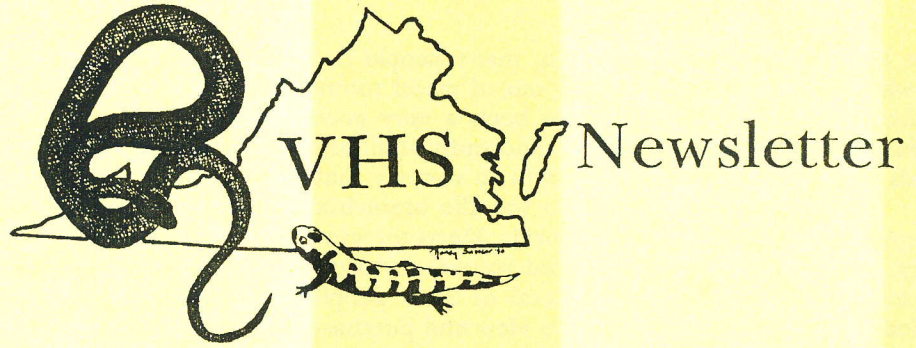


# Virginia Herpetological Society



\*\*\*\*\*

## THE VHS NEWSLETTER

Volume I, No. 2

November 1990

Virginia Herpetological Society  
5608 Parkland Court  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

\*\*\*\*\*

### OFFICERS

President: Joseph C. Mitchell  
Vice-President: Kurt A. Buhlmann  
Sec./Tres.: Ron Southwick

Newsletter Editor: Douglas W. Eggleston  
*Catesbeiana* Co-Editors: Paul Sattler and Terry Spohn

\*\*\*\*\*

### COMMENTARY FROM YOUR EDITOR

Here we are with Vol. I, No. 2 of the VHS NEWSLETTER in print. The idea behind the newsletter was to give our members a forum to print their herp news and information. Needless to say, response has not been very favorable to our requests for your submissions. The VHS is Your society and this is Your newsletter, your forum. Get involved and let us hear from you.

The following is reprinted with permission from the Sept. 1990 issue of THE LEAGUE OF FLORIDA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETIES Newsletter and taken from The FLORIDA WEST COAST HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY's submission. It holds true for the VHS and this newsletter as well.

#### "HOW TO KILL A GROUP"

1. Don't go to meetings, or go late.
2. If you attend, find fault with the accomplishments of others.
3. Never accept a responsibility, it's easier to criticize.
4. If you're asked your opinion, say nothing. Later, tell everyone just how things should have been.
5. Do no more than necessary. If a few people work tirelessly, complain that the group is run by a clique.
6. Agree to everything at the meeting, disagree

later.

7. Get all the benefits your organization provides - but don't make a personal contribution.

\*This view is that of the newsletter editor and does not necessarily represent the views of the VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY or it's officers. Your comments are More Than Welcomed!

### HERP HAPPENINGS:

For the last four to five years, I have attended various herp society meetings, conferences, symposiums, and expositions from early Spring through the Fall. I usually attend a minimum of six to eight, with at least two to three being national or international meetings. These functions offer everyone interested in Herpetology an opportunity to pick up valuable information and enjoy some good times.

I look forward to the Spring due to the calendar of events that starts then. I generally combine business, learning and fun when I attend. My business allows me to financially justify some of the trips and expenses. The learning and fun just seem to be natural processes.

Aug. 3-5, 1990 found me in Orlando, Fla. to attend the First National Reptile Breeder's Expo. This event was a real first in the herping community. For years, those into captive husbandry have presented papers at major conferences around the world. Those conferences have frowned upon the selling or exhibiting

of live herps at their functions. So, many people had dealt with the situation by working out of motel rooms and their vehicles. This has never been a very good situation for the sellers, the buyers, and most of all, the animals involved. The Expo set forth to remedy that.

The Reptile Breeder's Expo was the brainchild of Wayne Hill and the Central Florida Herpetological Society, which produced 20 dedicated volunteers to put it all together. For two days, a total of 2010 people crowded into the two exhibit halls to view and purchase the animals and products offered there. You had to be there to appreciate the scope of and the hard work that went into making this event happen. The C.F.H.S. and Wayne deserve a big round of applause for their efforts.

From the opening nights icebreaker (complete with stand-up comedian Dwayne Cunningham, and a cobra shaped ice sculpture), to the door prize drawings of donated animals and dry goods on the closing day - the Expo was a big hit with those attending.

Like the conferences and symposiums I've attended in the past, the Expo offered herpers a chance to gather together and discuss what they were working with. We shared our successes and failures. This, to me, has always been the best part of attending any of these functions.

Viewing all the animals and products available, being able to purchase future breeding stock or hard to come by supplies and literature, combined with the opportunity to share experiences with fellow herpers, made this the most enjoyable event I've ever attended. I look forward to next year's event, which is promised to be bigger and better. There is talk of an autograph party with some well known herp authors, a breeder's forum for a question and answer session, and a viewing room for over 40 different video recordings of speakers at CFHS meetings. Even if captive husbandry of herps is not your thing, next years Expo should have something of interest to attract you to Orlando in 1991.

Report by: Doug Eggleston

If you have attended a meeting, conference, or similar herping event, please write us a report on it and share your experience with fellow VHS members. If you know of an upcoming event of this type, let us know that too, so we can print a calendar for all our members to learn about and plan for them.

### HERP SIGHTINGS

VHS Sect./Treasurer, Ron Southwick passed on a couple of correspondences from a Richmond area member, Anna Platz concerning herp sightings. A photograph of what appears to be a Green Treefrog, *Hyla cinerea*, accompanied one letter. She reported multiple sightings of this animal, as well as D.O.R.

specimens of the Northern Copperhead, *Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen* (ssp.), and a Black Rat Snake, *Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*, found in front of her beach house in Sandbrige, VA.

Unfortunately, we are unable to reproduce the small photograph for these pages, (Sorry Anna), and as her sightings did not meet with present guidelines for reporting in *Catesbeiana* we have mentioned them here. New guidelines for county record reports for *Catesbeiana* are being drawn up now and more information will be available in a future issue of our bulletin.

Thanks to Anna and to Ron for bringing her news to our attention!

### CAPTIVE CORNER

One of the reasons this newsletter began, was to offer our VHS members a forum to share ideas and information of interest to the hobbyist/keepers amongst us. These might include success stories with hard to keep species, tips on husbandry, economical short cuts and ideas of handling and keeping herps and any other Herpful Hints you may have.

Please share your experiences and knowledge with the rest of us by sending in your information for our "CAPTIVE CORNER" section. Here are a couple for you:

Those black plastic bottoms to 2-liter bottles can be recycled into inexpensive and suitable hide boxes for small snakes and lizards. If you will freeze the empty bottle overnight, the plastic bottom can generally be removed with little trouble or glue left attached. Using a razor or sharp scissors, you can cut a small opening for the animal. Remember, contact security is extremely important to captive herps.

When you are heating a reptiles cage using an overhead, incandescent lighting fixture, try using red-tinted bulbs in place of clear or frosted. The herps can't detect the color red and will stay in view in your display cage more often. The effect these bulbs give the cage is nice too. Be sure the bulbs are shielded so the animals don't get burned.

### THE SOCIETY COLUMN

The BLUE RIDGE HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY have been some very busy folks. Membership has now reached over 25 and the group has been active in many projects.

September found them exhibiting at Lynchburg's Kaleidoscope event "Day-In-The-Park" and that exhibit received great reviews from the estimated 27,000 people in attendance, as well as the press. Their participation in this event also caught the eye of the organizers of the Appomattox Railroad Festival. On Oct. 13 & 14th,

members of the B.R.H.S. had an exhibit as this well attended Fall event.

The members of the B.R.H.S. have joined the state highway department in their "Adopt-A-Highway" program and will keep a 2 mile stretch of VA's roadways clean of litter. A vote to hold a raffle of herp-related items donated by members and merchants passed and the first raffle brought in \$23.00. As a "Sister Society" to the VHS, members voted to donate a check for \$25.00 to the VHS Poster fund to further this educational project.

REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN magazine mentioned the B.R.H.S. in their Sept./Oct. issue and this has produced interest in the group from other areas as well.

Those interested in the B.R.H.S. can write to: B.R.H.S., c/o P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528. A brochure/application is now available. A self-addressed stamped envelope would be appreciated to off-set costs.

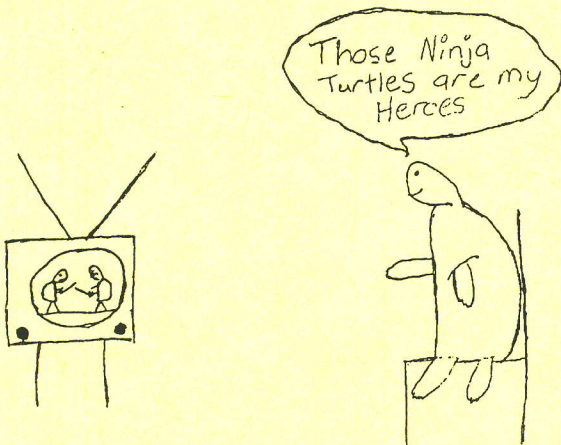
We know that there are other regional herp societies in VA that should be recognized in this column. PLEASE, let us hear from members about those groups and their activities!

For those of you that might have an interest in the monitor lizards, this editor just heard of a new publication just for you. Further information can be received by writing: VARA NEWS, Greg Naclerio, 8726D S. Sepulveda Blvd., #243, Los Angeles, CA 90045. I'm sure that a self-addressed stamped envelope would be appreciated.

### I SAW THAT SOMEWHERE!

This section will spotlight our members that have recently found their work in print, on television or other media. As members of the VHS, we all

Original Cartoon by Amy Giles



By  
Amy Giles

represent our society when we step in the spotlight and this should be noted. If you have an article published, a book on the market, a TV interview or your own film out, let us know about it so we can all look for it. If you know of a member that has accomplished one of these feats and is too modest to admit it, submit their name and what they've done and where we might find it.

Our President, Joe Mitchell has been busy as usual. You can read his articles: "Eeek, It's a Snake!" in the April 1990 issue, (Vol. 51, No. 4) and "Romancing The Frog" in the July 1990 issue, (Vol. 51, No. 7) of the VIRGINIA WILDLIFE magazine.

VHS Vice-President, Kurt Buhlmann was found in print with his article "Study of the Wood Turtles" in BACK ROADS, Aug. 1990 issue, (Vol. 10, No. 103). \*BACK ROADS is a monthly newsletter published out of Love, VA.

Chris Pague was recently featured in a local PBS television show in Virginia, the Environment and Economy, (sorry if this isn't the exact show title). This show was put together by five of the states local PBS stations and covered issues on the environment and the economy within Virginia.

Doug Eggleston had his article, "Eastern Box Turtle", published in REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN magazines May/June 1990, (Vol. 1, No. 4) issue.

If we missed your work, we're sorry. Let us hear from you.

### ENEMY OR ALLY?

Most people have a great, and often unfounded, fear of snakes. This frequently leads to many innocent snakes being killed because they look like poisonous snakes, or simply because they are snakes. Snakes are, however, very useful in many ways. Snakes contribute to keeping certain pest populations in check. Animals such as rats, mice, moles, gophers, ground squirrels, and chipmunks that are costly enemies to any agriculturist, are regularly consumed by our snake species. Many smaller snakes also devour a large number of insects. Even poisonous snakes are important in that their venom is being used in several areas of medical research.

There are thirty species of snakes in Virginia: of these, only four species are poisonous. According to all documented scientific research, the only poisonous snake known to reside in Mathews County is the Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*).

by Patti Pies



Submitted by: Walter Alpaugh

PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO REPRODUCE AND/OR PUBLISH THIS CARTOON IN THE INTEREST OF REPTILE CONSERVATION WHEREVER AND WHENEVER NEEDED.

*Ronald L. Shuler 3/1/88*

**\*REMINDER:** All 1991 dues should be sent to:  
Secretary/Treasurer - Ron Southwick, 5608 Parkland Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23464.  
Please renew your membership today - Family \$7.50, Regular \$5.00, Student (under 18) \$3.00.