



# Virginia Herpetological Society Newsletter

Volume 21, Number 1

February 2011

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## Celebrate! Year of the Turtle!

See Page 12



## Join Us at VHS Surveys!



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What is  
Virginia's  
longest  
salamander?  
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## Alert!

VHS needs photos for  
the 2012 Calendar!  
See page 5!

This month's Virginia Native- page 16



Eastern Box Turtle



**NEW! VHS MEMBERSHIP CARDS. GET DISCOUNTS AT ZOOS & AQUARIUMS! PAGE 2!**

Home Page:	<a href="http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com">http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com</a>
Message Board:	<a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VaHS">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VaHS</a>
Online Store:	<a href="http://www.cafepress.com/vahersociety">http://www.cafepress.com/vahersociety</a>
Facebook Page:	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Virginia-Herpetological-Society/53153159887?ref=ts">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Virginia-Herpetological-Society/53153159887?ref=ts</a>

Newsletter Editor:

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Coming Events		
EVENT	LOCATION	DATES
Reptiles Bizarre & Beautiful	Virginia Living Museum, Newport News, VA	Feb 19-21
Earth Day / Enrichment Day	Virginia Zoo, Norfolk, VA	Apr 23
Survey at Pocahontas State Park	Chesterfield County, VA	May 20-22
Terp Search/Survey	Multiple sites in eastern VA	June-July
Old Colchester Park Survey	Fairfax County, VA	June 4
HerpBlitz	Hungry Mother State Park, Marion, VA	June 24-26
Cave Survey for Salamanders	Highland County, VA	Aug 20
2012 Calendar Photo Submissions	<a href="mailto:Merchandise@vaherpsociety.com">Merchandise@vaherpsociety.com</a>	Sept 1

## VHS BUSINESS & NEWS

Discounts for VHS Members (1)  
VHS Annual Survey & Meeting (2)  
Terp Search! (3)  
Old Colchester Park Survey (4)  
Sixth Annual HerpBlitz (5)

6) Cave Survey for Salamanders  
7) NEED Photos for VHS 2012 Calendar!  
8) VHS Website Updates  
9) Help support the VHS  
10) New Email Addresses for VHS

### 1) VHS Members Get Discounts at Zoos... and Membership Cards

For the first time in more than 25 years, the VHS is pleased to offer a new membership benefit- discounts to select zoos and aquariums in Virginia!

#### Admission Discounts

Virginia Zoo	Norfolk, Va	\$2	<a href="http://virginiazoo.org">virginiazoo.org</a>
Virginia Living Museum	Newport News, Va	\$1	<a href="http://thevlm.org">thevlm.org</a>
Leesburg Animal Park	Leesburg, Va	\$2	<a href="http://leesburganimalpark.com">leesburganimalpark.com</a>

#### Membership Discounts

Virginia Aquarium	Virginia Beach, Va	25%	<a href="http://virginiaaquarium.com">virginiaaquarium.com</a>
Crab, Otter or Hedgehog memberships (\$19 to \$38 savings!)			

We hope that having an admission or membership discount will give you an incentive to visit the zoos and aquariums and give them your business. Although \$1 or \$2 off of the price of admission does not sound like a lot, most zoos, aquariums, and museums are expensive to maintain, and it represents a generous offer by the participating facilities.

In order to facilitate these discounts, a VHS member must have proof of a current membership. We will be e-mailing out membership cards in the month of February. These will be in PDF format and it will only need to be printed, copied and folded. Please have these cards handy when visiting the facility.

Check out the "Zoo Updates" section of this newsletter to find out some of the new and interesting things you can see with some of your discounts!



## 2) VHS Annual Survey and Meeting

**Friday-Sunday, May 20-22**

The VHS will help the Virginia State Parks celebrate their 75th birthday by holding the Annual Survey and Meeting at the state's largest state park, [Pocahontas State Park](#) near Richmond. Almost **8,000 acres** is available to the VHS in our first large-scale survey around Richmond. Pocahontas State Park is relatively centralized in the state, and has a lot of on-site amenities for family members not attending the survey.

**Location:** Chesterfield County, 20 miles south of Richmond  
[10301 State Park Road](#), Chesterfield, VA 23832-6355



**Events:** Friday, May 20: Business meeting, Survey coordination, 6 PM to 9 PM, [Heritage Center \(in park\)](#)  
 Saturday, May 21: Main-event survey, 8 AM to 4 PM  
 Sunday, May 22: Secondary survey, 8 AM to 12 PM  
*\*Participation in all events is not required, come and go as you please.*

**Lodging:** Ample campsites are available (reserve early!)  
 The closest hotels are approximately **15 miles away in Midlothian, Virginia** (west of the park). Or, in **Chester, Virginia** (east of the park). No cabins are available.

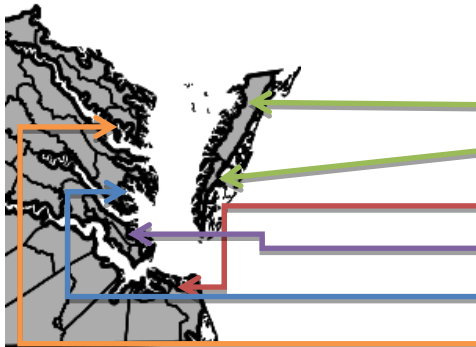
Park Website: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/poc.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/poc.shtml)  
 Park Phone: (804) 796-4255

## 3) Terp Search!



The VHS will be assisting the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) with the first ever statewide Diamondback Terrapin survey. Diamondback terrapins are unique because they are the only reptile that solely inhabits brackish waters. The population status of the terrapins in Virginia is currently unknown, but there is reason to believe the terrapins are in decline due to various factors such as habitat loss, but most notably from drowning in crab pots used to catch crabs in the Chesapeake Bay. Obtaining a population count of the terrapins will have a tremendous impact in the regulation of the activities that are a source of mortality.

The survey will be strictly land-based and consists of visual observations from a pair of observers at designated locations that will count the number of terrapins surfacing for air at the designated location. There will be six areas of Virginia that will be surveyed separately.



	General Location	Dates
1	Accomack Co	June 4 & 5
2	North Hampton Co	June 11 & 12
3	Va Beach / Norfolk	June 18 & 19
4	Newport News / York Co	June 25 & 26
5	Gloucester / Mathews Co	July 9 & 10
6	Lancaster / Northumberland Co	July 16 & 17

All VHS survey locations can be viewed on Google Maps:  
<http://goo.gl/maps/4MKS>



The survey is entirely dependent upon volunteer observers to count the number of surfacing terrapins. The observers will receive training materials before the survey and instructions the morning of the survey. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kory Steele, [president@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:president@vaherpsociety.com).

Please keep in mind that we will have a greater need for observers on the Eastern shore and in the northern areas.

#### 4) Old Colchester Park Saturday, June 4

The VHS has been invited to conduct a survey by the Fairfax County Park Authority on a recently acquired property on Mason Neck in Fairfax County, called Old Colchester Park. The VHS conducted our annual survey on the nearby Mason Neck State Park last year with great success. This event will be a one-day survey to help the park authority inventory their natural resources on the site. Old Colchester Park is 140 acres in size and is currently closed to the public. This means that the VHS is giving you access to sites where other herpers are not permitted!

Contact John Orr ([jorr1@gmu.edu](mailto:jorr1@gmu.edu))



#### 5) Sixth Annual HerpBlitz Friday-Sunday, June 24-26

The sixth annual HerpBlitz will be held at Hungry Mother State Park on June 24-26. As usual the main survey day will be on Saturday June 25. Pre-registration is required for this survey. To pre-register or get questions answered please contact Jason Gibson ([frogman31@gmail.com](mailto:frogman31@gmail.com)). Hungry Mother State Park has many camping spaces but to ensure you get one make sure to reserve a spot early.



#### 6) Cave Survey for Salamanders Saturday, August 20

The Herp Society is going to take a departure from our usual type of survey to go spelunking! Virginia is full of unique geologic formations, including over 4,300 caves. The Herp Society has teamed with the Virginia Highlands Grotto (VHG) to take a small group of Herp Society members to two privately owned caves to look for salamander inhabitants. There will be no guarantee that salamanders will be in the caves at the time of the survey, but we are sure to have a fun experience with the guided tour of the caves provided by VHG.



**Registration:** Since this is a departure from the Herp Society's usual survey, registration will be required to attend. A web-based registration form will be available, first come first serve, about one month prior to the event. Herp Society members will get an e-mail when this form is available, but also check the Herp Society website.

**Who Can Attend:** Herp Society members and their guests; children 10 years and up. Due to the *limited space available* for this trip, each Herp Society member will be allowed two guests each. Others not going into the caves are welcome at the survey's site.

**Cost:** \$15 will cover the cost of equipment rental (helmet and lights) for each attendee.

**Required Equipment:** Gloves, hiking boots, long sleeves, pants, and knee pads. Temperatures inside the caves will be 54°F, so dress warmly!

**Suggested Equipment:** Backpack, beverages, extra flashlights (no spot lights please) and since you will get dirty and possibly wet, a change of clothes. You will need to bring your own meals.



**Location:** Attendees will meet in McDowell, in Highland County, Virginia. The exact location will be e-mailed to registered attendees.

**Expected Duration:** 2-3 hours

**Note:** This survey will be conducted on private property. All attendees will be required to sign a liability waiver. Please note that these caves are not show-caves like Luray Caverns. Be prepared to climb, crawl and shimmy. Only primitive amenities are available on-site such as a pit toilet. This is a rural area of Virginia and the nearest stores are located 10 miles away.

**Virginia's caves are protected by law;** please familiarize yourself with the Cave Do's and Don'ts here:

<http://www.caves.org/safety/index.shtml>

Herp Society members will strictly adhere to any rules imposed by the VHG in order to protect the caves and their inhabitants.

This is not your only chance to go into a cave! There are [numerous grottoes in Virginia](#) that welcome guests on their frequent cave trips.

Contact Kory Steele ([president@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:president@vaherpsociety.com)).

## 7) NEED Photo Submissions for the VHS 2012 Calendar!!!:

The VHS Store manager, Pattie Crane, needs high resolution pictures in good quality. Images should have the subject in focus and with very little background distraction. Images received by September 1<sup>st</sup> will be considered for the 2012 calendar, but any late submissions will be saved for consideration in the 2013 calendar. Please send your submissions to [Merchandise@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:Merchandise@vaherpsociety.com)

IF you still need a calendar for 2011, please go to the VHS Store to order yours today! The VHS calendar is loaded with wonderful photos of herps taken by wonderful VHS members!



## 8) VHS Website Updates

- Reminder from Summer 2010, our website address has changed... please update your favorites and/or bookmarks:  
<http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/>
- The Virginia Herpetological Society has set-up a statewide program to report Eastern Box Turtle observations. The project was proposed by Dr. Joe Mitchell and developed in association with J.D. Kleopfer, Herpetologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

By collecting data on living and dead box turtles we hope to develop baseline data on County/City abundance. Long-term, we hope to use this as early detection incase of drastic changes in box turtle population. Collecting information on road-killed box turtles will allow us to identify high-mortality at road crossings and possibly make changes to circumvent the problem. Collection of data will begin this year.



## 9) Help Support the VHS!

Your support is a beautiful thing!! With simple clicks on the internet you can help support the VHS and our mission to conserve, research, and educate the public on our native herps.

Not interested in a fundraiser, but still want to support the VHS? Donations are always accepted, in any monetary





amount. 100% of your donation goes towards our cause and is tax deductible due to our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Donate online via PayPal or send your donation to our Treasurer.

Fundraisers that support our cause:

#### Bloomin' Bucks with Brent and Becky's Bulbs

It's simple...go to [www.bloominbucks.com](http://www.bloominbucks.com) (with no 'g') and from a pull down menu of all of the organizations registered, select to support VHS! With one click, you are then sent to the Brent and Becky's Bulbs website where you can order whatever you want, in whatever quantity and color you want...books, bulbs, garden tools, plant supplements, gift certificates...ANYTHING...and a percentage of the order goes to support our cause!

#### GoodSearch and GoodShop

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

And if you download the GoodSearch – Virginia Herpetological Society (NEWPORT NEWS VA) toolbar, our cause will earn money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first! Add the Virginia Herpetological Society (NEWPORT NEWS VA) toolbar at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/virginia-herpetological-society>

#### Cafe Press - The VHS Store

In this store you will find an assortment of high quality merchandise intended to celebrate the diversity of amphibians and reptiles native to Virginia. Eventually, we will branch out into other non-herp and non-Virginian related wildlife. If you are visiting this site from out of state, our products are not exclusive to Virginians. Many of the species we feature can be found throughout a large part of the country.

**All** proceeds from the sale of merchandise on this [site](#) go towards funding the VHS's mission.

### 10) New Email Addresses for VHS

The VHS will be using new *static* e-mail addresses for all elected officers and appointed positions. This will allow VHS members to use the same e-mail addresses year after year even when new officers are elected every two years. This will also enable us to preserve communications through the years. All of the new e-mail addresses can be found on our Contacts webpage:

<http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/contacts/vhs-contacts.htm>

## EVENTS

	<b>Northern Va Reptile Expo</b>	<b>Richmond Reptile Expo</b>
Dates	2/19, 5/14, 7/23/2011	3/20, 7/24/2011
Location	Prince William County Fairgrounds Manassas, Virginia 20108	The Holiday Inn Select 1021 Koger Center Blvd. Richmond, VA 23235
Admission	\$7 / \$3 child	\$8 / \$3 child
Time	9 am to 3 pm	10 am to 3 pm
Contact	<a href="http://www.kingsnake.com/nva">www.kingsnake.com/nva</a>	<a href="http://www.kingsnake.com/richmond">www.kingsnake.com/richmond</a>



## HERP TRIVIA

The questions and answers in this edition of “Herp Trivia” are pulled from material in the recently published ***Salamanders of the Southeast*** by Joe Mitchell and Whit Gibbons (University of Georgia Press, 2010). The common names and species range maps as they appear in the book are used in the questions & answers below.

1. How long ago did salamanders diverge from the ancestors of frogs and caecilians?
2. How many species of salamanders inhabit the 10 southeastern states?
3. How many of these are members of the family Plethodontidae?
4. Which species is the longest salamander in North America?
5. How many toes does a two-toed amphiuma have?
6. Which two species of sirens are native to Virginia?
7. What canine names are applied to the genus *Necturus*?
8. Where do troglobitic salamanders live?
9. How are Northern and Southern Two-lined Salamanders differentiated?
10. How are Red and Mud Salamanders differentiated?
11. What is the largest terrestrial salamander in the Southeast?
12. What are Virginia’s two most geographically widespread Ambystomids?
13. Which Ambystomid is restricted to the Atlantic Coastal Plain?
14. What is the most widespread salamander in the Southeast?
15. Which SE salamander is black with green or yellowish green, lichen-like markings?
16. Where is *Plethodon hubrichti* found?
17. How many species of Slimy salamanders are native to the Southeast?
18. Where is the Cow Knob salamander found?
19. Term for amphibians that are salamanders.
20. Colloquial term for salamanders used as fish bait.



Answers can be found on page 14

**NOTICE: Submissions for *Catesbeiana* Vol. 31 No. 2 are due March 1, 2011!**

Please support the VHS by submitting any papers, field notes, or artwork for *Catesbeiana* to: Dr. Paul Sattler, Editor, *Catesbeiana*, [pwsattler@liberty.edu](mailto:pwsattler@liberty.edu).



## ZOO UPDATES

### Virginia Living Museum

### Newport News

[thevlm.org](http://thevlm.org)



Recently we replaced the old golden mouse exhibit with a green anole and eastern box turtle exhibit. It is located in the Chesapeake Bay area of our museum. Also, we've added two western hognose snakes to our program collection as well (currently, they're still in quarantine). Eventually, we'll be exchanging our current exhibit American alligator for two smaller alligators. The current gator is already 6 feet long and still growing, which means she'll need a larger area soon to continue feeling comfortable. We're hoping to have that done sometime during late spring or early summer.

- Travis Land

### Virginia Zoological Park

### Norfolk

[virginiazoo.org](http://virginiazoo.org)



Herp-related news is slow at the zoo since we are about to open the \$18+ million Asian area, Trail of the Tiger. Although it lacks herps, it is still a very exciting addition.

After hitting numerous snags, we hope to have the new winter tortoise house built this spring or early summer for the Aldabra tortoises. It will be adjacent to the existing "new" Aldabra exhibit to allow them to come and go outside during winter months when we get those odd warm days. It will also alleviate the stress of forcibly moving them from one location to another via trailers, etc. in spring and fall. Hopefully the delays will translate into improvements in the overall plan and finished product.

Other areas of the herp department have been devoted to diversifying the collection for both exhibitry and education programming. We are moving to more natives in both categories, including a timber rattlesnake and an eastern cottonmouth to display all of VA's venomous species, as well as working on adding pinesnakes, another VA native, to our exhibit lineup. For the education department, we brought in a tiger salamander to go with our current marble salamander (~~thanks Kory!~~). Another education animal "brought in" was a gopher tortoise that was found in a park in northern VA. We now have two of these imperiled tortoises in our education department collection.

One of the most interesting additions was a donation of 1.1 William's dwarf geckos, a minute species of terrestrial gecko found only in a small coastal rain forest in Tanzania. We are the only AZA zoo in the North America to have them, and 1 of 3 zoo when you include European zoos (EAZA). They are very much like Phelsuma sp. when it comes to color, but are terrestrial in behavior and at best only 2" long. Our intention is to maintain this pair in an off-exhibit vivarium so we can attempt to learn document their husbandry and hopefully reproductive behavior (and success?) with the hope of producing some written information on them. The species is apparently quite common in the wild, but due to its very small range the population is precarious, similar to the dynamics of island species....one catastrophe could lead to their decimation in the wild. Should be a fun project.

- Craig Pelke

***"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."***

***~Chief Seattle, 1855***





## CONSERVATION KEY

### Conservation of Sea Turtles in Virginia

Tim Christensen, Conservation Committee Chair,  
Virginia Herpetological Society  
Christina Trapani, Assistant Stranding Response  
Coordinator Virginia Aquarium Stranding  
Response Program

Our view of herpetofauna in Virginia often extends inland towards those species that inhabit swamps, ephemeral pools and forested areas. Frogs, snakes and lizards are familiar components to these habitats. We tend to overlook one other group of herpetofauna in Virginia despite their federal listings as endangered or threatened, depending on the species. Such herps are, of course, sea turtles.

Let's reflect a little on these unique organisms. They have retained their reptilian ancestry yet have virtually divorced themselves from the terrestrial habitats, save only to deposit eggs in the attempt to perpetuate the species. Carapace and plastron remained while forelimbs evolved into flippers. Their relative large size makes them virtually familiar to many, but rarely observed by most people compared to many other herpetofauna species. There are seven species of sea turtles worldwide (Mitchell, 1994) (Spotila, 2004) of which five enter the Chesapeake Bay and exist along Virginia's shorelines during the warmer months of the year (Terwilliger and Tate, 1995). These include loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) and the leatherback (*Dermachelys coriacea*) sea turtles. The hawksbill, Kemp's ridley and the leatherback are all listed as federally and state endangered. Loggerhead and green sea turtles are listed as federally and state threatened.



VAQS staff respond to a dead loggerhead turtle with a boat propeller wound, the probable cause of death. In this photo, staff attempt to draw blood as part of the thorough examination that takes place on freshly dead animals.

Virginia is considered the northern-most nesting area for the loggerhead sea turtle, with number of nests ranging from 0 – 9 per year. Loggerheads nest most commonly on ocean facing beaches. In Virginia, the majority of nests have been documented on the ocean beaches of Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, False Cape State Park and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (i.e., Virginia's portion of Assateague Island). Nests have also been reported on several other Virginia barrier islands, including Wallops, Cedar, Paramore and Hog islands as well as the resort area of Virginia Beach and Dam Neck Naval Base. In 2005, a green turtle nested on the Sandbridge area of Virginia Beach. This was the first recorded green turtle to nest in Virginia, (pers. comm. Ruth Boettcher, VDGIF).

These organisms continue to decline facing a multitude of anthropogenic threats. Worldwide anthropogenic threats to sea turtles include loss of nesting habitat as a result of development; illegal egg poaching; commercial and recreational fishing; pollution, including marine debris and oil spills; decline in prey items; and both recreational and commercial vessel interactions.

With such human-generated threats, populations become stressed further by a barrage of environmental factors. Nest and hatchling predation by raccoons, crows and gulls take a considerable toll. Sudden ambient temperature drops lead to annual cold-stunning events from Massachusetts to Florida and even through the Gulf coast of Texas. According to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, over 6,000 sea turtles experienced cold-stunning in Florida in January 2010 during extended periods of cold temperatures. This phenomenon occasionally occurs in Virginia with



VAQS staff and volunteers examine a dead loggerhead during a boat based survey of strandings on Virginia's Eastern Shore.



at least five cases documented in 2010 (unpublished data, Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program).

The Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program is responsible for responding to both live and dead sea turtle strandings throughout the state. Strandings occur when sea turtles wash ashore either sick, injured or dead or become entrapped or entangled. Live stranded sea turtles are rescued and taken to the Virginia Aquarium Marine Animal Care Center for rehabilitation and eventual release. Dead stranded sea turtles are examined by the Stranding Response Team for life history (measurements, sex, stomach contents) as well as cause of death. This data can be used to understand these marine animals as well as to manage them.

In the last 10 years, an average of 290 sea turtle strandings on Virginia shorelines have been documented, most of which were dead when reported. There were 184 sea turtle strandings in 2010. The causes are not always known but many are the result of boat/propeller collisions (almost 25%), fishing hooks lodged in the esophagus, debris ingestion (including pieces of plastic, balloon and monofilament), cold stun and entanglement in ghost and active commercial fishing gear.



*A loggerhead sea turtle is released into Chesapeake Bay after being accidentally hooked at a fishing pier, then spending time in rehab with VAQS. "Sally" was fitted with a satellite transmitter so that her post-release movements could be monitored.*

How can you help Virginia's sea turtles? If you find a stranded sea turtle, alive or dead, call the Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program immediately (757-437-6159, 24/7). To help keep trash out of our oceans, participate in beach cleanups; reduce, reuse and recycle; and keep your balloons grounded. Make sure you are eating sustainably and responsibly caught seafood (see the Virginia Aquarium website for

more information). If you are a boater, keep an eye out for the animals that live in our ocean and bay waters.

Here are some interesting facts about sea turtles in Virginia waters:

- According to Mansfield's work (2006), 2850-5479 sea turtles migrate into Chesapeake Bay every spring/summer.
- Only 3 hawksbills have been reported stranded in Virginia.
- Loggerheads are the most common turtle to strand in Virginia followed by the Kemp's ridley, the green and the leatherback.
- Sea turtles are often found stranded with fish in their GI tracts. Since sea turtles are too slow to catch free swimming healthy fish, they are likely stealing from nets or eating discarded bycatch.
- Most of the turtles in Virginia found with marine debris in their GI tracts are juvenile greens. They feed on grass and algae which are also convergence zones for debris.
- Sea turtles may be 35 years old before they return to their natal beach to nest.
- The leatherback sea turtle is the largest reptile, growing up to 2,000 pounds. Its main diet consists of jellyfish.

#### Literature Cited:

Mansfield, Katherine L., Sources of Mortality, Movements and Behavior of Sea Turtles in Virginia. 2006. A Dissertation Presented to The Faculty of the School of Marine Science, The College of William and Mary.

Mitchell, Joseph C., The Reptiles of Virginia, 1994. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London.

Spotila, James R., Sea turtles: A Complete Guide to their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation. 2004. The Johns Hopkins University Press and Oakwood Arts.

Terwilliger, Karen and Tate, John R., A Guide to Endangered and Threatened Species in Virginia. 1995. The McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company: Blacksburg, Virginia.



# HERPCETERA

VHS Posters (1 | 3) Craig's List Ads Reveal Possible Flaw in Native  
Celebrate: Year of the Turtle! (2 | Reptile Protection

## 1) VHS Posters

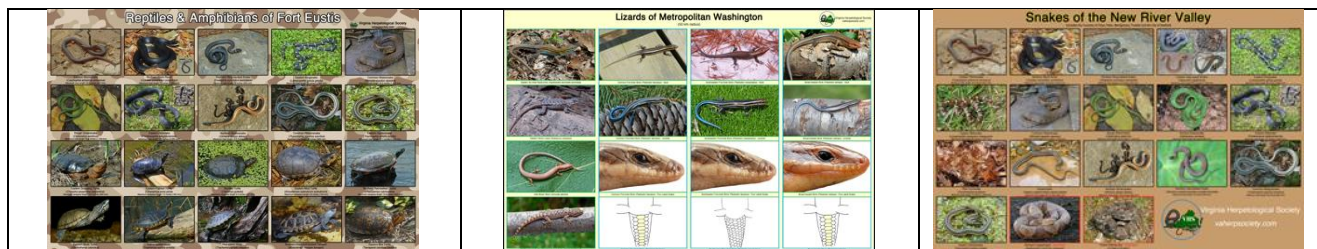


VHS Reptile & Amphibian Posters are currently used for education by the following: Smithsonian Institution National Zoo, National Aquarium, Great Falls National Park, Reptiles Alive, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Potomac Overlook Nature Center, Gulf Branch Nature Center, Long Branch Nature Center, Huntley Meadows Park, Hidden Pond Nature Center, Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Riverbend Regional Park, Ellanor C. Lawrence Nature Center, Fairfax County Schools, Arlington County Schools, Pulaski County High School, Casual Adventure, Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, Arlington Master Naturalists, Fairfax Master Naturalists, Patuxent River Park, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Luray Zoo, Corbalis Water Treatment Plant, Mason Neck State Park, Leesylvania State Park, Shenandoah River State Park, Fort Eustis, and several individuals.

Posters currently available include:

- Frogs and Toads of Metropolitan Washington and surrounding 50 km
- Lizards of Metropolitan Washington and surrounding 50 km
- Salamanders of Metropolitan Washington and surrounding 50 km
- Snakes of Metropolitan Washington and surrounding 50 km
- Turtles of Metropolitan Washington and surrounding 50 km
- Snakes of Page County, Virginia
- Snakes of Shenandoah State Park
- Snakes of Warren County, Virginia
- Snakes of the New River Valley (Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski and the city of Radford)
- Reptiles of Fort Eustis
- Amphibians of Fort Eustis

Posters measure 30 x 20 inches and available for \$20 each plus shipping. For additional information contact [vhs.webmaster@verizon.net](mailto:vhs.webmaster@verizon.net)







## 2) Celebrate: Year of the Turtle!

The Virginia Herpetological Society in conjunction with PARC and other turtle conservation groups have designated 2011 as the Year of the Turtle. The VHS created the Year of the Turtle video used on [YOT website \(yearoftheturtle.org\)](#). The VHS is currently working on other educational, multimedia YOT projects that are scheduled for release later this year.



## 3) Craig's List Ads Reveal Possible Flaw in Native Reptile Protection

Over the past several months turtles native to Virginia were offered for sale via advertisements on Craig's List. The District of Columbia at this time has no specific regulation prohibiting the sale of native turtles and/or non-venomous snakes. This allows individuals to legally sell turtles and/or non-venomous snakes in DC that were illegally captured in Virginia and Maryland. Currently the VHS, in conjunction with the Virginia DGIF, the MD DNR, the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service, The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, PARC and the District Department of the Environment is working toward a solution.

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*Like the resource it seeks to protect, wildlife conservation must be dynamic, changing as conditions change, seeking always to become more effective.*

*-Rachel Carson*

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## NEW BOOKS

**Stolen World: A Tale of Reptiles, Smugglers, (1  
and Skulduggery  
Forbidden Creatures (2**

**3) Wetland Habitats: A Practical Guide to  
Restoration and Management**

### 1) Title: **Stolen World: A Tale of Reptiles, Smugglers and Skulduggery**

Authors: Jennie Erin Smith

Price: \$16.45 ([Amazon.com](#))

Publisher: Crown Publishers, New York (2011)

Description: From [Booklist](#); Smith wades into the dark world of animal smuggling with this look at the decades-long careers of a couple of reptile enthusiasts and subsequent black market traders. Readers will make immediate comparisons to the *The Orchid Thief* (1999) as Hank Molt and Tommy Crutchfield share their experiences tracking animals all over the world and then selling them to willing buyers (including zoos) who were all too aware of the illegality of the transactions. Smith's account is quite compelling and highly readable, but it should be approached with a degree of caution. Although she states that the content was "derived from interviews and court documents," the absence of cited sources leaves one in doubt regarding the veracity of the details. Smith walks a fine line, telling a gripping story that provides a window onto a largely invisible subculture in the annals of collecting while raising questions as to the ratio of "creative" versus "nonfiction" in this nearly thriller-like chronicle. --Colleen Mondor

### 2) Title: **Forbidden Creatures: Inside the World of Animal Smuggling and Exotic Pets**

Authors: Peter Laufer

Price: \$14.24 ([Amazon.com](#))

Publisher: Lyons Press, Guilford, CT (2010)

Description: From [Booklist](#); Versatile journalist Laufer follows his earlier exposé of obsessive butterfly collecting, *The Dangerous World of Butterflies* (2009), with an intimate look into the motivations of exotic pet ownership. With an eye to tragic wild-pet attacks, he talks to people who own monkeys, lions, tigers, and reptiles, and he interviews people such as actress Tippi Hedren, who fight to end the practice. Laufer lets owners speak for themselves as they rationalize their deep love for creatures they must keep caged and crated for their own and their animals' safety. By visiting those who attempt to illegally import pets and those who run rescue operations, he observes each extreme of the ownership journey. Laufer spends time in



South Florida, where people buy Burmese pythons, and the Everglades, where the devastating effects of nonnative species in the wild are the focus of a serious federal eradication effort. Laufer can't help but come to his own conclusions about right and wrong, and the serious problems this industry engenders are obvious. --Colleen Mondor

**3) Title: Wetland Habitats: A Practical Guide to Restoration and Management (Landlinks Press)**

Author: Nick Romanowski

Price: \$35.54 ([Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com))

Publisher: CSIRO Publishing (October 2010)

Description: *Wetland Habitats* is a practical manual that puts developments in the field of wetland restoration and conservation of diverse animal species into plain English, placing much of the more recent work in this field into a single, coherent and user-friendly framework. As with *Planting Wetlands and Dams*, the text explains the various approaches to and aspects of each problem, so that readers will be able to make informed decisions about managing wetlands on their own properties. 186 pp.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### Tons of Archives about Reptiles (1) | 2) Herpetological Conservation & Biology

#### 1) Tons of Archives about Reptiles

Check out this link where you can search for anything related to reptiles:

<http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=reptile>

#### 2) Herpetological Conservation & Biology

The latest issue of Herpetological Conservation and Biology is open access and freely available to anyone interested: <http://www.herpconbio.org>.

## VIRGINIA LITERATURE

These selections represent articles published or in press during the period August 2010 to January 2011. Included articles are focused on (1) studies performed within Virginia, (2) studies on reptiles or amphibians native to Virginia, or (3) additional herpetological topics that are of general interest. Compiled by Susan Watson.

Homyack, Jessica A., Sucre, Eric B., Haas, Carola A., and Fox, Thomas R. 2010. Does *Plethodon cinereus* Affect Leaf Litter Decomposition and Invertebrate Abundances in Mixed Oak Forest? *Journal of Herpetology*: Vol. 44(3): 447-456

Crespi, Erica J., Browne, Robert A., and Rissler, Leslie J. 2010. Taxonomic Revision of *Desmognathus wrighti* (Caudata: Plethodontidae). *Herpetologica*: Vol. 66(3): 283-295

Ousterhout, Brittany H. and Liebgold, Eric B. 2010. Dispersal Versus Site Tenacity of Adult and Juvenile Red-Backed Salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) *Herpetologica*: Vol. 66(3): 269-275

Schieltz, Jennifer M., Lillian M. B. Haywood, and David M. Marsh. 2010. Effects of Cover Object Spacing on the Socioecology of the Red-Backed Salamander, *Plethodon cinereus*. *Herpetologica*. Vol. 66(3): 276-282

Innis, Charles, Constance Merigo, Kara Dodge, Michael Tlusty, Michael Dodge, Brian Sharp, Andrew Myers, Antoinette McIntosh, Denise Wunn, Christopher Perkins, Thomas H. Herdt, Terry Norton, and Molly Lutcavage. 2010. Health Evaluation of Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Northwestern Atlantic During Direct Capture and Fisheries Gear Disentanglement. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*, Vol. 9, No. 2: 205-222





Eskew, Evan A., Steven J. Price, and Michael E. Dorcas. 2010. Survivorship and Population Densities of Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) in Recently Modified Suburban Landscapes. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*, Vol. 9, No. 2: 244-249



McCollister, Matthew F. and Frank T. van Manen. 2010. Effectiveness of Wildlife Underpasses and Fencing to Reduce Wildlife–Vehicle Collisions. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, Vol. 74(8): 1722-1731

Jacobson, Cynthia A., John F. Organ, Daniel J. Decker, Gordon R. Batcheller, and Len Carpenter. 2010. A Conservation Institution for the 21st Century: Implications for State Wildlife Agencies. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, Vol. 74(2): 203-209

Shulse, Christopher D., Raymond D. Semlitsch, Kathleen M. Trauth & Arnold D. Williams. 2010. Influences of Design and landscape Placement Parameter on Amphibian Abundance in Constructed Wetlands. *Wetlands*, 30: 915-928 (A pdf of this article is available from the CNAH PDF Library at [http://www.cnah.org/cnah\\_pdf.asp](http://www.cnah.org/cnah_pdf.asp))

Moore, J-D. and R. L. Wyman. 2010. Eastern Red-backed Salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) in a Highly Acid Forest Soil. *The American Midland Naturalist*, Vol. 163(1): 95-105

Hays, Kimberly A. and Karen McBee. 2010. Population Demographics of Red-Eared Slider Turtles (*Trachemys scripta*) from Tar Creek Superfund Site. *Journal of Herpetology*. Vol. 44(3): 441-446

***I love fools' experiments. I am always making them.***

**- Charles Darwin**

Answers from page 7

## HERP TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. How long ago did salamanders diverge from the ancestors of frogs and caecilians?
  - 230 million years ago.
2. How many species of salamanders inhabit the 10 southeastern states?
  - 102 species.
3. How many of these are members of the family Plethodontidae?
  - 77 species.
4. Which species is the longest salamander in North America?
  - Two-toed amphiuma.
5. How many toes does a two-toed amphiuma have?
  - 8 toes.
6. Which two species of sirens are native to Virginia?
  - Greater and Lesser sirens.
7. What canine names are applied to the genus *Necturus*?
  - Mudpuppies and Waterdogs.
8. Where do troglobitic salamanders live?





- Caves.
9. How are Northern and Southern Two-lined Salamanders differentiated?
    - Coastal grooves (15-16 northern; 13-14 southern).
  10. How are Red and Mud Salamanders differentiated?
    - Red salamanders have yellowish eyes; mud salamanders have brown eyes.
  11. What is the largest terrestrial salamander in the Southeast?
    - Tiger salamander.
  12. What are Virginia's two most geographically widespread Ambystomids?
    - Spotted salamander and Marbled salamander.
  13. Which Ambystomid is restricted to the Atlantic Coastal Plain?
    - Mabee's salamander.
  14. What is the most widespread salamander in the Southeast?
    - Red-spotted newt.
  15. Which SE salamander is black with green or yellowish green, lichen-like markings?
    - Green salamander.
  16. Where is *Plethodon hubrichti* found?
    - Peaks of Otter area of Virginia's Bedford and Botetourt counties.
  17. How many species of Slimy salamanders are native to the Southeast?
    - 10 species.
  18. Where is the Cow Knob salamander found?
    - Shenandoah and Great North mountains of Virginia and West Virginia.
  19. Term for amphibians that are salamanders.
    - Caudates.
  20. Colloquial term for salamanders used as fish bait.
    - Spring lizards.



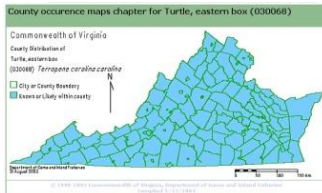
Send suggestions for Herp Trivia to newsletter editor, Susan Watson, [newsletter@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:newsletter@vaherpsociety.com).



## VIRGINIA NATIVE

The purpose of **Virginia Native** is to highlight native species that are deserving of recognition. Additional information can be found on the website of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/information>.

### eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)



#### Characteristics

This is a medium-sized terrestrial turtle that reaches a maximum length of about 8 in (20.32 cm). The top of the shell (carapace) is highly domed, elongate, and smooth on the rear edge. The rear edge may be flared in some adults. The color is brown, or sometimes black, with orange to yellow spots, blotches or lines. The patterns and colors vary greatly. The underside of the shell (plastron) may be brown or black and may have an irregular pattern of cream or yellow. The skin of the head, neck, and legs is brown with orange to yellow spots, streaks, or blotches. The adult may have a sharply defined beak on the upper jaw. The box turtle is so named because it has a hinged plastron that enable it to completely withdraw into and close its shell. This species is seldom confused with other Virginia species, except for possibly the wood turtle, *Glyptemys insculpta*, which lacks the high-domed shell and the hinged plastron and is much less common. The box turtle has a low reproductive rate and is long lived. It requires 5-10 years to reach sexual maturity. Box turtles may sometimes live to over 100 years. Nesting occurs between late May and late July, with 2-7 eggs laid in one or two clutches per year.

#### Distribution

The terrestrial box turtle is found in many types of wooded areas, including hardwood forests, mixed oak-pine forests, pine flatwoods, maritime oak forests, hardwood swamps, and agricultural areas. It may also be found in pastures, especially in the edge areas, and occasionally, in caves. It enters water readily, but only temporarily, for summer aestivation, drinking, or dispersal. In hot, dry weather, the box turtle hides in pools of water, mud, or damp ground. It hibernates in winter under several centimeters in the soil beneath leaf piles and grass clumps.

#### Foods

Box turtles are omnivorous. Fruits include blackberry, mayapple, elderberry, sweet low-bush blueberry, maple-leaf viburnum, muscadine grape, white mulberry, wild strawberry, black cherry, and wineberry. Small animals include slugs, terrestrial snails, beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars, flies, dusky salamanders, and slimy salamanders. Mushrooms and carrion are also consumed.

**Common Name:** Eastern Box Turtle

**Scientific Name:** *Terrapene carolina carolina*

**Genus:** *Terrapene* is derived from Native Americans (Algonquin) which means "turtle".

**Species:** *carolina* is derived from the Carolinas, were the species was first described.

**Subspecies:** *carolina* is derived from the Carolinas, were the species was first described.

**Average Length:** 4.5 - 6 in. (11.5 - 15.2 cm)

**Virginia Record Length:** 6.1 in. (15.6 cm)

**Record length:** 7.8 in. (19.8 cm)

