

# KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER NO. 83

FEBRUARY 1991

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CALL FOR ACTION

The Southwestern Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History has issued an alert concerning intended gold mining activity in the immediate area of the station. Specifically, the Newmont Mining Corporation has established claims on federal land near the entrance of Cave Creek Canyon to place four exploratory holes between the forest border and the Chiricahua Wilderness Area. Should the exploration prove promising, this company will begin mining gold by cyanide leaching of rock blasted from huge open pits.

The area in which this proposed activity will take place has one of the richest biotas in North America, being influenced by five major life zones, the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Sonoran desert, and the Chihuahuan desert. The Museum established the Southwestern Research Station in 1955 to study this unique biota and hundreds, if not thousands, of researchers have worked and been trained at the Station. In addition, the residents of the town of Portal would be directly and adversely affected by this mining. Consequently, these residents and those of nearby areas have formed the Portal Mining Action Association to bring this matter to the attention of the public and to encourage a letter-writing campaign. They feel that "protecting this unique parcel of land is of much greater public value than encouraging mining under the 1872 law which provides no payment to the government for precious metals extracted, and sale of the Forest Service land to the mining concern at \$2.50/acre after five years of mining."

The Portal Action Association asks that you do the following if you are disturbed by this possible environmental travesty: "Public officials, particularly at the U. S. forest Service, need to know your concerns about Newmont's proposed activities. If you are a researcher, it would be worth explaining the biotic factors that drew you to the Portal area to carry on your investigations. If you are a naturalist or birdwatcher drawn to Cave Creek Canyon by its unique features, you might mention them. The Forest Service of Congress could withdraw the Newmont claims if the public makes a strong case for better public interest being served by doing so. They need to hear the views of the people who own our federal lands - you."

At the end of this piece, several names and addresses

of people to whom to write are included. I urge everyone in KHS to do so. I found my first Chiricahua Northern Blacktail Rattlesnake (*Crotalus m. molossus*) in the very area in which this proposed mine will go. It was without doubt the most beautiful rattlesnake I have ever seen and one of those rare moments in nature which takes one's breath away and always remains in one's memory. Please help to make sure that others can have the same experience.

— EMR

Mr. Gordon Parker  
President  
Newmont Mining Corporation  
One United Bank Center  
1700 Lincoln Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Mr. David F. Jolly  
Regional Forester  
United States Forest Service  
5701 Gold Avenue, SW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Mr. Jim Abbott  
Forest Supervisor  
Coronado National Forest  
301 West Canyon  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Ms. Jeanne Wade  
District Ranger, U. S. F. S.  
R.R. 1, Box 228R  
Douglas, Arizona 85607

Congressman Morris K. Udall  
373 South Meyer Avenue  
Tucson, Arizona 85635

Senator John McCain  
5353 North 16th Street, Suite 190  
Phoenix, Arizona 85016

Senator Dennis DeConcini  
700 East Jefferson, Suite 200  
Phoenix, Arizona 85034

## 14TH ANNUAL ALL-FLORIDA HERPETOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

The Florida Museum of Natural History and the Gainesville Herpetological Society announce that the All-Florida Herpetological Conference will be held 13 April 1991 at the Reitz Union Auditorium on the campus of the University of Florida. Speakers include Roger Conant, Justin Congdon, Phillippe de Vosjoli, Richard Funk, Louis Guillette, Marc Hayes, Rick Hudson, Max Nickerson, and Cecil Schwalbe. Preregistration costs for the conference are \$10. For the conference and barbecue, they are \$16. Add \$2 for registration after 7 April. Make checks payable to "The Gainesville Herpetological Society" and mail to: David Auth, Division of Herpetology, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 32611. Those wishing for more information may call Dr. Auth at (904)392-1721.

## BOOKS AVAILABLE

Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., P. O. Box 9542, Melbourne, Florida, 32902-9542, announces the following books for sale: **The Snakes of Thailand and Their Husbandry** by Merel Cox (\$69.50), **Handbook of Alligators and Crocodiles** by Steve Grenard (\$29.50), **Lizards of the Orient, A Checklist** by Kenneth R. G. Welch, P. S. Cook, and A. S. Wright (\$21.50), **Snakes of the World; Vol. 1, Synopsis of Snake Generic Names, Vol. 2, Synopsis of Living and Extinct Species** by Kenneth L. Williams and Van Wallach (\$31.50 and \$33.50, respectively). In addition, three other titles without price set yet are, or soon will be, available: **Venomous Sea Snakes: Comprehensive Bibliography** by George V. Pickwell and Wendy A. Cullotta, **Geckoes** by Herbert Rosler, and **Medical Value of Amphibians and Reptiles** by Steve Grenard.

## NEW SOCIETY SEEKS MEMBERS

The International Iguana Society, Finca Cyclura, Rt. 3, Box 328, Big Pine Key, Florida, 33043 is looking for a few good members. The society was formed to preserve the biological diversity of iguanas and is concentrating its initial efforts on the highly endangered West Indian Rock Iguanas (*Cyclura*). Indeed, an IIS member has recently rediscovered a population of the Jamaican Rock Iguana (*Cyclura collei*), a species whose continued existence has not been confirmed in over 40 years. The group is emphasizing habitat preservation and management. Board members include such well known herpetologists as Richard Montanucci, John Iverson, and Howard Lawler. I encourage all who can afford the \$25 membership fee to join.

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## MID-AMERICA PHOTOGRAPHERS WEEKEND

The first Mid-America Photographers Weekend is being planned for the spring of 1991 in southern Kansas. The event, which is designed to bring photographers with a variety of interests together for an informal meeting, is being sponsored by Kansas Heritage Photography of Caldwell.

A display of amphibians and reptiles, as well as other wildlife, will be provided for KHS members and others to photograph.

Complete information, registration forms, and dates for the event will be available after 15 February. Those wishing to receive this information should send \$1 to Larry Miller, Kansas Heritage Photography, 524 N. Osage Street, Caldwell, Kansas, 67022.

## MORE BOOKS

The Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles announces the publication of two new books. **The Snakes of Iran** by Mahmoud Latifi is an English translation of his 1985 work. This edition contains descriptive accounts for each species, a key to 60 species of Iranian snakes, distributional list (by province), and an extensive bibliography. A new appendix by Alan Leviton and George Zug contains a supplemental bibliography and current nomenclature. The clothbound book contains 164 pages, 24 color plates, 2 maps, and 25 figures and will be available March 1991 for \$22, \$17 for SSAR members.

**The Herpetofauna of Iraq, Kuwait, and the Arabian Gulf Region** by Alan E. Leviton, Steven C. Anderson, Sherman A. Minton, and Kraig Adler is a handbook for identification of herps in the region extending from the Turkish border through Iraq, Kuwait, and northern and eastern Saudi Arabia, including the Persian Gulf and lowlands bordering it. This approximately 175 page book contains a checklist of 144 species and subspecies, including diagnosis and distribution, and an illustrated key. Sixteen color plates (90 photos) depict every genus and most species. A separate chapter on venomous snakes gives detailed descriptions, behavioral and ecological notes, and sections on medical procedure, recommended antivenoms and a list of sources. An appendix on collection and preservation techniques by KHS member John Simmons and an extensive bibliography are also included. The book will be available June 1991 for \$28 (\$23 to SSAR members).

Send orders to Dr. Robert Aldridge, Department of Biology, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, 63103. Make checks payable to "SSAR."

## KHS BUSINESS

### 1991 KHS FIELD TRIP TO BE HELD AT MILFORD RESERVOIR

The Annual Spring Field Trip of the Kansas Herpetological Society will be held 3-5 May 1991 at School Creek Campground A of Milford Reservoir in Clay/Riley Counties. The potential is good for several county records in this area, but you will have to check locations carefully as several counties surround this reservoir. There have been rumors of copperheads which would be county records) from the Timber Creek area. All attendees are responsible for payment of user fees (\$4/day) per vehicle. To get to the campsite, take US Highway 77 to State Highway 18 just west of Junction City. Turn west at this junction and proceed to County Road 857 (approximately 8.5 mi W of the 77/18 junction). Turn north and proceed to County Road 837(10 mi) and turn east. Go three mi E and one mi S and you should arrive at Campground A. If you have questions or need a copy of a map contact me at 5782 Zeandale Road, Manhattan, Kansas, 66502. Bring friends and hope to see you there!

— Kelly J. Irwin  
KHS Meeting Chairman

### THIS AND THAT

Remember, folks, the spring herp season is just around the corner. In fact, amphibian season is here for those of you with a masochistic bent. Please make an effort to try to get out into the field and put those nifty Amphibian Census forms you received in your last Newsletter to use. Although spring and early summer are the best times to document amphibians, the intent of this data-gathering effort is that it be done on a year-round basis. Any information you gather can be used, whether you find one salamander or 1,000 frogs. A word of caution: certain species of anurans here can be confusing to identify, particularly chorus frogs, toads and leopard frogs. If you are not positive as to who belongs to what category, attempt

to collect specimens or make tape recordings of their calls and have them identified by an experienced herpetologist. If this is not possible, identify your critters to *genus* only. We hope to conduct anuran identification workshops sometime in the near future to train additional identifiers.

As part of the problem with determining the extent of this amphibian crisis is the lack of long-term data, it would be extremely helpful for those of you who maintain field notes or logs to go over your old notes as far back as you can and enter data on amphibians into these census forms.

Last, keep in mind that the time for the annual KHS Herp Counts (April-May) is coming also. We had an excellent response last year and look forward to adding many more counts this year. *Anyone* can do a herp count anywhere in the state that they choose. In fact, you can do as many as you wish and we encourage all to do so.

Send Amphibian Census forms to me here at the zoo. KHS Herp Counts should go to Joseph T. Collins, Museum of Natural History - Dyche Hall, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 66045. Happy hunting.

And in a more serious vein — at the end of the previous SSAR book announcement I had intended to add a few flip remarks about Bush and Hussein and whether any herps in the region covered would be worth looking at. As this issue goes to press, it looks to me like we stand a very real chance of going to war in the very near future. Perhaps by the time you receive your copy, we have already done so. If this is the case, whatever your feelings on the issue, I ask that each of you look into your hearts and pray to your god or gods for a swift and peaceful resolution to this conflict. I realize that perhaps this Newsletter is not exactly the proper forum for such editorializing but certain fundamental beliefs of mine do not allow me *not* to issue such a call in whatever manner of which I am capable. As we all grapple with issues of our degrading environment and the creatures which it contains and which we hold most dear, remember that war is most horrendous act of environmental degradation man can commit, both to his world and to himself.

— EMR

## KHS BRINGS YOU GREAT NEWS OF THE WORLD

### ANNUAL HERP AUCTION RAISES \$1,542

Joseph Collins looked at the two long tables full of snake sacks, reptile books, frog T-shirts and hundreds of other herpetology-related items.

"This is a lot of stuff", said Collins, a KU zoologist. "We have over 300 items to sell here."

Collins was the auctioneer Saturday night at the 17th annual Herp Auction at the Big Eight Room in the Kansas Union. More than 100 people attended the auction, which raised \$1,542 for the Kansas Herpetological Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving snakes, amphibians, and reptiles (sic) in Kansas.

Members of the Society donated items to be sold at the

auction, which was part of the Society's annual meeting.

Kelly Irwin, a Kansas State University student and member of the Society, said people from as far away as New Orleans and Albuquerque, N. M. had attended the meeting.

For three hours, herpetology fans bid on hundreds of books, pieces of original artwork, empty aquariums, a license plate that read REPTILS, a 1991 "Snake in the Grass" calendar, and a tablecloth signed by everyone who attended the two-day meeting.

Nancy Schwarting, president of the Society, said the variety of material sold reflected the diversity of the Society's members.

"We have the whole spectrum of humanity represented here", she said. "We have teachers and students, zookeepers and eccentrics. We have people who have Ph.D.s and people who have almost no education at all. The only thing they have in common is that they like snakes and reptiles."

Schwarting said the 229-member Herpetological Society worked with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to promote habitat preservation and to discourage the buying and selling of native Kansas reptiles and amphibians.

The Society also conducts a "herp count", an annual census of snakes, reptiles and amphibians (sic) in Kansas that is used to document changes in their populations over time, she said.

The most feverish bidding of the evening was for an out-of-print hardcover edition of *Reptiles and Amphibians in Kansas*, a book written by herpetologist [and Kansas native] Hobart Smith, who Society members described as a legend.

— University Daily Kansan, 5 November 1990  
(submitted by Ralph Black, Wichita)

## BIOLOGIST NOTES TURTLE DEFORMITIES

A Common Map Turtle is an uncommon sight in Kansas, but until recently biologists thought the species had disappeared from the state long ago.

David Edds, an assistant professor of biology at Emporia State [University], sent some of his students out into the creeks and streams of southeast Kansas this summer, trying to find specimens of the turtle.

Until recently, no Common Map Turtle had been seen in Kansas in 38 years. The students have found nine so far, some of them in the Marmaton River near the Allen-Bourbon County line.

Edds hoped some of the turtles would show up in clear streams such as Shoal Creek and the Spring River, but so far none have been found.

But Marty Capron, a biologist from Oxford, Kansas,

who conducted turtle studies for the state, said he wasn't surprised, and blames pollution.

The Spring River, he said, is "a virtual wasteland as far as fish, vertebrates and even invertebrates are concerned."

Capron notes that around the country, the turtle population is dropping and the number of deformities is on the rise. Capron first noticed this trend while searching southeast Kansas for the Alligator Snapping Turtle. He found deformities in 4 percent to 10 percent of the turtles he saw — including soft shells, missing eyes, deformed legs and toes.

The Emporia State researchers, whose work is funded by the university and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, have found eight species of turtles in a 19-county area of southeast Kansas.

Edds says part of the problem is a lack of research on turtles. Although they're not cute, cuddly creatures that usually interest people, what happens to them can be an important indicator of the state of the environment.

"Turtles disturb me in the fact that they are relatively tough and relatively ancient and they've done real well coping with mayhem over the years", adds Capron. "By the time you start seeing turtles in trouble, you could be seeing it in a lot of vertebrates."

— 31 August 1990, Columbus, Kansas Daily Advocate  
(submitted by David Edds, Emporia)

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE LISTS MADTOM AS THREATENED SPECIES

Effective 21 June 1990, USFWS listed the Neosho Madtom (*Noturus placidus*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The Madtom is currently known to exist in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. Habitat destruction and modification have decreased the distribution and abundance of the species and isolated it into three populations. [This small catfish was first discovered in Kansas and its listing has important implications for such herps as the Common Map Turtle, the Alligator Snapping Turtle, and the Northern Crawfish Frog in the state.]

— AAZPA Communique, July 1990  
(submitted by Ignatius Spratt, Wichita)

## HERPS IN HAZARD

The most tantalizing natural history story of the year has been the dawning realization that frogs and other amphibians are suffering a mysterious decline in many parts of the world. The extinction of a species can be viewed as an isolated tragedy. The disruption of an entire class of animals, some scientists fear, may be the harbinger of planetary catastrophe.

"A couple of hundred [herpetologists] attended a conference at New Orleans in August to pool their information on the mystery", Andrew Blaustein of Oregon State University said on the phone recently. "They stood up, one after the other, and reported, 'Hey, this one's gone' and 'That one's gone', ad nauseum. There was a lot of anecdotal evidence of species disappearing from areas where they once were common, but no one could come up with hard data to support the causes of disappearance. A lot of long-term studies are now under way."

The patterns of decline are confusing. Many once familiar species of "herps" are gone from large areas of our Pacific states. Researchers report major losses in Latin America, Europe, and Australia. Yet there are few similar reports from our southeastern states, except locally where development projects have destroyed good amphibian habitat. All sorts of reasons, including pesticides, heavy metal contamination, acid rain, predation, and ultraviolet radiation, have been advanced for the declines.

"In Oregon we looked at thirty populations of the Cascades Frog (*Rana cascadae*) and found an overall 80 percent drop in numbers", Blaustein said. "But one population near several decimated ones was doing very well. In one study area there was 100 percent mortality among 600,000 eggs of Western Toads (*Bufo boreas*). The only exceptions were eggs I took into my lab. They did fine, and the tadpoles that hatched from them also did fine when I put them back into the wild."

David Wake, director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California-Berkeley, also asked us to emphasize that amphibians are not disappearing *en masse*.

"I am painfully aware of the decline because I have a house in Calaveras County, where *all* the native frogs have disappeared", he said. "That includes the Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora*), which was the original jumping frog in the Mark Twain story. Certainly the introduction here of an alien species, the Bullfrog, had much to do with its disappearance. But I live at 5,000 feet, where the Bullfrog isn't a factor and the Mountain Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana muscosa*) — which was common here 30 years ago — is now gone."

Wake agreed there is some evidence that a thinning of the ozone layer may be responsible for part of the decline. Studies have shown that frog eggs and tadpoles are extremely vulnerable to increased levels of UV-B radiation, the kind of rays that would reach Earth because of a thinning of the ozone layer. (The success of eggs and tadpoles reared away from sunlight in Blaustein's laboratory lends extra credence to the theory.) But Wake also points to the disappearance of frogs in parts of the Sierra which in the recent past were heavily sprayed with insecticides to control bark beetles.

"Birds have long been seen as good indicators of

environmental problems", Wake pointed out. "But amphibians may be even better indicators at the local level. Birds can fly away, but frogs must face the problem. They are extremely susceptible, being herbivores as tadpoles and predators as adults. Many of them easily absorb contaminants through the skin. Whatever is happening to frogs is happening to them right here — not in Belize or Brazil, as may be the case with birds."

Blaustein, Wake, and others have speculated that the decline may have been masked for some years because frogs are often a "top carnivore" in their ecosystems. ("A lot of frogs die of old age", David Wake said.) Whatever is striking at their populations may be affecting only the early life stages so that the problem did not appear until the adults began dying of "old age."

"Frogs are telling us the ecosystem is sick", Wake said. "If something bad is going on out there it may be hard to turn around at this stage, and all forms of life may be affected."

Wake believes that the endangered species concept has been overworked by environmentalists.

"Biodiversity is the key word, and we haven't gotten it across to the public", he insisted. "I think we've made a great mistake, for instance, in our use of the spotted owl to fight the destruction of ancient forests. By emphasizing one species we make the case vulnerable at times and give the exploiters a shot at overturning the Endangered Species Act."

"The destruction of old forests is absolutely devastating to amphibians — and, of course, to vast numbers of other organisms. Let's concentrate on the *diversity* we're losing and make the regulators and the public understand the immensity of the problem."

— Audubon Magazine, November 1990  
(submitted by John Simmons, Lawrence)

## LIZARD SIZE AND PERFORMANCE

Hatchling lizards [*Sceloporus occidentalis*] from southern California have larger bodies and longer hindlimbs, move faster, and have more stamina than their counterparts in Oregon and Washington. To test whether the differences in performance reflect differences in body size (allometric consequences), miniature California hatchlings were produced by removal of 10-50% of the total egg mass and compared with northern hatchlings of the same size. Three weeks after a lizard had hatched, its speed on a laboratory was charted, and at 4 or 5 weeks, its stamina was measured on a treadmill. Speed proved to be a direct outcome of size, northern and southern hatchlings of the same size had equal burst speeds. But California lizards retained their edge in stamina even when miniaturized, showing that this trait is not fully size-dependent. "Allom-

etric engineering" experiments and recent genetic engineering studies have added experimentation to allometric analyses, which previously were largely statistical. [Barry] Sinervo and [Raymond] Huey note that, of these two experimental approaches, allometric engineering is at the present time the most likely to be widely applicable for studying how size affects the performance of offspring of many different egg-laying animals.

— Science, 1 June, 1990  
(submitted by Dan Schupp, Wichita)

### **SNAKE MAN WINDS WAY BACK TO FLORIDA**

The snake man is back.

Bill Haast waved a scarred hand inches from a King Cobra, the world's deadliest animal. Distracting it, he reached with the other hand to grab it around what passes for a neck on the nearly 14-foot snake.

Suddenly the cobra - the animal that can kill an elephant - lunged with the swiftness of a cracking whip. It barely missed sinking its fangs into Haast's hand and releasing enough venom to kill 100 people. Then Haast had the snake and was putting its fangs onto a membrane-covered test tube.

He has repeated that process many times with the world's most poisonous species of snakes for nearly a half century.

He has also indirectly saved thousands of lives. If you're bitten by a rattlesnake anywhere in America, it's almost certain the hospital will give you an antidote that started in Haast's lab. He's also a leading international provider of venom for research.

For four decades, he and his snakes — sometimes as many as 10,000 — performed for admiring tourists at the Miami Serpenterium south of Miami. In 1984, he closed the attraction and moved lock, stock, and rattle to a research center in Utah.

But the snakes didn't fancy skiing weather, so Haast recently bought 44 acres near Florida's Gulf Coast in fast-growing Charlotte County, about 30 miles north of Fort Myers.

There he continues to extract venom for his clients in a sprawling compound that will eventually include his home, a laboratory, and open snake pits.

Haast, 79, has done pioneering — and controversial — work in the use of venom to treat diseases.

He has been bitten 150 times, 78 by cobras. Some are bites no one else has ever survived. His gnarled hands show the effects of the venom: part of the snake's digestive juices, it starts deteriorating muscle tissue almost immediately.

In 1954, he was bitten by a krait, a snake with venom

that is, drop for drop, 15 times more lethal than a cobra. For a time after the bite, Haast was paralyzed and could not move his eyelids.

He lives because in 1948 he started injecting himself with venom from 50 different snakes. He started with venom diluted 10,000 times and now takes booster shots every two weeks, containing enough venom to kill five people.

Haast's blood is like gold to other snakebite victims, and 21 have been saved by transfusions.

For 40 years, Haast has been the primary supplier to Wyeth Laboratories, which has a virtual monopoly on snakebite antidotes. Wyeth injects small amounts of venom into horses, whose blood builds up antibodies. The blood is then removed, and solids are separated.

—Wichita Eagle, 14 June 1990  
(submitted by Jack Shumard, Wichita)

### **MISSING ALLIGATOR FOUND IN CRAWL SPACE**

Be on the lookout for a missing Alligator, Topeka police were told Saturday.

Lt. Roland Whye, patrol division watch commander, said the 7 1/2 foot-long Alligator disappeared from the home of Shane Hicks, . . . who reported it missing at 5:58 p.m.

Police were told the animal was potentially dangerous.

But Hicks called police back at 6:40 p.m. to report he had found the missing reptile in a crawl space under the house, Whye said.

City ordinance requires Topekans to have a special permit issued by the city treasurer to keep exotic animals, including Alligators. Police said they would check this week to see whether Hicks had such a permit.

— Topeka Capitol-Journal, 17 December 1990  
(submitted by Jim Gubanyi, Topeka)

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### NEW RECORDS OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN KANSAS FOR 1990

By

Joseph T. Collins  
Museum of Natural History  
The University of Kansas  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045

The 100 new county records and nine maximum size records listed below are those accumulated or brought to my attention since the publication of records for 1989 (Collins, 1989). Publication of these new records permits me to give credit and express my appreciation to the many individuals who collected or obtained specimens and donated them to me for deposition in an institutional collection. Further, recipients of this list are permitted an opportunity to update the range maps and size maxima sections in *Amphibians and Reptiles in Kansas* (Collins, 1982). Finally, these new records represent information that greatly increases our knowledge of the distribution and physical proportions of these creatures in Kansas, and thus gives us a better understanding of their biology. This report is my sixteenth in a series that has appeared annually since 1976, and the data contained herein will be incorporated into the upcoming third (revised) edition of my book, currently in preparation.

The Kansas specimens listed below represent the first records for the given county based on a preserved, cataloged voucher specimen in an institutional collection, or represent size maxima larger than those listed in Collins (1982). Any information of this nature not backed by a voucher specimen is an unverifiable observation. All new records listed here are presented in the following standardized format: common and scientific name, county, specific locality, date of collection, collector(s), and place of deposition and catalog number. New size maxima are presented with the size limits expressed in both metric and English units. Common names are those now generally accepted and in use across North America, as proposed by Collins (1990).

The records listed below are deposited in the herpetological collections of the Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence (KU) and the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, The University of

Minnesota, Minneapolis (JFBM). I am most grateful to the members of the Kansas Herpetological Society, to David Edds and his graduate students at Emporia State University, and to the staff of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, who spent many hours in search of some of the specimens reported herein. John E. Simmons, Collection Manager for the Division of Herpetology, Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, diligently assigned catalog numbers to the specimens listed below, and to him I am indebted. Mary Kate Baldwin assisted me in making measurements on the new size maxima listed herein, and to her I am most grateful. Thanks are due also to Philip S. Humphrey, Director, and William E. Duellman, Curator of Herpetology, of the Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, and to John Moriarty, James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, The University of Minnesota. And finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Travis W. Taggart, whose collecting efforts are abundantly apparent in the records listed below. His efforts and enthusiasm made 1990 a most memorable season.

#### NEW COUNTY RECORDS

##### SMALLMOUTH SALAMANDER (*Ambystoma texanum*)

- JEFFERSON CO: Sec. 8, T10S, R16E. 7 March 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216170).
- LEAVENWORTH CO: Sec. 25, T10S, R20E. 28 February 1989. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216169).
- SHAWNEE CO: Sec. 4, T12S, R17E. 7 March 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216171).
- WYANDOTTE CO: 0.5 mi W of 123rd on Donahoo. 2 October 1990. Kevin Toal & Brad Strothkamp (KU 217242).

TIGER SALAMANDER  
(*Ambystoma tigrinum*)

GRAHAM CO: Sec. 35, T10S, R24W. 6 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217216). HODGEMAN CO: Sec. 16, T23S, R23W. 5 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216173).

AMERICAN TOAD  
(*Bufo americanus*)

BOURBON CO: Sec. 14, T26S, R21E. 28 May 1988. Keith Coleman (KU 209747).

GREAT PLAINS TOAD  
(*Bufo cognatus*)

MCPHERSON CO: Sec. 8, T25S, R4W. 27 May 1990. Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins (KU 216151).

WOODHOUSE'S TOAD  
(*Bufo woodhousii*)

SALINE CO: within Salina city limits. 12 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216112).

SPOTTED CHORUS FROG  
(*Pseudacris clarkii*)

PAWNEE CO: Sec. 5, T21S, R15W. 3 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216178).

WESTERN CHORUS FROG  
(*Pseudacris triseriata* complex)

PAWNEE CO: Sec. 5, T21S, R15W. 3 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216182). HODGEMAN CO: Sec. 16, T23S, R23W. 5 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216180).

PLAINS NARROWMOUTH TOAD  
(*Gastrophryne olivacea*)

DICKINSON CO: Sec. 12, T14S, R4E. 6 May 1990. Al Kamb (KU 216176). HODGEMAN CO: Sec. 16, T23S, R23W. 5 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216175). NESS CO: Sec. 4, T16S, R22W. 24 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216113). OSBORNE CO: Sec. 22, T10S, R15W. 28 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216114).

SOUTHERN LEOPARD FROG  
(*Rana utricularia utricularia*)

WYANDOTTE CO: Kansas City, near jct. 43rd and Leavenworth Road. September 1990. Dan Murrow (KU 217248).

COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE  
(*Chelydra serpentina serpentina*)

MCPHERSON CO: Sec. 19, T17S, R1W. 27 May 1990. Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins (KU 216165). MORRIS CO: Neosho River, Sec. 14, T17S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217279). OSBORNE CO: Sec. 18, T13S, R10W. 7 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216144).

COMMON MUSK TURTLE  
(*Sternotherus odoratus*)

ALLEN CO: Marmaton River, Sec. 28 & 33, T25S, R21E. 23 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217278).

YELLOW MUD TURTLE  
(*Kinosternon flavescens flavescens*)

HODGEMAN CO: Sec. 16, T23S, R23W. 12 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216187). NESS CO: Sec. 7, T16S, R22W. 13 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217240). RUSH CO: Sec. 2, T16S, R18W. 29 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217241).

THREE-TOED BOX TURTLE  
(*Terrapene carolina triunguis*)

WYANDOTTE CO: Kansas City, Welbourn, jct. 42nd and Leavenworth Road. October 1990. Dan Murrow (KU 217258).

ORNATE BOX TURTLE  
(*Terrapene ornata ornata*)

BROWN CO: Brown County State Lake, Sec. 26, T2S, R18E. 23 June 1990. Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins (KU 216166). DECATUR CO: Sec. 14, T3S, R28W. 19 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217239). OSBORNE CO: Sec. 17, T10S, R15W. 28 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216142).

COMMON MAP TURTLE  
(*Graptemys geographica*)

ALLEN CO: Marmaton River, Sec. 16, T25S, R12E. 25 July 1990. Judy Schnell, Lenn Shipman & Warren Voorhees (KU 217260).

MISSISSIPPI MAP TURTLE  
(*Graptemys kohnii*)

CHASE CO: Cottonwood River, Sec. 20, T14S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217261). CHEROKEE CO: Neosho River, Sec. 36, T34S, R21E. 1 October 1990. Warren Voorhees (KU 217261).



217263). GREENWOOD CO: Fall River, Sec. 30, T2S, R10E. 3 September 1990. Lenn Shipman & Paul Shipman (KU 217264). MORRIS CO: Neosho River, Sec. 14, T17S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217265).

OUACHITA MAP TURTLE  
(*Gratemys pseudogeographica ouachitensis*)

ALLEN CO: Neosho River, Sec. 35, T24S, R18E. 23 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217270). CHASE CO: Cottonwood River, Sec. 20, T14S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217268). CHAUTAUQUA CO: Big Caney River, Sec. 12, T34S, R8E. 20 September 1990. Lenn Shipman & Warren Voorhees (KU 217269). CHEROKEE CO: Neosho River, Sec. 36, T34S, R21E. 1 October 1990. Warren Voorhees (KU 217272). FRANKLIN CO: Marais des Cygnes River at Ottawa. 25 July 1990. Lenn Shipman & Warren Voorhees (KU 217266). GREENWOOD CO: Fall River, Sec. 30, T25S, R10E. 3 September 1990. Lenn Shipman & Paul Shipman (KU 217267). LABETTE CO: Neosho River, Sec. 8, T33S, R21E. 1 October 1990. Warren Voorhees (KU 217271). MIAMI CO: Marais des Cygnes River, Secs. 30-31, T18S, R24E. 25 July 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217274).

WESTERN PAINTED TURTLE  
(*Chrysemys picta bellii*)

JEWELL CO: Sec. 6, T2S, R6W. 14 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217238). RUSH CO: Sec. 2, T16S, R18W. 11 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216141). SCOTT CO: Scott County State Lake below dam in Ladder Creek, Sec. 1, T16S, R33W. 21 November 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217257).

RED-EARED SLIDER  
(*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

MARION CO: Sec. 23, T21S, R5E. 16 July 1990. David Edds et al. (KU Color Slide 8905). MCPHERSON CO: Sec. 30, T18S, R1W. 27 May 1990. Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins (KU 216167).

WESTERN SPINY SOFTSHELL  
(*Apalone spinifera hartwegi*)

CHAUTAUQUA CO: Mule Creek, Sec. 3, T34S, R11E. 20 September 1990. Lenn Shipman & Warren Voorhees (KU 217282). MORRIS CO: Neosho River, Sec. 14, T17S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217281).

EASTERN COLLARED LIZARD  
(*Crotaphytus collaris collaris*)

• NESS CO: Sec. 2, T16S, R22W. 24 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216118). • OSBORNE CO: Sec. 18, T10S, R15W. 28 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216117).

TEXAS HORNED LIZARD  
(*Phrynosoma cornutum*)

GOVE CO: Sec. 12, T15S, R26W. 5 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216119). RUSH CO: Sec. 10, T16S, R16W. 28 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217219).

FIVE-LINED SKINK  
(*Eumeces fasciatus*)

• COWLEY CO: Sec. 17, T34S, R8E. June 1956. A. L. Metcalf (JFBM 1607).

GREAT PLAINS SKINK  
(*Eumeces obsoletus*)

RAWLINS CO: Sec. 21, T1S, R33W. 19 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217220).

PRAIRIE RACERUNNER  
(*Cnemidophorus sexlineatus viridis*)

NESS CO: Sec. 33, T16S, R22W. 17 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216184).

WESTERN SLENDER GLASS LIZARD  
(*Ophisaurus attenuatus attenuatus*)

• ROOKS CO: Sec. 27, T7S, R19W. 21 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216115). • TREGO CO: Sec. 9, T11S, R21W. 8 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217218).

WESTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE  
(*Heterodon nasicus*)

CLOUD CO: Sec. 8, T8S, R5W. 20 September 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217227). ELLSWORTH CO: Sec. 5, T14S, R10W. 14 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216191). LINCOLN CO: Sec. 18, T13S, R10W. 7 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216124). MITCHELL CO: Sec. 2, T7S, R10W. 23 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216127). RUSH CO: Sec. 2, T16S, R18W. 11 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216125).

EASTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE  
(*Heterodon platirhinos*)

• GOVE CO: Sec. 12, T15S, R26W. 17 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216129). KINGMAN CO: E edge Zenda on Rt. 42. 1 June 1990. Chris Mammoliti (KU Color Slide 8902). • NORTON CO: Sec. 26, T4S, R21W. 19 September 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217229).

PRAIRIE RINGNECK SNAKE  
(*Diadophis punctatus arnyi*)

NESS CO: Sec. 3, T16S, R22W. 15 September 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217221).

PLAINS BLACKHEAD SNAKE  
(*Tantilla nigriceps*)

GOVE CO: Sec. 12, T15S, R26W. 17 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216135). OSBORNE CO: Sec. 9, T10S, R26W. 7 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216134).

COACHWHIP  
(*Masticophis flagellum*)

OSBORNE CO: Sec. 18, T10S, R15W. 28 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216132).

GREAT PLAINS RAT SNAKE  
(*Elaphe guttata emoryi*)

GOVE CO: Sec. 12, T15S, R26W. 5 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216123). LANE CO: Sec. 2, T18S, R27W. 17 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217222). LOGAN CO: Sec. 25, T14S, R23W. 16 October 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217224). NESS CO: Sec. 33, T16S, R22W. 17 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216189). NORTON CO: Sec. 35, T4S, R21W. 19 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217223).

PRAIRIE KINGSNAKE  
(*Lampropeltis calligaster calligaster*)

ELLIS CO: Sec. 1, T15S, R18W. 27 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Scott Meyer (KU 216130).

COMMON KINGSNAKE  
(*Lampropeltis getula*)

DICKINSON CO: ca. 1.6 km S Lyons, Sec. 7, T14S, R5E. 12 May 1990. Al Kamb (KU 216192).

MILK SNAKE  
(*Lampropeltis triangulum*)

• GOVE CO: Sec. 12, T15S, R26W. 17 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217225). HODGEMAN CO: Sec. 18, T23S, R23W. 4 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart, Larry Miller & Kelly J. Irwin (KU 216193). ROOKS CO: Sec. 35, T10S, R17W. 25 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Scott Meyer (KU 216131). RUSH CO: Sec. 1, T16S, R18W. 23 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216195).

WESTERN RIBBON SNAKE  
(*Thamnophis proximus*)

GOVE CO: Sec. 11, T15S, R26W. 17 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217232).

WESTERN PLAINS GARTER SNAKE  
(*Thamnophis radix haydenii*)

• JEWELL CO: Sec. 17, T2S, R6W. 14 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217233). NORTON CO: Sec. 17, T3S, R23W. 22 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart, Scott Meyer & Michelle Hartman (KU 216137). PAWNEE CO: Sec. 5, T15S, R16W. 20 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216136).

COMMON GARTER SNAKE  
(*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

RAWLINS CO: Sec. 28, T1S, R33W. 19 August 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217234).

LINED SNAKE  
(*Tropidoclonion lineatum*)

• NORTON CO: Sec. 34, T4S, R21W. 19 September 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217235). RUSH CO: Sec. 1, T16S, R18W. 23 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216202).

GRAHAM'S CRAYFISH SNAKE  
(*Regina grahamii*)

ATCHISON CO: Atchison County State Lake, Sec. 7, T5S, R17E. 15 May 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216196). CHAUTAUQUA CO: Sec. 28, T33S, R12E. 6 May 1990. Stanley D. Roth (KU 216197).

DIAMONDBACK WATER SNAKE  
(*Nerodia rhombifer rhombifer*)

MORRIS CO: Sec. 32, T17S, R9E. 28 May 1990. Suzanne L. Collins & Joseph T. Collins (KU 216159).

NORTHERN WATER SNAKE  
(*Nerodia sipedon sipedon*)

CHEYENNE CO: Sec. 10, T1S, R42W. 21 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217230). GOVE CO: Sec. 11, T15S, R26W. 17 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217231).

OSAGE COPPERHEAD  
(*Agkistrodon contortrix phaeogaster*)

DICKINSON CO: 1/4 mi N and 3/4 mi E Lyona, Sec. 6, T14S, R5E. 31 August 1990. Eric M. Rundquist (KU 217251).

MASSASAUGA  
(*Sistrurus catenatus*)

ROOKS CO: Sec. 30, T8S, R16W. 8 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217237). TREGO CO: near Cedar Bluff Reservoir, SE 1/4 Sec. 9, T15S, R22W. 15 April 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216206).

TIMBER RATTLESNAKE  
(*Crotalus horridus*)

WILSON CO: 8 km W & 2.4 km S Fredonia. 2 August 1987. J. Black & J. Edens (KU 216205).

PRAIRIE RATTLESNAKE  
(*Crotalus viridis viridis*)

MITCHELL CO: Sec. 5, T7S, R10W. 23 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 216140). NORTON CO: Sec. 25, T3S, R24W. 22 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart, Scott Meyer & Michelle Hartman (KU 216139). OSBORNE CO: Sec. 9, T10S, R26W. 7 June 1990. Travis W. Taggart & Chris Kuhn (KU 216138). RUSH CO: Sec. 10, T16S, R16W. 28 July 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 217236).

NEW MAXIMUM SIZE RECORDS

SMALLMOUTH SALAMANDER  
(*Ambystoma texanum*)

JEFFERSON CO: below Perry Lake dam, Sec. 9, T11S, R18E. 7 March 1990. Travis W. Taggart (KU 215632). SVL = 90 mm; total length = 167 mm (6 1/2 inches). Female.

RED-SPOTTED TOAD  
(*Bufo punctatus*)

BARBER CO: 7.2 km S & 1.2 km E Aetna. 14 June 1983. Larry Miller (KU 193290). SVL = 56 mm (2 3/16 inches). Female.

STRECKER'S CHORUS FROG  
(*Pseudacris streckeri streckeri*)

HARPER CO: 8 km W & 7.7 km N Waldron, Sec. 27, T34S, R9W. 7 April 1984. Suzanne L. Collins, Joseph T. Collins, & Larry Miller (KU 195621). SVL = 38 mm (1 1/2 inches). Male.

NORTHERN SPRING PEEPER  
(*Pseudacris crucifer crucifer*)

CHEROKEE CO: Schermerhorn Park Cave, S of Galena. 30 July 1980. Chris Stammer & Dan Hodges (KU 186100). SVL = 30 mm (1 1/4 inches). Female.

PLAINS NARROWMOUTH TOAD  
(*Gastrophryne olivacea*)

ELLIS CO: Sec. 1, T12S, R17W. 21 April 1990. Larry Miller & Karen Toepfer (KU 215633). SVL = 41 mm (1 9/16 inches). Female.

COMMON MAP TURTLE  
(*Graptemys geographica*)

OSAGE CO: NW 1/4 Sec. 25, T18S, R16E. 3 July 1990. Lenn Shipman & Warren Voorhees (KU Color Slide 8872). Upper shell length = 226 mm (8 7/8 inches). Female.

MISSISSIPPI MAP TURTLE  
(*Graptemys kohnii*)

MORRIS CO: Neosho River, Sec. 14, T17S, R9E. 7 September 1990. Judy Schnell & Warren Voorhees (KU 217265). Upper shell length = 243 mm (9 1/2 inches). Female.

PRAIRIE RINGNECK SNAKE  
(*Diadophis punctatus arnyi*)

SHAWNEE CO: Kingston Twp., Wakarusa. 15 June 1990. Mark Ellis (KU 216516). Total length = 456 mm (17 7/8 inches). Female.

RAT SNAKE  
(*Elaphe obsoleta*)

JEFFERSON CO: Sec. 33, T11S, R20W. 9 July 1990. Roger Christie (KU 216168). Total length = 1912 mm (75 1/8 inches). Weight = 3 pounds, 13 ounces. Male.

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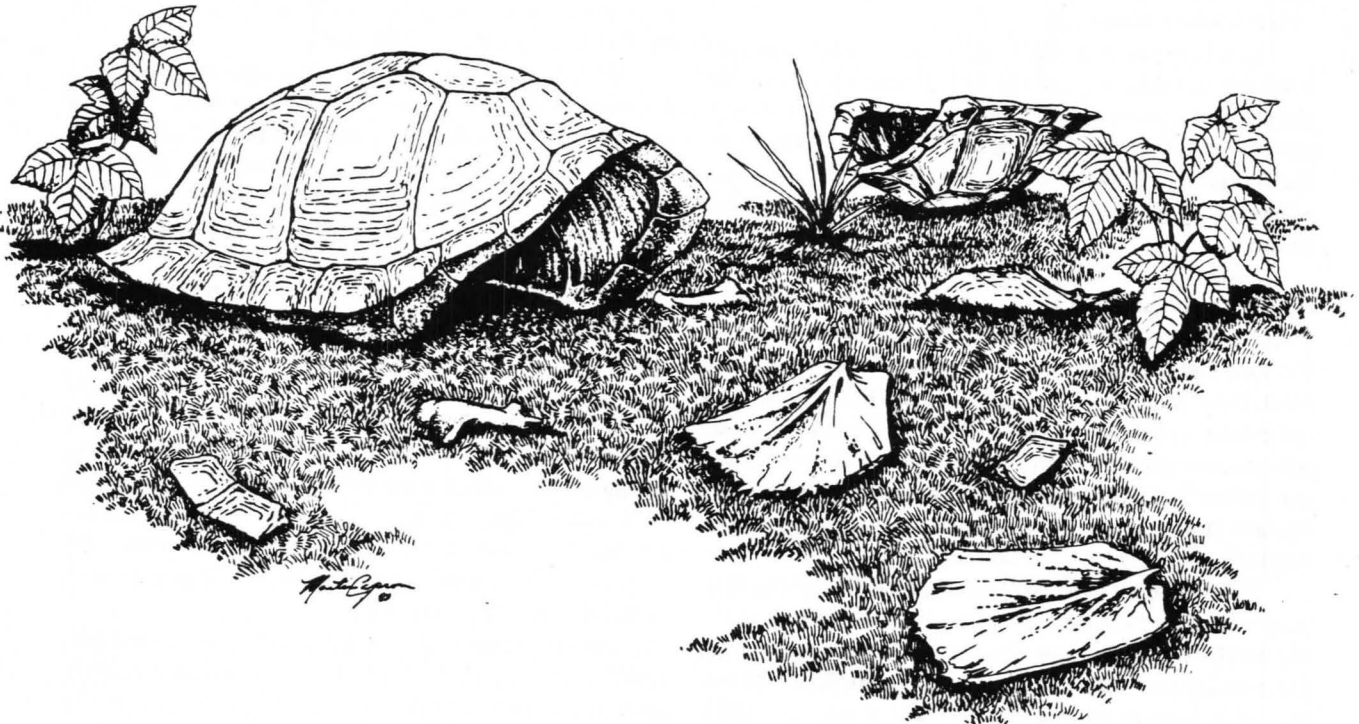
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THE PROBLEM WITH PYTHONS  
OR  
DON'T ANSWER THAT PHONE!

by  
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I think most knowledgeable herpers are nice folks, helpful and patient and we owe them a lot for this. I think of quiet, professional men like Henry Fitch and Max Nickerson and a host of others who endured adolescent pestering and dim-witted, but honest, questions with gracious calm and understanding. These are men who realized that the kids to whom they were teaching the ropes might well be the professional herpetologists of tomorrow. Looking back, I realize what a pain in the butt I must have been — asking an endless stream of questions that seem moronic in retrospect and regaling these towering herpetologists with the small-time discoveries and observations of a kid out along the river. God, it's a wonder they didn't club me with a snake stick.

So it is, to this day, that men like those mentioned and hundreds of others around the world patiently endure the pestering and phone calls in the hopes that young enthusiasm can be molded into lifelong commitment. I do my best, after realizing the awesome debt still owed to others. But, as God is my witness, this deal with Burmese Pythons has to end.

I guess that's being a little too specific, since Ball Pythons are equally at fault, with Boa Constrictors to a lesser extent. Mainly, though, it's the darn Burmese Pythons that are behind this. I can vaguely see why, since once, long, long ago, I did aspire to own some pythons. I got them eventually — a pair of baby Reticulated Pythons which grew into monsters, a Ball Python that rarely ate (and when it did, ate only gerbils), a "tame" African Rock Python (raised in Alaska of all places) that nearly bit my head off, and yes, even a Burmese Python.

They were all beautiful snakes, no doubt about that. And were they ever the conversation pieces! Everyone in my small town soon knew that I had them and came to see for themselves. For a gangling, teenage misfit, it was one hell of a way to be popular. It was a macho, egoist skyrocket trip to the top of the social ladder.

However, the snakes all proved to be problems. Most of them outgrew their accommodations rapidly. Some became mean, potentially man-eating monsters. Others only bit when I tried to feed them. Despite their motives, a bite from a big python is never forgotten. And wait until a big Burmese sprays you with two quarts of musk and liquid waste, right in the face.

I figured my python problems were over when I got rid of them all — not an easy task itself. My days, I vowed, would be quietly devoted to enjoying serpents in the wild, observing turtles in local streams, and keeping maybe just one or two small things. I didn't realize that one can never really escape one's past.

For about three years now, a week hasn't gone by without the phone ringing as soon as I get home from work, sometimes two or three times a week. It's a fair bet, when it does ring, that it is one of about four or five different guys with a question about snakes. Not just any snakes, not the local kids wanting me to identify a Hognose Snake they've caught or asking what to feed a Prairie Kingsnake. Those kids are as good as gold. They're the future of our environment and I treat them well.

No, the guys who call when you've got supper in front of you or one leg in the shower are python nuts. One guy in particular has owned a python and a boa for a little over six months now and in that time he's had more go wrong with those two snake than I've had with the hundreds I've kept during 26 years of active herp keeping — including some shaky early years.

For this guy, sometimes the snake's problem is a runny nose. One time it was snake mites. Another time he claimed it had a "bacterial skin infection", although how he arrived at that diagnosis, I have no idea! He wants to bring them over to my house to so I can look at them. He wants to bring a friend to show him my big turtle or my boa. And, naturally, he told another guy who had bought a Ball Python, and this guy wants to know where he can get another one, and if it's a male or female, and when they breed, and how often it should eat, and so on and so forth, until I am literally at wits end.

I used to figure that I was just helping out the animals, which were trapped in the care of well-meaning but utterly uninformed owners. But now — now I'm not so sure my noble intentions are worth the headache. I am not a veterinarian. I definitely do not want someone else's animals in my house — especially if they think that their snake has mites or "bacterial skin infections" or whatever. And I DO NOT RUN A ZOO! I have a house and a wife and the private time we have together is very important to me. I do not take strangers on tours of my home and the people who ask this of me must be either intolerably rude

of completely ignorant. My old colleagues and friends in the KHS and well-meaning youngsters with an interest in nature and herpetology will always be welcome in my home, anytime. But I do not operate a facility for adolescent minor macho types to which to bring their python problems. I don't want to have to change phone numbers, as some KHS members have had to do, but what else can I do? I've been called at work to answer python health care problems, been called on vacation by folks who got my phone numbers by claiming it was an emergency! And I cannot "get" anybody anything. I am not now nor have I ever been a reptile dealer. I do not sell snakes nor do I believe more than one out of about every fifty people who buys them actually deserves to have that privilege.

The underlying cause of all this, as I see it, has been, in part, attributable to the popularity of the Burmese Python and the relative ease with which it has been bred in captivity. People make money, hatching out 50 or 60 expensive babies for the pet trade which looks like an acceptable situation to some. However, it all comes back to the fact that most people who get these snakes don't know a thing about taking care of them (If they did, they wouldn't buy them to start with!). So, you would think that the only one to suffer would be the hapless snake, right? Wrong. Private individuals like me suffer a certain amount of stress dealing with these folks. Worst of all, herpetology and anyone associated with it suffers when the inevitable happens: the snake escapes. That's what I'm speaking of.

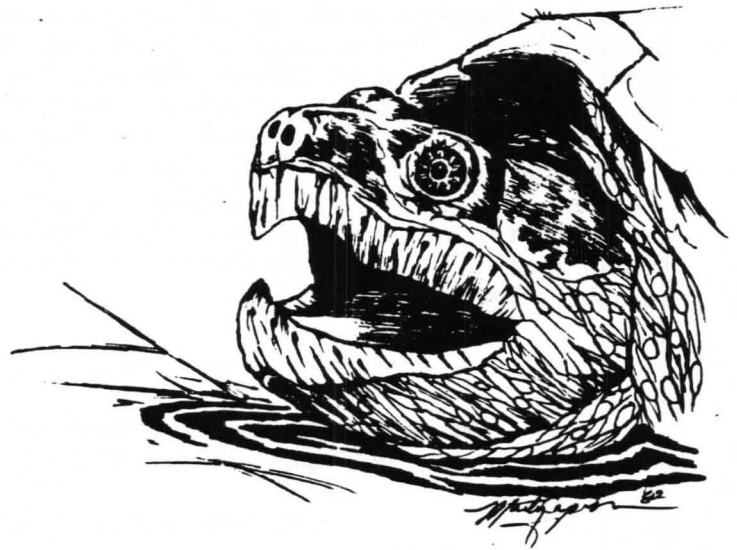
In the past year, headlines have been made in Florida, California, Missouri, New York, and Louisiana by pythons that have escaped or have been released by their owners. Giant snakes terrorizing America? Sounds stupid, but it is the stuff that laws and regulations are made of. Everyone who works with snakes is suddenly lumped in with a bunch of marijuana-smoking head-bangers whose pet python, which normally roams about the house at will, finally has had enough Bon Jovi and makes a break for it out the window or down the toilet. Then the escape is in the newspaper with typical half-wit headlines and, next thing you know, William Shatner is raking us over the coals on RESCUE 911.

True, the python trade and its associated captive breeding have taken pressure off wild populations. But zoos are overflowing with unwanted pets now and most will not accept any more. Neither can their staff be tied up on the phone all the time with pet care questions. Neither can I, for that matter. Nobody wants more regulations and laws about what we can or cannot keep either. More infringements on our personal freedoms is one thing this country doesn't need! So, please, if you are selling pythons — carefully screen those folks to whom you do sell, to insure that they have the knowledge, ability, and commitment to

keep this long-lived, giant creature throughout its lifetime. And if you're thinking about getting a Burmese Python, or any other herp for that matter, think again. It is not just another leather jacket that makes you look tough, simply to be tossed in closet when you are tired of it. Consider that, if all goes well, it will be with you for 30+ years; that it eats, alot; that it craps, alot; that it may bite. However, even one bite can change your life.

Pythons in general just don't fit into most folks' lifestyles and accommodations. They can be seriously dangerous animals when grown and they are expensive creatures to constantly keep in good condition. Worst of all, it can make a herper feel guilty when he becomes sick of the questions and pestering by people with snake who should have never acquired them to start with and, the herper is left with either changing his phone number or just plain rude behavior.

With apologies to python fans the world over.



U. S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture

*Publication Announcement*

**THE REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS  
OF THE CIMARRON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS,  
MORTON COUNTY, KANSAS**

Joseph T. Collins & Suzanne L. Collins

*with Photographs by the Authors*

This booklet defines the reptile and amphibian diversity of the Cimarron National Grasslands, and includes accounts of the 31 species known, either now or in the past, to reside there. The text accounts contain standard common names, identifying characteristics of each species, statements about size and size maxima, descriptions of habits and habitats, brief comments on when the species was first discovered in the Grasslands and its current abundance, and information about reproduction and food preferences. The introduction contains an historical summary of herpetological explorations in Morton County, and a checklist (with current scientific names) of the snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs and toads, and the single kind of salamander found in the Grasslands, as well as remarks on their threatened status. A complete bibliography of articles on the reptiles and amphibians of Morton County, Kansas, appears at the end of the text. There are 32 color photographs of Grasslands amphibians and reptiles, and eight color photographs which display the rugged beauty of this wilderness area in extreme southwestern Kansas. The Kansas Wildlife Heritage Task Force has adopted the theme "Grasslands — Roots of our Diversity" for 1991, and the authors and sponsors of this publication join them in celebrating the largest such public area in Kansas — the Cimarron National Grasslands. viii + 60 pages, 40 color photographs, 3 figures. January 1991.

*Price \$7.00 postpaid; Make checks payable to U. S. Forest Service*

Orders may be sent to U. S. Forest Service, Cimarron National Grasslands,  
242 Highway 56-E, P. O. Box J, Elkhart, Kansas 67950 USA.

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Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks  
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