

KANSAS  
HERPETOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER



Number 9

October 1975

KHS MEETING AT STERLING COLLEGE A SUCCESS

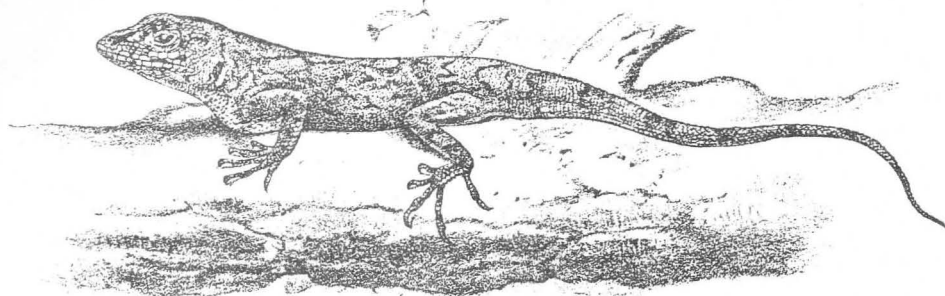
On 20 September thirty members of the KHS met to hear Arnold Froese speak on "How snapping turtles use their habitats." He spoke of his research on snapping turtle population size and movement in a small two-acre pond. The talk was supplemented with color slides and a short but excellent 2-3 minute film on snapping turtle movement under experimental conditions. In addition, a live snapping turtle was present to settle disputes. Dr. Froese's talk was enjoyed by all.

After the program in Sterling, hardy KHS members headed for Cheyenne Bottoms for a field trip/campout. Three groups immediately formed at the campsite to pursue various projects. Jan Caldwell led an entourage to ambush tadpoles along the Cheyenne Bottoms waterways. Joseph Collins and his rowdy crew went on a general amphibian and reptile hunt. David Grow couldn't find any lower vertebrates so he went bird-watching. Meeting back at the Bottoms headquarters for dinner, the assembled KHS members were entertained first by Jan Perry's attempt at setting up a tent, followed by Kelly Irwin's incredible inhalation of an entire 10-piece family size chicken dinner from finger-lickin' good Kentucky Fried Chicken. Much to the dismay of the entertainers, this was all captured on film by enthusiastic KHS photographer Larry Miller.

After dinner KHS members, with flashlights in hand, went in search of nocturnal beasties. The more enthusiastic of the group went splashing through the icy water in search of frogs. However, the temperatures prevented much collecting and the group returned to the camping area for the night. Our singin' secretary Schwaner strummed his guitar and started a singout that lasted late into the night. The next morning everyone broke camp and left for home or further collecting in other areas. All had a good time and were happy about the five new county records secured on this trip.

KHS 1975 ANNUAL MEETING IN TOPEKA

The second annual meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society will be held from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday, 15 November 1975, in the West Lake Shelter House, Gage Park, Topeka, Kansas. Persons planning to attend should obtain



instructions on the location of the West Lake Shelter House from the admission gate of the world famous Topeka Zoological Park. West Lake Shelter House is in close proximity to the zoo entrance, is enclosed and heated, and has ample seating. The program is as follows:

- 10:00 am KHS President George R. Pisani will open the meeting and receive reports from the KHS officers and committees. All attending KHS members shall vote for 1976 KHS officers at this time (see report of the KHS Nominating Committee elsewhere in this Newsletter).
- 10:45 pm Coffee Break
- 11:00 pm Speaker: Terry D. Schwaner, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas. Topic: Speculations on the relationships of Northern and Southern Watersnakes (Natrix sipedon-fasciata complex).
- Noon Break for lunch at nearby restaurants of your choice -- rides will be available.
- 1:00 pm NOTE: Please bring your five (5) best 35mm color slides of any amphibian and reptile. We will show them on the screen from 1:00 to 2:00 pm and you can tell the other assembled KHS members about them.
- 2:00 pm Coffee Break -- time to talk with your fellow KHS members and discuss future projects and field trips.
- 2:30 pm Speaker: George R. Pisani, Division of Biological Sciences, University of Kansas. Topic: Photographing amphibians and reptiles. NOTE: All members and interested individuals should bring their cameras and one (1) harmless reptile or amphibian in an escape proof container. No venomous reptiles will be allowed in the building.
- 4:00 pm Meeting adjourns.

Bring your friends and any prospective KHS members. We urge everyone to attend -- it will be a great meeting.



REPORT OF THE KHS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with Article IV, Sections 1-4, of the Bylaws of the Kansas Herpetological Society, the following KHS members have been duly nominated to run for KHS office on the 1976 ballot:

For President-elect

Dwight R. Platt (Bethel College, Newton)  
Robert F. Clarke (Emporia Kansas State College)

For Secretary

Terry D. Schwaner (Museum of Natural History, KU)

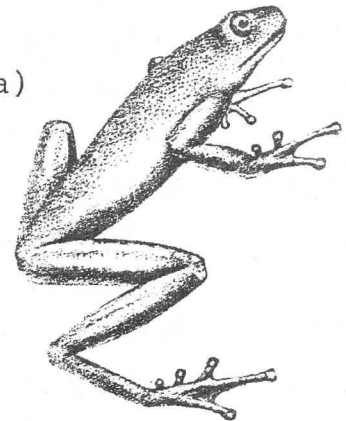
For Treasurer

Delfi Messinger (Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita)  
Victor Moss (Hays)

Respectfully submitted,

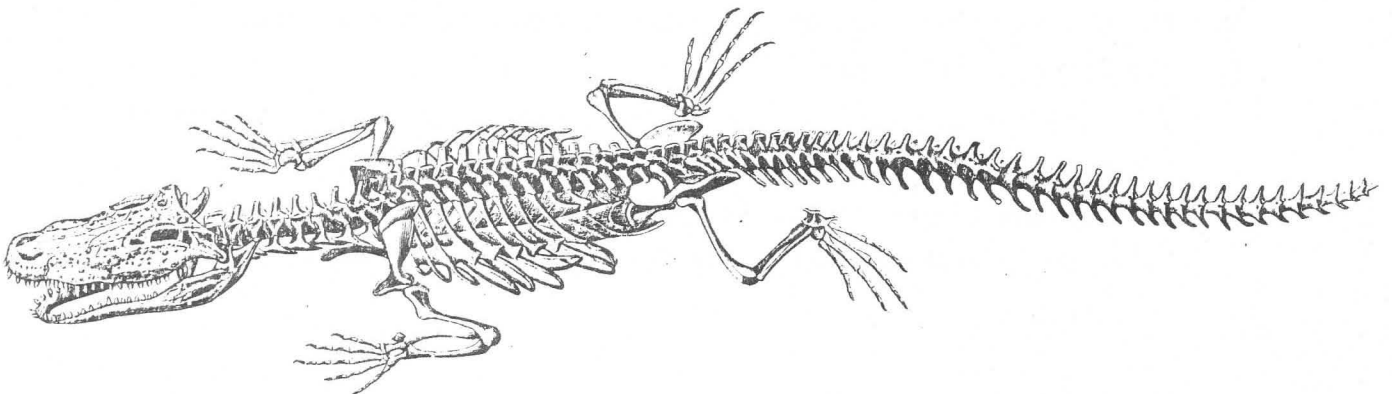
KHS Nominating Committee

Members: David Grow  
Janice Perry  
Joseph T. Collins, Chairperson

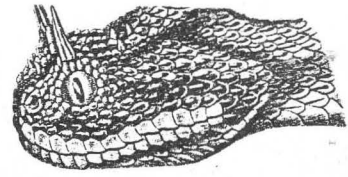


KHS MEMBERS RECEIVE NEW BOOKLET WITH THIS NEWSLETTER

KHS members will receive with this issue of the KHS Newsletter a booklet dealing with the treatment of diseases of captive reptiles. This publication, jointly sponsored by the KHS and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, is something of a landmark in that it represents the first such joint effort between a national herpetological society and a regional one. The co-sponsorship is a direct result of a proposal submitted to the SSAR Liaison Committee by KHS President George Pisani. Such interaction between regional and national societies is a fine way to maximize the efficient use of herpetological resources and advance the field. KHS is proud to be the first regional society to engage in this project. KHS members are urged to support their Society by showing this new booklet to anyone (friends, pet shop owners, etc) who may be interested in purchasing copies.



## CONSTITUTION OF THE KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY



### Article I. Name

Section 1. The name of this organization is "Kansas Herpetological Society," hereafter referred to as the "Society".

### Article II. Purpose

Section 1. To encourage education and dissemination of scientific information through the facilities of the Society.

Section 2. To encourage conservation of wildlife in general and of amphibians and reptiles in Kansas in particular.

Section 3. To achieve closer cooperation and understanding between amateur and professional herpetologists, so that they may work together in the common cause of furthering science.

### Article III. Bylaws

The Society shall establish bylaws concerning the organization and procedures to be followed.

### Article IV. General Prohibitions

Notwithstanding any provision of this Constitution or the Bylaws which might be to a contrary interpretation:

1. the Society shall be organized and operated exclusively for scientific and educational purposes;
2. no part of the net earnings of the Society shall or may under any circumstances inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual;
3. no substantial part of the activities of the Society shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation;
4. the Society shall not participate in, or intervene in (including publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office;
5. the Society shall not be organized or operated for profit;
6. the Society shall not:
  - a. lend any part of its income or corpus, without the receipt of adequate security and a reasonable rate of interest;
  - b. pay any compensation, in excess of a reasonable allowance for salaries or other compensation for personal services actually rendered;

- c. make any part of its services available on a preferential basis;
- d. make any purchase of securities or any other property for more than adequate consideration in money or money's worth from;
- e. sell any securities or other property for less than adequate consideration in money or money's worth to; or
- f. engage in any other transactions which result in a substantial diversion of its income or corpus to;

any officer, or substantial contributor to the organization.

The prohibitions contained in this subsection 6 do not mean to imply that the organization may make such loans, payments, or sales to or purchases from anyone else, unless such authority be given or implied by other provisions of this Constitution or Bylaws.

#### Article V. Distribution on Dissolution

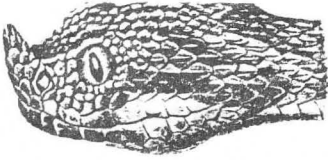
Upon dissolution of the Society, the officers of the Society shall distribute the assets and accrued income to one or more organizations as determined by them, which organization or organizations shall meet the limitations prescribed in subsections 1 to 6 inclusive, of Article IV immediately preceding.

#### KHS CONSTITUTION AMENDED

At the KHS meeting on 29 March in Sedgwick County, the assembled members voted to amend Article V of the KHS Constitution to read as follows:

"Upon the dissolution of the Society, the Executive Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Society, dispose of all of the assets of the Society exclusively for the purposes of the Society in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Executive Council shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Society is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes."





KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BYLAWS

Article I. Members

Section 1. Membership shall be open to all persons who shall make formal application to the Secretary and pay the prescribed dues.

Section 2. The Officers of the Society shall have the right to refuse any new member or to terminate the membership of an existing member for cause and without prior notice. However, a terminated person may appeal to the general meeting of the Society.

Article II. The Officers

Section 1. the Officers of the Society shall be of two kinds, elective and appointive.

a. The elected officers shall be President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and the immediate past President.

b. The appointed officer shall be Editor of the Society Newsletter.

Section 2. No one individual may hold two or more elective offices concurrently.

Section 3. The terms of office for all officers of the Society shall be for one year.

Section 4. The duties of the elective officers shall be as follows:

a. The president shall preside at meetings of the Society and its officers; shall be nominal head of the Society; shall rule on questions of procedure that may arise; and shall appoint standing and ad hoc committees at his discretion.

b. The President-elect shall fulfill the duties of the President when the latter is absent, and shall succeed the President at the termination of the latter's term. He shall also assume the presidency should that office become vacant during a term.

c. The Secretary shall maintain the records of the Society and its officers, shall notify the membership of the Society of pertinent business; shall be responsible for all general correspondence of the Society, and shall coordinate the organization of the general meeting.

d. The Treasurer shall keep records and accounts of the Society including all monies received and disbursed; he shall collect the annual dues and maintain the membership roster; he shall be responsible for all financial reports required by the business of the Society. The Treasurer shall make a financial report to the membership at the general meeting. An

outside audit shall be conducted immediately prior to the elected treasurer's acceptance of the Society's financial records by a firm acceptable to the Executive Council.

e. The immediate past-President shall serve as a member of the officers of the Society.

Section 5. All records and implements of office shall be turned over by any officer to his successor immediately subsequent to the latter's assumption of the office.

Section 6. The duties of the Editor of the Society Newsletter shall be as follows:

He shall be responsible for all phases of its publication. He may appoint staff members to assist him. In as much as the newsletter is the principal mechanism for written communication to the membership, the Editor is obligated to publish all communications of the Society and its Officers on first priority and to include, as space permits, other items consonant with the stated objectives of the Society.

He shall report annually to the Officers to whom he is responsible.

Article III. The Executive Council of the Society

Section 1. The Executive Council of the Society shall consist of the President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and the immediate past-President.

Section 2. The Executive Council shall be empowered to manage the affairs of the Society and to designate all appointive officers for terms of one year.

Section 3. The Executive Council shall fill any vacancy occurring among officers, except that of President, by an appointment for the unexpired term.

Section 4. The Executive Council shall be specifically responsible for any publications of the Society and shall set such policy as is needed to coordinate the contents of the various media so as to further the stated objectives of the Society and to insure the availability and distribution of the several items.

Article IV. Elections of Officers

Section 1. The President shall appoint three members of the Society to serve as a nominating committee, to include not more than one member of the current Executive Council.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of at least one candidate for each office to be filled. The slate must be presented at the general meeting, at which time nominations may be made by the membership.

Section 3. The Nominating Committee, or a member of the Society, proposing a nominee, shall obtain assent of the candidate to serve if elected.

Section 4. The Slate of Nominations shall be circulated to the entire membership by the Secretary via the Newsletter not later than one month before the general meeting.

Section 5. Voting shall take place at the general meeting of the Society. The Secretary shall receive and count the votes. The results of the election shall be communicated to the membership via the Newsletter.

Section 6. The Secretary shall inform the elected candidates of their election. Newly elected persons will take office after the date of the general meeting of the election.

#### Article V. Meetings

Section 1. The Society shall hold a general meeting annually at a time and place set by the Executive Council of the Society. Not more than 18 months shall elapse between meetings.

Section 2. The membership shall be informed in writing of the time and place of the general meeting not later than two months prior to the opening of the meeting.

Section 3. The membership assembled at the general meeting shall elect the Society officers for the coming year.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by vote of a majority of the Executive Council, or on a petition of a quorum of the membership. The time and place of such special meetings must be announced to the membership in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 5. One-tenth of the membership will constitute a quorum to petition for a special meeting.

Section 6. All meetings shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order.

#### Article VI. Meetings of the Executive Council of the Society

Section 1. The Executive Council of the Society shall meet at least once a year on the occasion of the general meeting of the Society and at least once no later than one month before opening of the general meeting.

Section 2. Any meeting of the Executive Council shall be open to attendance by interested members of the Society as observers unless the Executive Council moves for Executive Session.

Section 3. A simple majority of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. A majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to pass any motion.



Section 5. The meeting shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 6. Special meetings of the Executive Council may be called by the President, or by a majority of same.

#### Article VII. Dues

Section 1. The Executive Council shall be authorized to establish such dues as are compatible with the financial status of the Society.

Section 2. Dues shall not exceed \$15 annually.

Section 3. A member in arrears for payment of dues for a period of 6 months after conclusion of the current membership year shall be dropped from the role after due notice from the Secretary.

#### Article VII. Fiscal Year

Section 1. The fiscal year of the Society shall embrace the period of 1 January through 31 December of the same year.

#### Article IX. Amendment of the Bylaws

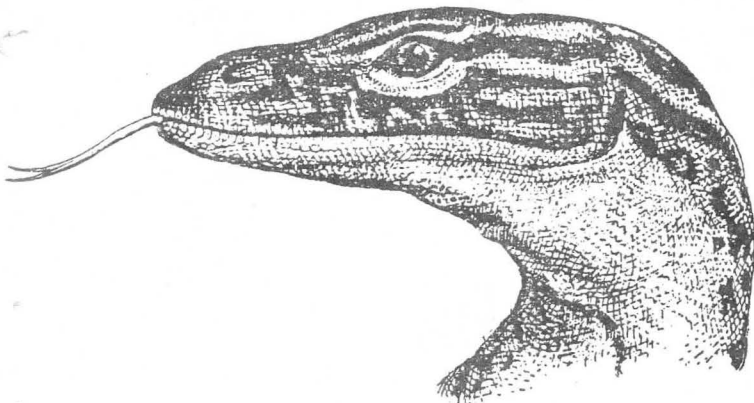
Section 1. Amendments may be proposed by the Executive Council or by petition to the Secretary by ten or more members of the Society.

Section 2. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least three months before the general meeting at which they are to be discussed.

Section 3. Such amendments shall be submitted in writing by the Secretary to the general membership at least two months prior to the general meeting at which they are to be discussed.

Section 4. To be approved, an amendment must receive a positive vote by two-thirds of those voting at the general meeting.

Section 5. Any adopted amendment shall become an integral part of the Bylaws and the Secretary shall be instructed to add them to copies of the Bylaws and to distribute the amended Bylaws to the members of the Executive Council of the Society and to other interested members of the Society.



Submitted by:

Ad Hoc Constitution Committee

Mary Dawson

Al Kamb

Richard Plumlee

Robert Sprackland

Stanley Roth

Eric Rundquist, presiding

#### COLORADO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Colorado Herpetological Society earnestly solicits new members interested in amphibians and reptiles. The CHS is two years old and is dedicated to education and conservation in herpetology. The Society holds meetings on the third Sunday of each month, usually at the Denver Zoo or at the University of Colorado in Boulder. In addition, the CHS issues a Newsletter to all members. Kansans interested in joining the Colorado Herpetological Society should send \$5.00 for subscribing membership to: Colorado Herpetological Society, Box 15381, Denver, Colorado 80215.

#### SPECIAL LIMITED OFFER ON HYLID FROG MONOGRAPH

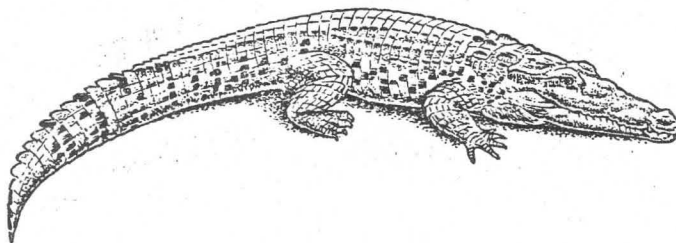
W. E. Duellman's recently published monograph entitled "The Hylid Frogs of Middle America" is being offered at a 40% reduction in price for a limited time. Originally offered at \$25.00 for the two volume set, the Museum of Natural History at KU is now making this classic work available for only \$15.00 postpaid. Kansas residents should add 3.5% sales tax. Orders should be prepaid and sent to: Publications Secretary, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

#### KANSAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society encourages memberships from persons not employed in professional wildlife positions. The KTWS has as its objectives 1) the development and promotion of sound stewardship of wildlife resources and environment, 2) the undertaking of an active role in preventing man-induced environmental degradation, 3) an increasing of the awareness and appreciation of wildlife values, and 4) the seeking of the highest standards in all activities of the wildlife profession. All KHS members interested in joining the KTWS should send \$3.00 (students - \$2.00) to: Bill Peabody, KTWS, 1045 Grand, Emporia, Kansas 66801.

#### HEAVY POLLUTION KILL IN ARKANSAS RIVER

The Wichita-Sedgwick County Environmental Resource Advisory Board has reported an extensive pollution kill in the Valley Center-Wichita Flood Control Canal and lower Cowskin Creek over a 10 mile stretch. The kill occurred in September 1975. In excess of four tons of dead aquatic vertebrates were removed and buried. These included many frogs, toads, turtles and snakes. KHS members concerned about the pollution generated by over-populated Wichita should write to: Ms. Joan Kamas, c/o Dr. Don Distler, Environmental Resource Advisory Board, Department of Biology, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas.

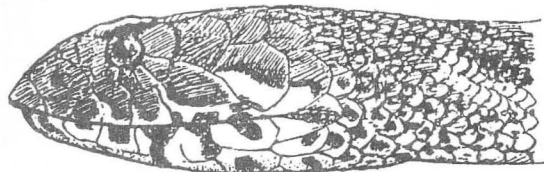


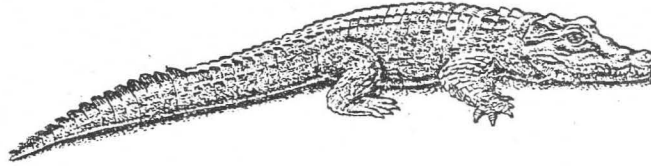
## OBSERVATIONS ON THE ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE IN KANSAS

Until Joseph T. Collins wrote the "Amphibians and reptiles in Kansas" (1974) I never considered the alligator snapping turtle rare in Kansas. For some years now I've seen numerous examples of this animal in one tiny area on the Arkansas River at Oxford in Sumner County.

I'm your KHS correspondent from the Sumner/Cowley County area. Stuck down here in the boonies like this, I haven't been able to attend the regular KHS meetings or field trips. None-the-less, I am here, alive and well(?). Getting back to the alligator snappers though, like I said I have never looked upon the alligator snapping turtle as rare. It is for this reason that I have never bothered to pay much attention to its occurrence near Oxford, my home town stuck in the middle of nowhere some 40 miles south of Wichita on the Arkansas River.

Where the Arkansas River makes its southern-most loop into Sumner County this little-seen turtle is alive, well, and evidently occurs in some numbers. It is here that U.S. Rt. 160 crosses over the river from the Oxford City Park on the west bank. It was here that I first positively identified an alligator snapping turtle. Due to the fact that I never thought of this species as anything of startling significance, I cannot say for sure whether it was 1972 or 1973 when I noticed that it was getting to be quite numerous here. However, I did take note of its occurrence. It was a warm day in late May and a friend of mine and I were crossing the bridge over the Arkansas River on U.S. Rt. 160 when I noticed the turtle. It was in about three feet of water, one of the deeper holes in that area, and the river was running clear. Almost immediately I saw it was not the more common Northern Snapping Turtle. It was far too large and its carapace had the three characteristic high keels running the length of it. The head was huge for the body size, and I could clearly see the arrangement of plates on top of the head. We decided to capture it, but before we could organize a plan of action the turtle surfaced. It was almost directly below us and we froze for fear of frightening it away. Again, it was clearly recognizable as Macrochelys temmincki -- the small eyes were set very low on the sides of the head. Then, to my delight, this turtle slid off the back of another one! Now I saw that I had a real occasion on my hands. Two alligator snappers instead of one, and they were mating. The second (lower) turtle, the female, was slightly smaller than the male, about 18 inches in shell length compared to the estimated 20 inch shell of the male. Not wanting to wrestle a fifty pound turtle in three feet of water and chance getting my hand bitten off, I tried to con my partner into catching them while I "kept track of them from above" on the bridge. My partner was not about to fall for this plan, so I began to run the length of the bridge



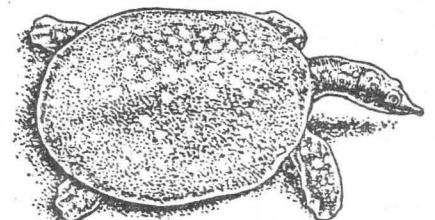


so I could get down to the water and attempt to bring 'em back alive. Before I could get there, my companion warned me that they were beginning to move into deeper, murkier water. By the time I reached the river edge the two turtles were nowhere in sight. I mumbled something about "there's plenty of them around anyway . . . ." as we walked back to my house.

Although disappointed by the fact that I'd missed a chance at capturing the biggest snapper I had ever seen, and also a chance to find out about egg-laying and hatching in this species, I remained undaunted. About a week later I examined a turtle caught by a fisherman some 500 yards upstream from where I'd seen the first two mating. Unfortunately, it had been killed. To my dismay it was another alligator snapper. This specimen had, in life, measured some 12 inches long, but death by car tires had added some 2-3 inches to its length and width. The head, however, was not crushed and I could see the tongue "lure" quite well.

It was August before another snapping turtle appeared in the area. This time I had fame and fortune literally in my hands. I believe this turtle was perhaps one of the two I'd seen mating in May. I was, as usual, plying the banks of the Arkansas River in search of any amphibian or reptile life I could find. I sat down on a large hunk of concrete that had been thrown into the river in an effort to stop shore erosion. There were a good number of these broken pieces of concrete in the shallows where I was sitting. I took off my wet tennis shoes to inspect for leeches and cool my feet. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed one of the "rocks" moving. I sprang back onto dry land when I saw it was actually a giant snapper. Its high keels protruded from the water some three inches. It saw me and started to move slowly for deep water, but I quickly regained my wits, grabbed the turtle's tail, and tried to lift it. I am not a muscle-man, and couldn't even get the snapper's back feet off the river bottom. So, I changed my plan of attack and tried to drag the turtle ashore. This too failed as the immense beast began to hang onto the rocks and pull me instead. The jagged-edge of the tail and flailing hind feet of this animal soon forced me to release my hold and watch despairingly as the critter made off to its aquatic retreat.

It was next spring before I got a chance at an alligator snapping turtle again. This time a small, eight-inch specimen was brought to me (unharmd) by a school friend. It took up brief residence in a wash tub in my back yard. For a week it was content to stay in the tub and eat nestling sparrows I got for it. But again, success slipped through my hands as the turtle made a midnight escape right in the middle of town. I never saw it again or heard any reports of it, and figured it had gotten back to the Arkansas River.



That was the last I've seen of alligator snapping turtles in Kansas, except for a possible specimen overturned on the highway at Chanute on the Neosho River. It was a very large specimen, but my mother was in no mood for a reptilian traveling companion and refused to stop. At the request of Joseph T. Collins I have been alert for more specimens of the alligator snapping turtle in Kansas, but recent high water has prevented my attempting to locate any. I have never seen any of these turtles during high water -- only during extremely low water and only in a ¼ mile stretch where the Arkansas River curves into Sumner County at Oxford. If I find any more and can muster the strength to get it out of the river, I will save it. This species should not, however, be preserved in great numbers due to its endangered status in Kansas.

-- MARTIN CAPRON, P. O. Box 542, Oxford, Kansas 67119.

#### CURRENT LITERATURE

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

Collins, J. T.

1975. Observations on reproduction in the southern coal skink (Eumeces anthracinus pluvialis Cope). *Trans. Kansas Acad. Sci.*, 77(2): 126-127. Reprints are available from the KHS Newsletter Editor)

Grzimek, B.

1975. *Animal Life Encyclopedia*. Volume 5, Fishes II & Amphibians; Volume 6, Reptiles. Available for \$29.95 each from: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York. All illustrations in color.

Johnson, T.R., R. N. Bader and D. J. Coxwell.

1975. Amphibians and reptiles in captivity. *St. Louis Herp. Soc. Spec. Issue*, 2: iii + 38 pp. Available for \$1.25 from: Diane M. Johnson, St. Louis Herpetological Society, 2820 Oakland, St. Louis, Missouri 63143.

Mount, R. H.

1975. *The reptiles and amphibians of Alabama*. Publ. Auburn Univ. Agric. Exp. Sta., vii + 347 pp. Available for \$4.00 from: Agricultural Experiment Station, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama. Probably the finest state herpetological work to appear since Philip Smith's "Amphibians and reptiles of Illinois."



Murphy, J.

1975. A brief outline of suggested treatments for diseases of captive reptiles. SSAR Misc. Publ. Herp. Circ., 4: 1-13. Available for \$1.00 from: Henri Seibert, SSAR, Department of Zoology, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701

Schwartz, A. and R. Thomas.

1975. A checklist of West Indian amphibians and reptiles. Carnegie Mus. Nat. Hist. Spec. Publ., 1: 1-216. Available for ? from Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 4400 Forbes, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213.

Wake, D., et al.

1975. Collections of preserved amphibians and reptiles in the United States. SSAR Misc. Publ. Herp. Circ., 3: 1-22. Available for \$1.50 from Henri Seibert (see address above).



*Alligator Snapper*

-- The KHS Newsletter is issued every other month by the Kansas Herpetological Society. EDITOR: Janice Perry, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence 66045, and ASSOCIATE EDITOR: David Grow, Sedgwick County Zoo, 5555 Zoo Boulevard, Wichita 67212.