time, size, sex, etc.)
- encourage long-term abuse via prizes for large numbers of snakes, longest snake, etc.

-promote animal cruelty as "family entertainment"

As the North Texas Herpetological Society says, "Rattlesnakes are hard to love, but as living beings they deserve our respect and consideration."

I urge you to contact the North Texas Herpetological Society (P.O. Box 470771, Fort Worth, TX 76147) for more information about their campaign.

--John E. Simmons
Lawrence, Kansas

Wildlife Appreciation Day

Kansas Governor Mike Hayden (center) is shown holding a large bullsnake that was brought to the Capitol for the second annual Wildlife Appreciation Day by the Caldwell, Kansas, Sixth Grade Class. The event took place on 23 March 1988. Also pictured are Derek Walta (left) and Emily Hull (right), both sixth grade students at Caldwell Grade School. The students also brought two tiger salamanders and two ornate box turtles.

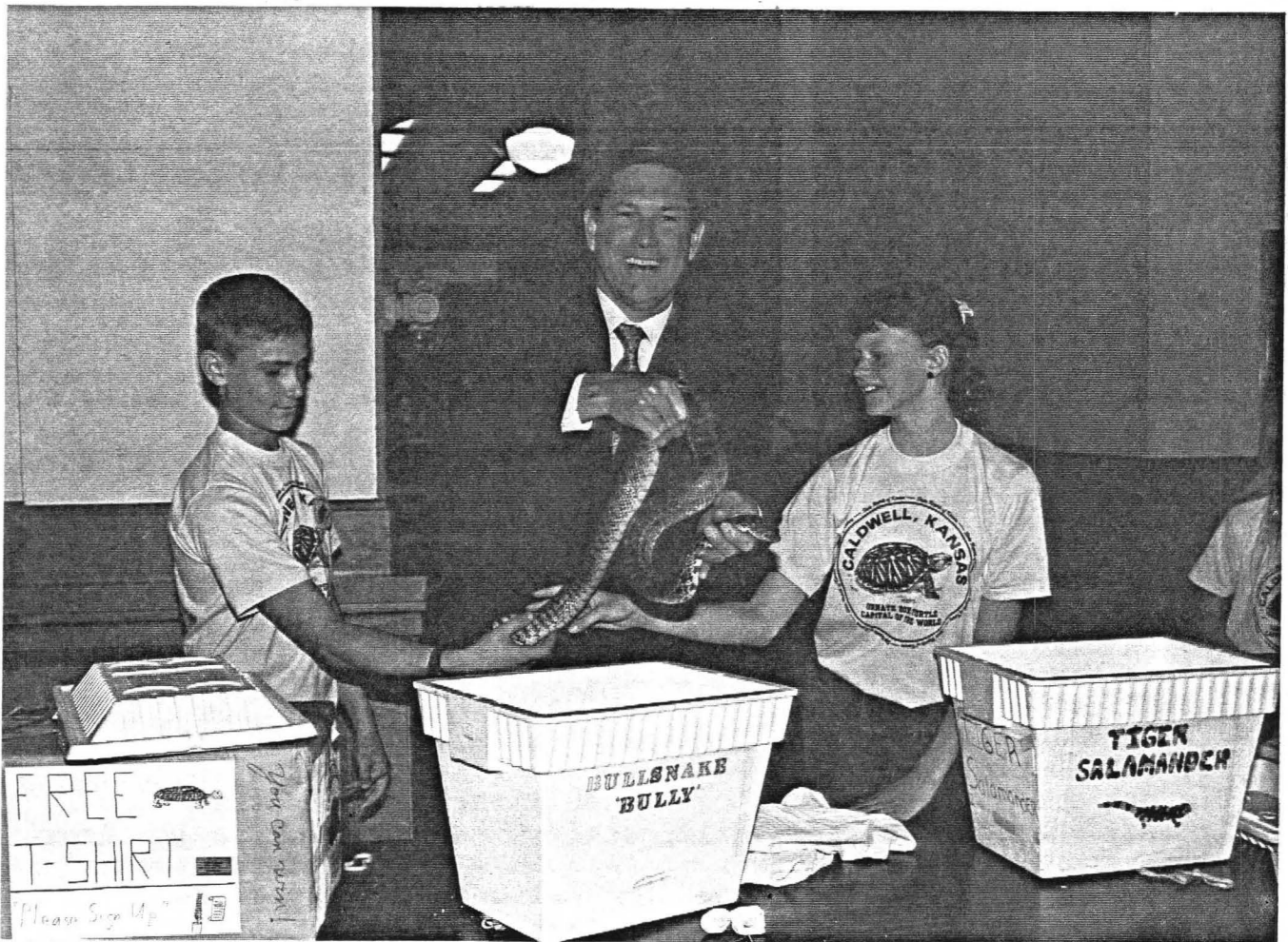


Photo Credit: Office of the Governor, State of Kansas