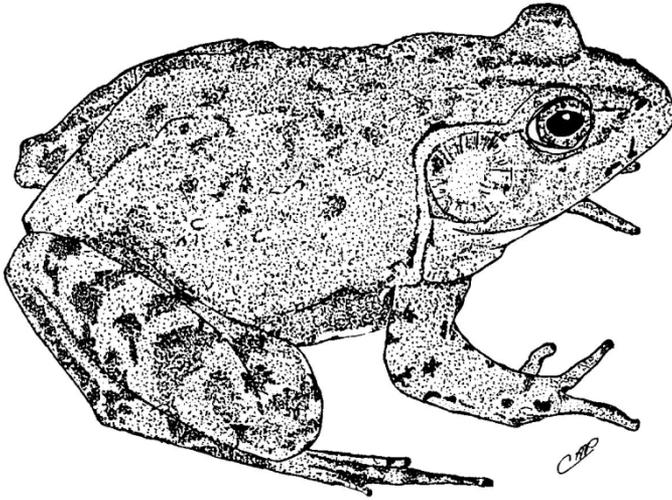


# CATESBEIANA



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## BULLETIN INFORMATION

*Catesbeiana* is published twice a year by the Virginia Herpetological Society. Membership is open to all individuals interested in the study of amphibians and reptiles and includes a subscription to *Catesbeiana*, two newsletters, and admission to all meetings. Annual dues for regular membership are \$15.00. Payments received after September 1 of any given year will apply to membership for the following calendar year. See the Web Site (<http://virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com>) for a membership application/renewal form.

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The principal function of *Catesbeiana* is to publish observations and original research about Virginia herpetology. Rarely will articles be reprinted in *Catesbeiana* after they have been published elsewhere. All correspondence relative to the suitability of manuscripts or other editorial matters should be directed to Dr. Paul Sattler, Editor, *Catesbeiana*, Department of Biology, Liberty University, 1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502 (email: [psattler@liberty.edu](mailto:psattler@liberty.edu)).

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Manuscripts for consideration of publication in *Catesbeiana* should be single spaced and submitted to the Editor electronically. Consult the style of articles in this issue for additional information, including the appropriate format for literature citations. The metric system should be used for reporting all types of measurement data. email attachments in Word format is desired for all papers. Submissions concerning the herpetofauna of selected areas, such as a park, city or county, should be prepared in article rather than Field Note format. Articles will be refereed by the editor and one or more qualified reviewers. All changes must be approved by the author before publication; therefore, manuscripts must be received by the editor before February 1 and August 1 to be considered for publication in the spring and fall issue, respectively, of *Catesbeiana*. Reprints of articles are not available, but authors may reprint their own articles to meet professional needs.

(Editorial policy continued on inside back cover)

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## Contents

Sixth Annual HerpBlitz: Survey of Hungry Mother State Park Paul W. Sattler and Jason D. Gibson .....	3
A Survey of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Old Colchester Park in Fairfax County, Virginia John M. Orr .....	17
Field Notes .....	24
President's Corner .....	41
Minutes of the Fall 2009 VHS Meeting .....	44
Treasurer's Report .....	47
Spring 2012 Meeting Notice .....	48

### Next Meeting

May 18-20  
Shenandoah River State Park  
Warren County, Virginia  
See Page 48 for details.



## **Sixth Annual HerpBlitz: Survey of Hungry Mother State Park**

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### Introduction

Hungry Mother State Park was the first of the original Virginia State Parks. The inauguration of the first six Virginia State Parks was held at Hungry Mother State Park on 13 June 1936 with thousands of people in attendance. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held prior to our survey, on 18 June 2011. Much of the original land was donated by local landowners to establish a state park in Smyth County. The largest piece of land 760 hectares (1,881 acres) was donated by John and Mildred Lincoln in 1933. The Civilian Conservation Corps used 600 men to construct the roads, trails, cabins, picnic areas, restaurant and dam at Hungry Mother, between 1933 and 1941. The Hemlock Haven Conference Center, which was originally an Episcopal Church Camp, was purchased in 1986 and added to Hungry Mother. Today, Hungry Mother State Park consists of 985 hectares (2,435 acres), a 44 hectare (108 acre) lake, more than 19.3 km (12 miles) of trails, an amphitheater, restaurant, conference center and lodge. It is located 6.5 km (4 miles) north of Marion on State Route 16, off I-81.

Located in southwestern Virginia, the environment is one of high elevation deciduous forests dominated by oaks, hickory, sugar maples, tulip trees, and hemlock with an understory of rhododendron,

ferns, and some blueberry. The forest is mature so there are a number of decaying logs on the forest floor, covered with dead bark or moss, providing excellent habitat for salamanders and small snakes. The elevation at the lake is 730 m (2,200 feet) with Molly's Knob at 1070 m (3,200 feet). Hungry Mother Creek was dammed to make the lake, so much of the shore is steep hillside forming as the ravine through which Hungry Mother Creek ran was flooded. There are many small mountain streams coming into the lake, and these provide the major mesic areas in the Park. The hills and ridges above the streams are more arid.

The Virginia Herpetological Society chose Hungry Mother State Park for the sixth annual HerpBlitz because it had been 19 years since our last survey there. We had 20 volunteers on 25-26 June 2011, organized into two groups to survey the habitat around trails and the lake. The date in late June was chosen since the weather in the mountains would be cooler later in the summer, with other surveys in lower elevations occurring earlier in the season. Some members used the proximity to Whitetop Mountain to make side trips to this interesting habitat before or after the Hungry Mother Survey.

### Study Sites

To penetrate into the very mountainous park, survey teams had to follow established trails due to the rough terrain and thick vegetation. On 25 June two survey teams were formed. Team 1 consisted of 8 people and surveyed Site 1, team 2 consisted of 12 people and surveyed Site 2. On 26 June one survey team of 10 people visited Site 3. Observations of the fourth site were opportunistically made from people staying at the campground. Below are general descriptions of the survey sites. GPS coordinates obtained from Google™ Earth represent a point taken at the center of each survey site.

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

### Site 1 – Lake Loop Trail (36°52'17.74"N, 81°30'45.43"W)

To survey this site Team 1 parked at a parking area near Camp Burson then traveled the Lake Loop Trail from the southern starting point, and then traveling east until arriving at the boat ramp. They were able to survey the lake spillway, the marshy area at the end of the spillway, several streams flowing into Hungry Mother Lake, the wooded area surrounding the trail, several man-made debris piles, and the marshy area around the boat ramp.

### Site 2 – Raider's Run Trail (36°52'58.26"N, 81°31'21.39"W)

Team 2 parked at the Raider's Run Trail parking area. The trail is along the northern edge of Hungry Mother Lake, and they then followed the Lake Loop Trail to the boat ramp. All the streams, shaley slopes, and woodlands surrounding the trail were surveyed during the trip to the boat ramp.

### Site 3 – CCC Trail (36°52'37.91"N, 81°30'54.27"W)

The Sunday team parked at the wildlife viewing parking lot and then proceeded to follow the CCC Trail. This trail was completely surveyed along with its surrounding forests and streams adjacent to the trail. Where the CCC trail intersects with the Lake Loop Trail, the survey team followed the Lake Loop Trail south back to the boat ramp.

### Site 4 – Camp Burson campground (36°52'8.77"N, 81°31'28.14"W)

This site sits at the end of the spillway on the southern edge of park property. The campground has very few trees but to the southeast is a marsh and stream. Various individuals staying at the campground made observations on the species found here, but there was not a record of how many people or how much time was spent searching, so these data are not entered in Table 1.

## Materials and Methods

Twenty people participated in the sixth annual HerpBlitz for 5 hours on 25 June and 2.5 hours on 26 June 2011. Table 1 provides the amount of survey effort for each site. Surveyors utilized multiple collecting techniques to find amphibians and reptiles, including visual observation, listening for calling anurans, overturning cover objects, hand capture, and dipnetting. All captured animals were given a visual inspection to identify any malformations, disease or injuries. Digital photos were taken of any species considered county records or with injuries or disease. Group leaders were required to record all relevant data on data sheets.

Table 1: The amount of survey effort per research site.

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4
Number of surveyors	8	12	10	
Hours surveyed	5	5	2.5	
Person hours of survey effort	40	60	25	

## Results

One hundred twenty-five person hours of survey effort and miscellaneous observations around Camp Burson yielded a total of 25 species. The survey produced a total of six anurans, 10 salamanders, three turtles, one lizard, and five snakes. A grand total of 182 individual animals were found during the weekend. Table 2 indicates each site and how many of each species were collected from that site. An annotated checklist below documents observations about each species.

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

Table 2. Summary of the number of animals observed at each site.

Sites	1	2	3	4
<b>Species</b>				
<b>Amphibians</b>				
<i>Anaxyrus americanus</i>		1		1
<i>Hyla versicolor</i>			C	C
<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>				1C
<i>Lithobates clamitans</i>	5	3		1C
<i>Lithobates palustris</i>	1	4		
<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>			C	
<i>Desmognathus fucus</i>	19	10		
<i>Desmognathus monticola</i>	21	22	16	
<i>Desmognathus ochrephaeus</i>	1			
<i>Desmognathus quadramaculatus</i>	5	2	4	
<i>Eurycea cirrigera</i>	3	3	8	
<i>Eurycea l. longicauda</i>	7			
<i>Plethodon glutinosus</i>	6	12	6	
<i>Plethodon richmondi</i>		1		
<i>Pseudotriton ruber</i>	1		1	
<i>Notophthalmus v. viridescens</i>	1		1	
<b>Reptiles</b>				
<i>Chelydra s. serpentina</i>	1			
<i>Chrysemys p. picta</i>	1			
<i>Terrapene c. carolina</i>	1			
<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>	1	1		
<i>Agkistrodon c. mokasen</i>	1	1		
<i>Diadophis punctatus</i>	3			
<i>Nerodia s. sipedon</i>	2			
<i>Pantherophis alleghaniensis</i>			1	
<i>Regina septemvittata</i>	1			1
Total Number of animals by site	81	60	37	4

C = calling males heard

### Annotated Checklist

#### Amphibians

##### *I. Anaxyrus americanus americanus* (American Toad)

Two American Toads were found, one each at Sites 2 and 4. The toad at Site 2 was found near a stream and the toad at Site 4 was found on the camp road at night after a rainstorm.

2. *Hyla versicolor* (Gray Treefrog)

Small choruses of several male Gray Treefrogs were heard at night along the stream behind Camp Burson campground and the boat ramp.

3. *Lithobates catesbeianus* (American Bullfrog)

A few individual male bullfrogs were heard calling at night along the stream behind Camp Burson.

4. *Lithobates clamitans melanota* (Northern Green Frog)

Northern Green Frogs were found by the lake shore, along the edge of a stream, and on the road at Camp Burson. Males were observed calling at several sites.

5. *Lithobates palustris* (Pickerel Frog)

Five Pickerel frogs were found along the lake shore at Sites 1 and 2.

6. *Pseudacris crucifer* (Spring Peeper)

One male peeper was heard calling around the boat ramp at Site 3.

7. *Desmognathus fuscus* (Northern Dusky Salamander)

Twenty-nine Northern Dusky Salamanders were found under rocks in and near streams.

8. *Desmognathus monticola* (Seal Salamander)

*Desmognathus monticola* was the most commonly collected salamander species during the survey weekend. Animals were found under rocks, under logs, and in leaf litter. All animals were collected in or adjacent to streams.

9. *Desmognathus ochrephaeus* (Alleghany Mountain Dusky Salamander)

One lone Alleghany Mountain Dusky Salamander was found under a log approximately 1 meter from the edge of a stream at Site 1.

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

### 10. *Desmognathus quadramaculatus* (Black-bellied Salamander)

Black-bellied Salamanders were found at three sites. All of the animals were found under rocks in streams.

### 11. *Eurycea cirrigera* (Southern Two-lined Salamander)

Two-lined salamanders were found near streams under rocks, bark and leaf litter.

### 12. *Eurycea longicauda* (Long-tailed Salamander)

Seven adult Long-tailed Salamanders were discovered under rocks near a log pile and under logs by a brush pile at Site 1.

### 13. *Plethodon glutinosus* (Northern Slimy Salamander)

Twenty-four slimy salamanders were found under logs at three sites.

### 14. *Plethodon richmondi* (Ravine Salamander)

A juvenile Ravine Salamander was found under a log by the lake at Site 2.

### 15. *Pseudotriton ruber* (Red Salamander)

A large adult Red Salamander was found in a shallow stream pool under a rock at Site 3. The animal was missing one eye.

### 16. *Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens* (Red-spotted newt)

One Red-spotted Newt was found under a rock by a stream at Site 1.

## Reptiles

### 17. *Chelydra serpentina* (Eastern Snapping Turtle)

One large adult snapping turtle was discovered (by smell) near the road leading to the boat ramp of Hungry Mother Lake. The animal was dead. The cause of death was not apparent.

### 18. *Chrysemys picta* (Eastern Painted Turtle)

The shell of an adult Eastern Painted Turtle was found in the marsh beside the boat ramp at Site 1.

19. *Terrapene carolina* (Eastern Box Turtle)

One female *Terrapene carolina* was collected by a stream at Site 1. Upon closer inspection it was found to have swollen eyes and was lethargic.

20. *Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus* (Northern Fence Lizard)

Northern Fence Lizards were found basking near a shaley bank at Site 2 and at the edge of a treeline by the wildlife viewing pond at Site 1.

21. *Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen* (Northern Copperhead)

Two adult Northern Copperheads were observed at Sites 1 and 2. The snake captured at Site 1 was in a small floodplain by the boat ramp. The animal seen at Site 2 was basking on a beaver lodge by the shore of the lake.

21. *Diadophis punctatus* (Ring-necked Snake)

Three Ring-neck Snakes were found under rocks and bark at Site 1.

22. *Nerodia sipedon sipedon* (Northern Watersnake)

An adult Northern Watersnake was found in the water next to a culvert pipe at Site 1.

23. *Pantherophis alleghaniensis* (Eastern Rat Snake)

Only one adult Eastern Rat Snake was found during the survey period. This snake was found at Site 3 basking on a fallen tree next to the lake.

24. *Regina septemvittata* (Queen Snake)

A juvenile Queen snake was captured in the stream flowing out of the spillway from the dam of Hungry Mother Lake.

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

### Discussion

On this two day survey the VHS found a total of 182 specimens, representing 25 species (Table 2). There were 16 species of amphibians (6 anurans and 10 salamanders) and, as one might expect in a cooler, high elevation area, fewer reptiles with 9 species (3 turtles, 1 lizard and 5 snakes).

Of the species that were observed on the Hungry Mother Survey, many are found widely throughout Virginia and could be expected in most surveys. These species would include: *Anaxyrus americanus*, *Lithobates catesbeianus*, *L. clamitans*, *L. palustris*, *Hyla versicolor*; *Desmognathus fuscus*, *D. monticola*, *Pseudotriton ruber*, *Notophthalmus viridescens*, *Chelydra serpentina*, *Chrysemys picta*, *Terrapene carolina*, *Sceloporus undulatus*, *Agkistrodon contortrix*, *Diadophis punctatus*, *Nerodia sipedon*, *Pantherophis alleghaniensis* and *Regina septemvittata*. Many of the salamanders are common in the western counties. These included: *Desmognathus ochrephaeus*, *D. quadramaculatus*, *Eurycea longicauda*, *Plethodon glutinosus* and *P. richmondi*. Finally, *Eurycea cirrigera* is common along the southern counties. Thus, there were no real surprises or county records to come out of this survey. We found many of the species one would expect to be present in the western part of Virginia.

There were a number of species documented for Smyth County that we did not find. In looking at reasons why these species were not encountered, a variety of explanations exist. We consulted the Fish and Wildlife Information Service (FWIS) database maintained by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Mitchell and Reay (1999), to examine more closely the distribution of species within Smyth County. *Ambystoma maculatum*, *Lithobates sylvaticus*, *Pseudacris brachyphona* and *P. feriarum* may be difficult to find outside their spring breeding periods as the adults either disperse into the forest (the anurans) or resume their fossorial life style (spotted salamander). Also, the FWIS database reports the spotted salamander only from two sites in Smyth County, at Chilhowie and southwest

of Sugar Grove. The Wood Frog is reported only from the Big and Little Laurel Creeks in the very southern part of the county. They have not been reported for Smyth County north of I-81 near Hungry Mother State Park. The Mountain Chorus Frog has been reported in the database from only two sites in Smyth County, on Pond and Grave Mountains to the south of the Park. The Upland Chorus Frog is found in the database only from Chilhowie, to the east. Thus, many of these species are far from prevalent in the county, and may not occur within the Park.

There are several very high-altitude species that would not have been expected to occur at Hungry Mother State Park including *Desmognathus organi*, *Eurycea wilderae*, *Plethodon montanus*, *P. welleri*, and *P. yonahlossee*. The FWIS database reports them only from the Mount Rogers/Whitetop Mountain area in the southern part of the county. *Plethodon montanus*, the Northern Gray-cheeked Salamander is also reported from the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area in the northwest portion of the county. Pinder and Greenlee (1999) reported 127 from our 1998 VHS survey of the Clinch Mountain WMA. *Desmognathus marmoratus*, the Shovel-nosed Salamander, is endemic to Laurel Creek and its tributaries, south of the Park. These species, although found in the county, are not found in Hungry Mother State Park.

Other than Hungry Mother Lake, there were no large bodies of water in the Park so we might not have been expected to find some of the turtles such as the Spiny Softshell *Apalone spinifera*, Common Map Turtle *Graptemys geographica*, or Stinkpot *Sternotherus odoratus*, all of which have been reported for Smyth County. Both the Spiny Softshell and the Common Map Turtle prefer rivers, making it less likely to find them in Hungry Mother Lake and the relatively small Hungry Mother Creek. The FWIS database reports the Common Map Turtle and Spiny Softshell Turtle from the North Fork of the Holston River near Saltville. The Spiny Softshell is also reported just north of Chilhowie. Since Softshells can occur in impounded waters, it is not impossible they could inhabit the Lake, but they apparently are

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

not native to Hungry Mother Creek. The absence of Stinkpots at Hungry Mother State Park may be more a matter of not making use of turtle hoop traps, than their absence from the area. Stinkpots have been reported from tributaries of the North Fork of the Holston River just north of the Park. Likewise the Hellbender *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis* and Mudpuppy *Necturus maculosus* would not be expected. Hellbenders and Mudpuppies are known from Smyth County, but from the larger rivers such as the North and South Forks of the Holston River which run north and south of the Park.

Several of the snakes are not common and a brief survey may not turn them up. Species such as the Timber Rattlesnake *Crotalus horridus*, Hognose Snake *Heterodon platirhinos*, Milk Snake *Lampropeltis triangulum*, and Garter Snake *Thamnophis sirtalis* may be present in the Park but rarely encountered. The Timber Rattlesnake is reported in the FWIS database from the southeast and northwest corners of Smyth county, on either side of Hungry Mother State Park. The Hognose Snake is reported from only a single locality in the county, north of Saltville. The Milk Snake and Garter Snake are more widely reported for the county with sites both north and south of the Park. There is one report of the Milk Snake and four for the Garter Snake within the Park in recent years, so they are present. We just did not cross paths with them on this trip.

Many amphibians are not numerically plentiful even where they do occur, and could be overlooked during a brief survey. This would include *Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*. The Spring Salamander is widely reported from the southern portion of Smyth County with a couple of reports from the Clinch Mountain WMA in the northwestern part of the county, including Pinder and Greenlee (1999), and one record from just a km south of the southern end of Hungry Mother Lake either within the Park or just outside. Hayslett (1992) in his narrative of the 1992 survey of several sites around Smyth County reported that one was found within the Park, although not precisely where in the Park. They must be present, but just were not observed on this survey.

*Desmognathus orestes*, the Blue Ridge Dusky Salamander, is known from Smyth County. There are numerous records in the FWIS database, however, those are from the southern half of the county. *Desmognathus ochrophaeus* the Alleghany Mountain Dusky Salamander which should occur at Hungry Mother State Park, has been reported from one of the tributaries flowing into the Lake from the north by Tilly who did the work to separate *D. orestes* from *D. ochrophaeus* (Tilly and Mahoney, 1996). We did quite a bit of searching in these tributaries and found only one specimen we thought was *D. ochrophaeus*. *Desmognathus orestes* is not found in the Park but only farther south in the county. Since we found the Northern Slimy Salamander *Plethodon glutinosus*, we did not find the White-spotted Slimy Salamander *P. cylindraceous* since they are generally parapatric. *Plethodon cylindraceous* is found only in the southern portion of the county. The absence of caves ruled out finding the Cave Salamander *Eurycea lucifuga*. The Five-lined Skink *Plestiodon fasciatus* is apparently rare in Smyth County, possibly due to the elevation. There are only two data entries in the FWIS, both farther north in the Clinch Mountain WMA. The VHS did not find the Five-lined Skink in our 1998 survey of the Clinch Mountain WMA either (Pinder and Greenlee, 1999).

Fowler's Toad *Anaxyrus fowleri*, the Worm Snake *Carphophis amoenus* and Red-backed Salamander *Plethodon cinereus* are relatively widespread throughout Virginia, and their absence is harder to explain. Fowler's Toad has been reported from the Park, and just south of it, but only from two FWIS records. The most recent FWIS record was in 2005 with no subsequent records for 2006-2007 when other herp species were reported for Hungry Mother State Park. This Toad must be relatively rare within the Park. The Worm Snake has been reported for Smyth County from Whitetop Mountain and also from just outside Hungry Mother State Park. However, since there are only two records, they may be quite scarce in the county and hence missed in our survey. There are a hundred records for the Red-backed Salamander in Smyth County. Most are for the Whitetop Mountain/Mount Rogers area, but others stretch across the entire

## Hungry Mother State Park Survey

southern portion of the county. There are also records for the Clinch Mountain WMA to the northwest, with Pinder and Greenlee (1999) recording 67 for that survey. The Red-backed Salamander may be absent locally from the Park since we did extensive searching in likely habitat and failed to find any. There were no other *Plethodon* prevalent in the Park which might competitively displace the Red-backed Salamander, so their absence remains a mystery.

In summary, in addition to the 25 species we did find, we might have expected to find a maximum of only an additional 13 further species. Those we did not find, which either have been previously documented at the Park or are likely to be present, include: *Ambystoma maculatum*, *Anaxyrus fowleri*, *Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*, *Lithobates sylvaticus*, *Plethodon cinereus*, *Pseudacris brachyphona*, *P. feriarum*, *Carphophis amoenus*, *Crotalus horridus*, *Heterodon platirhinos*, *Lampropeltis triangulum*, *Sternotherus odoratus*, and *Thamnophis sirtalis*. We observed two-thirds of the species expected at the Park. Those not observed were mostly species with low population numbers and could be overlooked on a brief survey. It is always rewarding to find and admire many species of herps, however, just the looking can also be rewarding.

Hungry Mother State Park, being the oldest in the Virginia Park System preserves a beautiful mature deciduous forest. The forests, streams and lake provide excellent habitat for many endemic southwestern species of amphibians and reptiles in Virginia. The Park is well-maintained with campsites, cabins and trails to provide the public easy access to enjoy these natural resources. The Park Staff has nature programs and makes a conscious effort to educate campers about the wildlife within the Park. Naturalists visited the campsite with a program directed at children, and accompanied one of the VHS groups to receive additional training on identifying salamanders. The Park is commended both on their excellent management of Virginia natural resources and their education programs.

### Acknowledgments

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# A Survey of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Old Colchester Park in Fairfax County, Virginia

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## Introduction

Old Colchester Park is located on the Mason Neck peninsula in Fairfax County, Virginia. The Mason Neck peninsula is one of the last largely undeveloped areas in northern Virginia with about two-thirds of the peninsula (2400 hectares) in public hands. At approximately 55 hectares, Old Colchester Park is smaller than many of the other public parcels. It became the most recent public land acquisition on the peninsula when it was acquired by the Fairfax County Park Authority in March 2007. The park contains sites of archaeological interest, including the colonial port town of Colchester, Native American sites and an old cemetery possibly dating to the 1600s.

The boundaries of Old Colchester Park are formed by the Occoquan River, an unnamed creek, Old Colchester Road, residences along Old Colchester Road and the Fairfax Yacht Club. A second, smaller parcel of land between Old Colchester Road, Furnace Road, and the railroad tracks is also part of the park. Though it was logged during the 1980s, most of the site is forested today. The well-drained, floodplain forest shows signs of selective logging followed by secondary succession. A few large, old trees remain surrounded by younger trees, primarily American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Mature beech, oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and hickories (*Carya* spp.) occur on slopes particularly on the eastern

and northern portion of the park, and mature oaks, black gum, sweet gum and red maples occur in several wetland forest communities. In addition, the southern and eastern portions of the park contain a freshwater tidal marsh, a rare and declining wetland type in northern Virginia.

### Study Sites

#### Site 1—Upland Forest (38.665935, -77.231956)

Like most of the park Site 1 consists of upland forest traversed by a former logging road and some unnamed trails.

#### Site 2—Pond (38.665525, -77.229499)

This site is a seasonal pond possibly created during logging, for silt control. Only the center of the pond retained water at the time of the survey but the pond basin remained wet and muddy.

#### Site 3—Creek (38.665315, -77.22614)

The creek, an unnamed tributary of the Occoquan River, forms the eastern border of the park. It runs roughly parallel to Anita Drive from which it receives rainwater runoff. Residences along Anita Drive back up to the other side of the creek.

#### Site 4—Tidal Marsh (38.662919, -77.229112)

Before emptying into the Occoquan River, the creek widens and forms a tidal marsh. The marsh soil is waterlogged and difficult to traverse. Most survey effort took place along the forest/marsh ecotone.

## **Materials and Methods**

The survey took place on the morning of Saturday, 4 June 2011. Twenty volunteers participated. Surveying consisted of a loose group of surveyors following a route through the park while performing visual searches, turning cover objects and listening for calling amphibians. Capture by hand and dipnet were used to secure

## Old Colchester Park Survey

specimens for examination. The survey route proceeded along the old logging road to the pond. After searching around the pond, the surveyors continued to the creek, following it to the marsh. The survey route continued through the woods paralleling the Occoquan River, taking an unnamed trail back to the logging road. Lastly, the smaller parcel of park was surveyed.

### Results

Table 1. Summary of the number of animals observed at each site.

Sites	1	2	3	4
<b>Species</b>				
<b>Amphibians</b>				
<i>Acris crepitans</i>	1			1
<i>Anaxyrus americanus</i>	6	11+		
<i>Hyla chrysofelis</i>		3		
<i>Lithobates clamitans melanota</i>	1	1		
<i>Lithobates palustris</i>				1
<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>		3		
<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>	1	4		
<b>Reptiles</b>				
<i>Plestiodon fasciatus</i>	4			
<i>Carphophis amoenus amoenus</i>	13			
<i>Coluber constrictor constrictor</i>				1
<i>Pantherophis alleghaniensis</i>	1			
<i>Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>	1			
<i>Kinosternon subrubrum</i>			1	
<i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>	4	2		
<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>				1
Total Number of animals by site	32	24+	1	4

### Annotated Checklist

#### Anurans

- Acris crepitans* (Northern Cricket Frog) – (1,4)  
A Northern Cricket Frog was found in the upland forest. Another was heard calling from the marsh.
- Anaxyrus americanus* (American Toad) – (1,2)  
The American Toad was the most recorded animal in the survey.

Four adults were captured in the upland forest, one under a rotten log. Numerous recent metamorphs were seen around the pond and along the logging road near the pond.

3. *Hyla chrysoscelis* (Cope's Gray Treefrog) – (2)  
Three recent metamorphs were found on vegetation near the pond.
4. *Lithobates clamitans melanota* (Northern Green Frog) – (1,2)  
A Northern Green Frog was heard calling from the woods. A tadpole was found in the pond.
5. *Lithobates palustris* (Pickerel Frog) – (4)  
A Pickerel Frog was seen in the marsh.
6. *Pseudacris crucifer* (Spring Peeper) – (2)  
Two adults and a recent metamorph were found near the pond.

### **Salamanders**

7. *Ambystoma maculatum* (Spotted Salamander) – (1,2)  
A Spotted Salamander was found under a log along the old logging road. Another was found under a rock next to the pond. Three spotted salamander larvae were found in the pond.

### **Reptiles**

#### **Lizards**

8. *Plestiodon fasciatus* (Common Five-lined Skink) – (1)  
One skink was found on a log, another in a log and a third was found under the bark of a log. One of the skinks was a juvenile.

#### **Snakes**

9. *Carphophis amoenus amoenus* (Eastern Wormsnake) – (1)  
The Eastern Wormsnake was the most frequently encountered reptile in the study. One was found inside a log, another under a board. All other wormsnakes were found under logs with three under a single log.

## Old Colchester Park Survey

10. *Coluber constrictor constrictor* (Northern Black Racer) – (4)  
A Northern Black Racer was spotted along the forest/marsh ecotone.
11. *Pantherophis alleghaniensis* (Eastern Ratsnake) – (1)  
An Eastern Ratsnake was captured along the side of Furnace Road.
12. *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis* (Eastern Gartersnake) – (1)  
A partial shed skin from an Eastern Gartersnake was found. This species has also been encountered by archaeologists working on the site.

### **Turtles**

13. *Kinosternon subrubrum subrubrum* (Eastern Mud Turtle) – (3)  
An Eastern Mud Turtle found along the creek by a water monitoring station.
14. *Terrapene carolina carolina* (Eastern Box Turtle) – (1,2)  
Four Eastern Box Turtles were encountered in the upland forest. One, a young female, was found in a drying creek bed. Another was found on the northern parcel by the railroad tracks. Two Box Turtles were found in the mud next to the pond.
15. *Trachemys scripta elegans* (Red-eared Slider) – (4)  
A Red-Eared Slider plastron was found in the marsh.

### **Discussion**

This was the first survey of amphibians and reptiles in Old Colchester Park. The results will be used to develop a species checklist. Seven species of amphibians (six anurans and one salamander) and eight species of reptiles (one lizard, four snakes and three turtles) were found during the survey. None were new records for Fairfax County. A single day survey gives only a partial picture of which species occur at a given location. Rare and out-of-season species are not likely to

be detected. Many more species are likely to occur at Old Colchester Park than the fifteen that were found during this survey.

In all, fifty-four amphibian and reptile species have been documented from the Mason Neck peninsula (Klimkiewicz 1972a, Klimkiewicz 1972b, Ernst et al. 1997, Creque 2001, Orr & Mendoza 2011) though some of these species have been encountered only a few times over years of field work. Old Colchester Park's proximity to other natural areas and the mostly undeveloped condition of the Mason Neck peninsula allow movement of wildlife between refuges. Further survey effort, particularly using traps for aquatic turtles and a more concentrated effort in and along the creek for aquatic salamanders, could increase the species count for this park.

Only one introduced species, the Red-Eared Slider, was found during the survey. This turtle, common in the pet trade prior to 1972, has become established in many parts of Virginia (Mitchell 1994). It has been previously documented from Mason Neck and other parts of northern Virginia (Ernst et al. 1997). In other parts of its introduced range, this turtle has been found to have a negative impact on native turtles (Ernst & Lovich 2009). The Red-Eared Slider is now considered naturalized in Virginia and has the same legal protection as native turtles.

### **Acknowledgments**

Charles Smith of the Fairfax County Park Authority was instrumental in planning and coordinating the survey. The following people worked as volunteer surveyors: Craig Abbott, Alonso Abugattas, Glenda Booth, Daniel Chandler, Maria Espinoza, Robert Frezza, Rosemary Frezza, Kelly Geer, Michael Gregory, Alex Horton-Geer, Dana Horton-Geer, Mark Khosravi, Andrew Lamb, Jeanne Leckert, Amy White, Charise White and John White.

## Old Colchester Park Survey

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## Field Notes

**Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata (Mole Kingsnake).** VA: Greensville Co., (36°39'30.50"N, 77°30'43.20"W). 28 May 2011. Mark Gibson.

County Record: On 28 May 2011, a young adult Mole Kingsnake was found under a black piece of plastic in a replanted tree plantation. The snake upon being captured defecated and vibrated its tail in the hand of the capturer. Under the plastic there were many mole tunnels. After taking a photograph of the animal it was released at the capture site. This species has not been recorded for Greensville County by Tobey (1985, Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, Virginia Herpetological Survey, Purcellville, VA. 114 pp.), Mitchell (1994, The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC. 352 pp.), or Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia, Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 90 pp.) although it is found in all surrounding counties. An intensive survey of this site was conducted by the VHS in 2003 but failed to find this species (Gibson, J.D. and J. White. 2004. Survey of reptiles and amphibians in Greensville County, Virginia. *Catesbeiana* 24(1): 3-16). A digital photo has been deposited in the VHS archives # 182.

### **Jason D. Gibson**

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**Scaphiopus holbrookii (Eastern Spadefoot).** VA: Halifax Co., 607 Cedar Avenue, South Boston (36°41'48.57"N, 78°53'12.41"W). 11 June 2011. Zachary Gray.

County Record: On 11 June, 2011 ZG unearthed a juvenile Eastern Spadefoot while excavating a hole for a post. This site is .17 km from the edge of the Dan River and is adjacent to the floodplain of this river. This species is not reported from Tobey (1985, Virginia's

## Field Notes

Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, Virginia Herpetological Survey, Purcellville, VA. 114 pp.) or Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia, Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 90 pp.) and thus represents a county record. A digital photo has been deposited in the VHS archives (Digital voucher # 183). This is the third reported location of Eastern Spadefoots along the floodplain of the Dan River (Gibson and Sattler 2010. An unusual breeding event in an urban park in Danville, Virginia with specific notes on the Eastern Spadefoot (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*). *Catesbeiana* 30(2): 73-81) and suggests that other populations could be found in the piedmont along the floodplain of this and other rivers.

### **Zachary Gray**

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### **Jason D. Gibson**

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***Pseudemys concinna floridana* (Coastal Plain Cooter).** VA: City of Norfolk. Lake Whitehurst 0.4 km NW of the spillway at Shore Drive (36°54'43.13"N, 76°11'24.97"W). 19 May 2011. John D. Kleopfer.

City Record: On 16 May 2011, a female *Pseudemys concinna floridana* (Coastal Plain Cooter) was captured during a 2-day turtle survey of Lake Whitehurst. This observation is a new city record and fills a hiatus in the distribution of this species in Virginia (Mitchell, J.C. and K.K. Reay. 1999. Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication No. 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, Virginia. 122 pp). A digital image has been deposited in the VHS archives (Digital voucher #206).

### **John (J.D.) Kleopfer**

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
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Charles City, Virginia 23030

**Heterodon platirhinos (Eastern Hog-nosed Snake).** VA:  
Franklin Co., Turkeycock Mountain Wildlife Management Area  
(36°49'12.24"N, 79°42'44.46"W). 30 April 2011. Paul Sattler.

County Record: On the afternoon of 30 April 2011 an adult Eastern Hog-nosed Snake was found basking on the forest floor at Turkeycock Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The animal exhibited the melanistic color pattern. The snake initially stayed still while three members of our group took pictures. It then began to puff up its body by long, deep respirations and hissed. We continued to observe the snake while it turned its body over, wiped itself in its feces, regurgitated a toad foot, decreased its respiration rate, and played dead. Flies immediately were found crawling on the snake after it defecated. Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes have not been recorded for Franklin County in Tobey (1985, Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, Virginia Herpetological Survey, Purcellville, VA. 114 pp.), Mitchell (1994, The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC. 352 pp.), or Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia, Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 90 pp.) although it has for counties to the north, east and south. A digital photo has been deposited in the VHS archives (Digital voucher # 181).

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## Field Notes

**Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis (Eastern Gartersnake).** VA: City of Danville, Angler's Park (36°33'37.03"N, 79°21'24.63"W). 16 July 2011. Jason Gibson.

City Record/Reproduction: While driving through Angler's Park on 16 July 2011 I spotted a large Eastern Gartersnake dead on the road. Upon closer inspection I discovered that the snake was a gravid female. Fetal snakes were scattered around the female's body and coming out of its body wall. Quickly my son and I collected the female and gathered all the snakes around the body. The female was measured and then dissected to retrieve all the fetal snakes. All of the fetal snakes were counted and measured for total length. The female measured 70.1 cm SVL and 88.6 cm TL. The litter consisted of 52 total snakes. The snakes were measured for total length (mean = 166.5 mm, min = 124, max = 186, n = 39). This is a commonly found species in the City of Danville but has not been previously reported in Tobey (1985, Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, Virginia Herpetological Survey, Purcellville, VA. 114 pp.), Mitchell (1994, The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC. 352 pp.), or Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia, Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 90 pp.) for the City of Danville. Digital photos of the female and fetal snakes have been deposited in the VHS archives (Digital voucher #188a-c). The devastating affects of road mortality to populations of snakes is clearly seen in this observation.

### **Jason D. Gibson**

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***Coluber constrictor constrictor* (Northern Black Racer)**. VA: Smyth County, Saltville, VA 24370. 10 June 2006. Charles Hockett.

County Record: A subadult black racer was observed at 07:20 h on 10 June 2006 under a piece of tin on a farm near Saltville, VA. The black racer had a blue color and appeared to be in a state of preparing to shed. The estimated length of the black racer was 30-36 cm (12-14 inches). According to Mr. Hockett, the location as determined in Google Earth, was 36° 55' 14.85" N, 81° 44' 43.32" at an elevation of 680 meters (2230 feet). This specimen moved away shortly after it was observed.

This is the first recorded sighting of a Northern Black Racer in Smyth County. According to Mitchell and Reay(1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 87pp.) *Coluber constrictor* has a wide distribution in Virginia but has not been previously recorded from Smyth County, although it has been found in neighboring counties to the east and west.

This new county record Field Note is the product of a public outreach initiative by the VHS to provide identification of amphibians and reptiles to the public. Photographs(s) are sent by the observer to the VHS, and identification is made, with the submitted photograph(s) deposited in the VHS archive as a voucher (Archive #198).

**David A. Perry**  
316 Taylor Ridge Way  
Palmyra, VA 22963

## Field Notes

***Pantherophis alleghaniensis* (Eastern Ratsnake)**. VA: Middlesex County, 377 One Way Lane, Saluda VA 23175. 21 May 2011. Kevin Hopkins.

County Record: An adult Eastern Ratsnake was found on 21 May 2011 on the wooden back yard deck of a private residence on One Way Lane, near the end of Urbanna Creek in a highly wooded area. This specimen was incorrectly identified by neighbors as a Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus piscivorus*) and was killed.

This is the first recorded sighting of an Eastern Ratsnake in Middlesex County. According to Mitchell and Reay(1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 89 pp.) *Pantherophis alleghaniensis* has a widespread distribution in Virginia but has not been previously recorded from Middlesex County, although it has been found in all of the surrounding counties.

This new county record Field Note is the product of a public outreach initiative by the VHS to provide identification of amphibians and reptiles to the public. Photographs(s) are sent by the observer to the VHS, and identification is made, with the submitted photograph(s) deposited in the VHS archive as a voucher (Archive #199).

**David A. Perry**  
316 Taylor Ridge Way  
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***Lampropeltis getula getula* (Eastern Kingsnake).** VA: Prince George County. Puddledock Road (County Road 645). 37°15'29.8"N, 77°21'15.3"W. 03 July, 2009. Jonathan D. Jeffreys and Sandra K. Jeffreys.

Distribution: On 3 July, 2009 at approximately 13:20h and while conducting a mortality survey on River and Puddledock Roads in Prince George County, a male Eastern Kingsnake was noted DOR near the railroad crossing on Puddledock Road. The specimen was an apparent casualty of vehicular traffic only a short time prior as the carcass was still pliable. Air temperature at the time was approximately 28°C. The weather was clear. This portion of County Road 645 bisects mixed deciduous hardwood and pine forest. Nearby are numerous man-made ponds (the result of a former gravel quarry). No morphometric data was recorded.

This species has formerly been recorded for Prince George County by only a single specimen (Kleopfer & Niccoli, 2009. Field notes: *Lampropeltis getula getula*. *Catesbeiana* 29(2): 93). The location (State Routes 10 & 639) is approximately 17.2 km east of the current location. This specimen thus confirms the distribution of this species throughout Prince George County.

**JONATHAN D. JEFFREYS**

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Hopewell, Virginia 23860

***Plestiodon fasciatus* (Common Five-lined Skink)** VA: Fairfax Co., Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly, Virginia 20151. 23 August 2011. Tony Bulmer & John White.

Coloration: An atypically colored and patterned juvenile *Plestiodon fasciatus* was captured on 23 August 2011 at approximately 11:00h by Tony Bulmer. Unlike typical *Plestiodon fasciatus* as described

## Field Notes

by Mitchell (1994. The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C. 352 pages.) and other references, this specimen had a copper colored head and atypical, scattered dorsal striping. On the head, copper coloration covered in varying amounts, nasal, internasal, prefrontal, frontal, supraocular, frontoparietal, parietal, interparietal and nuchal scales. The copper coloration extends on to the side of the head to include the temporal infralabial, supralabial and post labial scales. All five, light dorsolateral stripes on the body were fragmented with the mid-dorsolateral line having the most distortion. Digital photos were submitted to the VHS archives (#196).

### **Tony Bulmer**

Fairfax County Park Authority  
Ellanor C. Lawrence Park  
5040 Walney Road  
Chantilly, VA 20151

### **John White**

2815 N. Van Buren St.  
Arlington, VA 22213

***Trachemys scripta scripta* (Yellow-bellied Slider) VA:** Loudoun Co., Claude Moore Park, 21544 Old Vestal's Gap Road, Sterling, VA 20164. 18 May 2011, William D. Robertson

County Record: At approximately 1330 h, on 18 May 2011, two Yellow-bellied Sliders were observed basking on logs in the larger of two adjacent ponds, referred to on the Claude Moore Park map as the "Wildlife Pond". The Yellow-bellied Slider occurs naturally in southeastern Virginia, but is not native to the northern part of the state. Its presence as an introduced species in Loudoun County has not previously been reported in Mitchell and Reay (1999. Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA, 122 pp.), Tobey (1985. Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey. Virginia Herpetological Society, Purcellville, VA, 114 pp.), or

the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Wildlife Database. A digital image of one of the turtles was submitted to the archives of the Virginia Herpetological Society (# 194) as a voucher.

**William D. Robertson**

2912 Bryan Street  
Alexandria, VA 22302

***Coluber constrictor* (Northern Black Racer)** VA: Virginia Beach, Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 4 September 2011. Ryan Collister.

Diet: I was in Back Bay NWR on September 4th, around noon, in a small pocket of trees at the north end of Pond C. It was quite hot, so I decided to try a more shady area to find any snakes that might be out - and I encountered a juvenile eastern hognose in the mouth of a roughly 1.3 meter black racer! The racer promptly spat him out and bolted. Unfortunately, the hognose was already dead (most certainly not feigning), and oddly, was missing the last half centimeter or so of his tail, which was bleeding enough that it was actually dripping. Ophiophagy has been documented in black racers for a variety of snakes including *Nerodia sipedon*, *Carphophis amoenus*, *Diadophis punctatus*, *Opheodrys vernalis*, and *Thamnophis sirtalis* (Mitchell, J.C. 1994. The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC 352pp.) however, predation on hognose snakes is a new observation. Pictures of the dead hognose snake were submitted to the VHS Archive (#201). Unfortunately I couldn't photograph the racer or the feeding event itself.

**Ryan Collister**

9200 Byron Terrace  
Burke, VA 22015

## Field Notes

***Storeria dekayi dekayi*** (Northern Brownsnake). VA: Albemarle Co., 1121 Foxvale Lane, Charlottesville, VA (38.006483, -78.500466). 25 June 2011. Garrett Steven Armstrong and Kelly Armstrong.

County Record: An adult Northern Brownsnake was found at a private residence located in Albemarle County on 25 June 2011. The observers estimates the snake was >30 cm (>12 inches) in total length. The snake was found under large rocks that line the driveway of the residence. Weather at the time of the observation was approximately 90 degrees and had recently been dry. A thin strip of trees approximately 45 m wide separates the residence from Interstate-64 to the north. The trees are contiguous with a much larger body of woods to the south that is connected to Biscuit Run State Park. The snake was released into the woods unharmed.

This is the first recorded sighting of a Northern Brownsnake in Albemarle County. According to Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 75 pp.) *Storeria dekayi dekayi* has a mostly coastal and eastern piedmont distribution in Virginia and has not been previously recorded from Albemarle County. However, this species has been found in neighboring counties to the south and west. This record serves to fill in a portion of the western edge of the snake's distribution in Virginia.

This new county record Field Note is the product of a public outreach initiative by the VHS to provide identification of amphibians and reptiles to the public. Photographs(s) are sent by the observer to the VHS, and identification is made, with the submitted photograph(s) deposited in the VHS archive as a voucher (Archive #186).

**Kory Steele**

174 Lori Circle

Newport News, VA 23602

***Pseudemys rubiventris* (Northern Red-bellied Cooter).** VA:  
Campbell Co., Lake Hydaway (38° 59' 24.35"N 78° 18' 45.19"W). 4  
June 2008. Paul Sattler.

County Record: Large sized turtles had been observed for several years swimming and basking in Lake Hydaway, a small lake or large pond, formed by damming a portion of Opossum Creek. In June of 2008, I set turtle hoop traps to capture and identify this species. Baiting the trap with sardines and canned green beans, I captured, photographed and released an adult Red-bellied Cooter. A digital photograph was taken of this animal which has been displayed on the VHS website for *Pseudemys rubiventris* and was recently deposited in the VHS archive (#197).

There is a breeding population of Red-bellied Cooters in Lake Hydaway, however, this is approximately 175 km west of the closest recorded population in Virginia (Mitchell J.C. and K.K. Reay 1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 87pp.; and Mitchell J.C. 1994, The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC. 352 pp.). This population is almost certainly introduced. Camp Hydaway is a church camp with a large summer program for children, and Lake Hydaway is frequently fished by large numbers of local residents. With such a large number of people using the facility it is likely that one or more Red-bellied Turtles captured to the east were released into the Lake when they grew too large.

**Paul Sattler**

Liberty University  
Department of Biology  
Lynchburg VA 24502

## Field Notes

***Pseudemys rubiventris* (Northern Red-bellied Cooter).** VA: Warren Co., Field just north of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River and east of Cedar Creek (38° 59' 24.35"N 78° 18' 45.19"W). May 2011. Chase Milner.

Distribution: In May 2011 a large turtle was observed in a field near Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The animal was identified as an adult Red-bellied turtle, and is only the second record for Warren County. The other record was a juvenile photographed by John White on 15 July 2001 at Bentonville.

This species is not reported in Mitchell and Reay (1999, Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication Number 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA 87pp.) or Mitchell (1994, The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC. 352 pp.) but is listed in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries database.

This distribution record is the product of a public outreach initiative by the VHS to provide identifications of amphibians and reptiles to the public. Photos were sent by the observer to the VHS and a conclusive identification was made by VHS officers. A digital photo of the specimen was submitted to the VHS archives (voucher #187).

### **Chase Milner**

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

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***Carphophis amoenus* (Eastern Wormsnake)** VA: James City County, Kingsmill on the James (37.234241°N,-76.681759 °W). 3 April, 2012. Matthew Somma

Coloration: On 3 April 2012 an albino Eastern Wormsnake (*Carphophis a. amoenus*) was discovered on the lawn of a private residence in the community Kingsmill on the James. The specimen measuring 21cm was discovered under a thin layer of leaves on a sun-baked portion of the yard five meters from the tree line. Classic albinism was exhibited including red/pink eyes and a lack of any pigmentation except for a light yellowish coloration around the edges of the dorsal scales.

Although *Carphopshi amoenus* is ubiquitous in James City County and throughout much of the Commonwealth (on the same day, two normal specimens were discovered within several yards), I am unaware of any previous literature records of albinism in this species. Given their fossorial nature, it seems likely that the detrimental effects of predation due to albinism would be lessened in worm snakes. Any further information on the presence of albinism in this species would be of interest. Photographs were deposited with the VHS Digital Archive (#209) as a voucher. The animal was released after photos were taken.

**Matthew Somma**

113 John Fowler  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

***Pseudemys concinna floridana* (Coastal Plain Cooter).** VA: City of Norfolk. Lake Whitehurst 0.4 kilometers northwest of the spillway at Shore Drive (36°54'43.13"N, 76°11'24.97"W). 19 May 2011. John D. Kleopfer.

City Record: On 16 May 2011, a female *Pseudemys concinna floridana* (Coastal Plain Cooter) was captured during a 2-day turtle

## Field Notes

survey of Lake Whitehurst. This observation is a new city record and fills a hiatus in the distribution of this species in Virginia (Mitchell, J.C. and K.K. Reay. 1999. Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia. Special Publication No. 1, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, Virginia. 122 pp). A digital image has been deposited in the VHS archives (Digital voucher #206).

### **John (J.D.) Kleopfer**

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
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***Virginia valeriae pulchra* (Mountain Earthsnake)** VA: Highland County, in the George Washington National Forest. 11 July 2009 – 9 April 2012. Gene and Paul Sattler.

Distribution: *Virginia valeriae pulchra*, the Mountain Earthsnake, is one of the rarest snakes in Virginia. The first record was apparently found in the vicinity of Hightown, Highland Co. in 1968 (reported in a letter from H.G.M. Jopson to F.J. Tobey, 14 February 1972) however, the specimen was subsequently lost. David A. Young collected the first confirmed specimen in the same area on 3 June 1986 as part of a herpetological survey of the county (Mitchell, J.C. 1994. The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC 352pp.) The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries database lists three entries, all from this area north of Hightown, along the ridge overlooking the Bluegrass Valley. This site is apparently on private land and has been logged (Mitchell, *ibid*).

Here we report on a new site, also in northern Highland County, the exact locality being withheld to protect the population. The site is in the George Washington National Forest, and therefore, better

protected than previously reported locations. The population was first discovered by GS. A specimen was discovered 11 July 2009 on a hillside under a flat rock and brought to PS for positive identification.

The specimen was 21.4 cm TL and 17.2 cm SVL. It's identity was confirmed by the weakly keeled scales, 17 scale rows at midbody, and the head scalation. This specimen was reported to the VADGIF and put into the Liberty University Natural History Museum as a voucher (LUNHM#700), with digital photographs archived with the VHS (#202). This is the specimen featured on the VHS website for this species.

Both GS and PS made subsequent visits to this site. On 22 June 2011 two adults were found, also under rocks. One adult measured 30.5 cm TL and 24.75 cm SVL, with the second being 27.5 cm TL and 24.5 cm SVL. Another visit on 11 September 2011 found a juvenile (10.7 cm TL) crawling over the ground. An additional adult (26 cm TL, 21 cm SVL) was found on 9 April 2012. These specimens were photographed and released (Digital Archives #203-204, 211). Visits to this site on 11 June 2010, 26 May and 1 October 2011 failed to uncover additional specimens. Other snake species found at this site include *Diadophis punctatus*, *Lampropeltis triangulum*, *Nerodia sipedon*, *Storeria occipitomaculata* and *Thamnophis sirtalis*.

This report is good news for the conservation of this species in Virginia because it is the first population found on public rather than private land. The population has been observed over several years and seems to be reproducing. The protection of this species, found only in the northern portion of Highland County, is thus enhanced.

**Paul and Gene and Sattler**

Department of Biology  
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## Field Notes

***Eurycea bislineata* (Two-lined Salamander)**. VA: Fairfax Co., South Run District Park (N 38.75086, W 77.277198, 94 m; WGS84 datum). 14 October 2006. Jeffrey W. Streicher and Todd A. Tupper.

Multifocal Skin Lesions: On 14 October 2006, we encountered an adult *Eurycea bislineata* possessing several protrusive red skin lesions. The salamander was found under fallen tree bark at South Run District Park in Fairfax County approximately 50 m from the nearest stream habitat where we previously encountered *E. bislineata*. Examination of the lateral surfaces revealed a single red lesion on the lower right side of the body. The left side of the animal was in a greater state of infection with two lesions present laterally as well as a reduced hind limb engulfed in similar but smaller lesions. Photographic vouchers of this individual were deposited in the University of Texas at Arlington digital image collection (UTADC 2436 and 2437). Known causes of multifocal nodules on the skin of salamanders (i.e., protrusive skin lesions) include encysted parasitic worms, encapsulated ectoparasites (e.g., mites), neoplasia (tumor growth), and inflammation due to viral, bacterial, or fungal infection (Brown et al. 2006. Clinical Challenge. Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine 37: 571-573). Additionally, protrusive red skin lesions have been documented to co-occur with the fungal pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in wild-caught larval salamanders (Brodman and Briggler. 2008. *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in *Ambystoma jeffersonianum* larvae in southern Indiana. Herpetological Review 39: 320-321). To the best of our knowledge this report is the first documentation of dermal lesions on *E. bislineata* in the wild.

One of the more common causes of red dermal pustules in amphibians from Virginia is intradermal mites (Mitchell. 2004. Occurrence of intradermal mite, *Hannemania* sp. (Acarina: Trombiculidae), parasites in two species of amphibians in Virginia. Banisteria 23: 50-51). These trombiculid mites are known to use salamander species in the genera *Ambystoma*, *Desmognathus*, *Eurycea*, and *Plethodon* as hosts (Regester. 2001. Intradermal mite, *Hannemania* sp. (Acarina: Trombiculidae), infestations differ in populations of

syntopic plethodontids in central Tennessee. Herpetological Natural History 8: 69-73). However, mite infection is thought to be less prevalent in aquatic amphibians given the terrestrial life cycle of the mites (Rankin. 1937. An ecological study of some North Carolina salamanders. Ecological Monographs 7: 169-269; Gibson and Sattler. 2006. Observations of intradermal Trombiculid mite larvae in two species of salamanders in Virginia. Banisteria 27:49). While *E. bislineata* spend much of the winter and spring near streams for breeding purposes, in the warmer months the species is typically found on the forest floor (Martof et al. 1980. Amphibians and Reptiles of the Carolinas and Virginia. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. 264pp.; P. Sattler pers. comm.). As such, an extended period of terrestrial microhabitat use (summer to early fall) may explain the number of lesions we observed in the *E. bislineata* described here.

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## **President's Corner**

I would like to start off by saying that I am honored to serve as your President for the next two years. When I agreed to run as Vice President two years ago, Kory Steele and I had developed a very aggressive agenda to turn the VHS into a world-class non-profit herpetological society and, as President, I intend to continue moving forward with this agenda. I think the next two years are going to be fun and exciting as we continue to evolve as an organization. Kory and I have accomplished a great deal, but the job isn't over yet, we still need to keep moving forward.

### **GOALS**

I would like to discuss what I foresee for the VHS in the next two years. I would like to continue to make the VHS more streamlined and to re evaluate how we conduct business. I will continue to see what works and what does not and, along with the Executive Committee make changes where they are needed. Here are some examples on what I would like to complete within my term: assigning a research grant review committee; improve communication between our officers and members by streamlining our email system using current technology; start posting business minutes on our website; offer incentives for members to renew and retain membership with the VHS; update our Constitution to reflect current operations and requirement for non-profit status; develop and implement the basis for a yearly budget in order to achieve long term sustainability; produce official VHS training powerpoints and/or videos on Virginia's reptiles and amphibians that can be used by teachers in classrooms; establish an official Virginia State Reptile and/or Amphibian; network with other Herpetological Societies to increase our effectiveness. This is by no means and exhaustive list. Onwards we move.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

I would also like to delineate some recent accomplishments:

I have started networking with many herpetological societies through Facebook as well as through a teleconference on April 10. The

president of the Reno Herpetological Society (Justin Meitz) would like to start a National Herpetological Society that would unite all herpetological societies in order to network and to help achieve the goals of each individual society. This society will focus on husbandry as well as natural history, research, conservation and education. I will be discussing with the Executive Committee whether this is something worth pursuing.

I'm always looking to grow our membership and to continue to educate Virginia's citizens on our native herps and as such, the VHS has been made a sponsor on [www.vaherps.com](http://www.vaherps.com), which is a forum for Virginia's herpetology enthusiasts. Although the majority of the members are hobbyists and exotic breeders, I felt it would be a great opportunity to reach out to an untapped market to gain memberships as well as to educate that sector of the herpetology world on the value of conservation of our native herpetofauna. The owner of the website has given us a free sponsorship spot and our logo, and a link will be exhibited on the main page. There is now a section to the forums titled "Virginia Herpetological Society News and Events" which includes the two subtopics titled: "Field Herpetology" and "Virginia Herps Conservation and Education News."

The VHS has successfully lobbied against two anti-reptile bills in the Virginia General Assembly that were proposed this past legislative session. Even though the VHS does not normally engage in lobbying, the VHS felt that it was necessary to get involved and stop, what we considered bills that would have legally defined reptiles as "dangerous animals" and that would have undermined the goals of the VHS.

I have discovered that freshman Sen. Dick Black shares the same enthusiasm about herpetology as most of us do. I capitalized on that fact and have met with Sen. Black (an avid amateur herpetologist himself) to discuss sponsorship of a bill that would establish an official state reptile. In short, he has agreed to sponsor this bill. The VHS will choose the reptile and/or amphibian to be selected and my goal is to get all members in the VHS involved in this decision. Stay

## President's Corner

tuned for more information and details.

### SURVEYS

We have a nice line up this year with surveys. We are starting off this year by having a one-day survey at the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve in Alexandria, Virginia on May 3rd.

Our Annual Spring Survey and Business Meeting will be held at the Shenandoah River State Park, located in Warren County Virginia. This survey will be conducted on the weekend of May 18-20th.

Our Annual Herp Blitz will be held at the new Mattaponi Wildlife Management Area (WMA) owned by VDGIF in Caroline County along the beautiful Mattaponi River.

We will also be conducting a one-day survey at the Caledon Natural Area State Park in King George County on August 18. Caledon is a national natural landmark, containing many stands of old growth trees.

I'm certain that this will be a fun and exciting year for the Virginia Herpetological Society. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any questions or comments at [president@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:president@vaherpsociety.com)

Regards,

Larry Mendoza,  
President  
Virginia Herpetological Society

Virginia Herpetological Society  
Minutes of the Fall Meeting  
Bridgewater College  
402 East College St • Bridgewater, VA 22812  
October 22, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 3:02pm by the president, Kory Steele, with 20 in attendance. Old Business was reviewed by reading the activity log kept by the president, vice president, and secretary. Copies were made available to those attending. The meeting was turned over to committees.

Committee Reports:

Newsletter, Susan Watson: Accepting materials for the Jan/Feb newsletter, including book reviews. The August newsletter was sent out with only a couple returned emails.

Catesbeiana, Paul Sattler: 31(2)- 200 copies were printed at the cost of \$436. Has a decent amount of articles for the next issue. Still needs data for the Old Colchester survey.

Treasurer-Secretary, Emily Steele: 205 members, 28 of which are Life members. 656 Facebook fans. Current bank account balance \$6597.86, but \$500 of that is assigned to the State Wildlife Grant.

Conservation, Tim Christensen: Unable to attend, report made available on our website for review.

Research, Joy Ware: Unable to attend, but reported to the president that no evidence of diseases have been found this year at her sites of Rappahannock, Presquile Island, and James River.

Education, Mike Clifford: (Received member of the year at this meeting!! Congratulations.) Some of his report will overlap with the conservation committee efforts. Has presented for Master Naturalist programs. We have educational posters, power point presentations, and information geared towards children on our website. We are the leading source of information for native herp inquiries. Full report of

## Minutes of the Fall 2011 Meeting

educational efforts is available on our website for review.

HerpBlitz, Jason Gibson: Hungry Mother State Park was the location for 2011 and the write-up is completed. Breaks Interstate Park write-up, 2009 location, is still in the works. Possible locations for 2012 are Mattaponi WMA and Carol County. Need to determine dates for the survey, possibly the second week of June.

Cafepress, Patricia Crane: Unable to attend, but reports that the 2012 calendar is now available for purchase.

Website, John White: We have unlimited storage and unlimited bandwidth, therefore able to continue updating site, adding information and photos as needed.

### New business:

Elections of new officers: Nominating committee, Jason Gibson, sent out emails ahead of time requesting nominations for all positions. Treasurer/Secretary- Emily Steele nominated to continue with this position and accepted. President- Larry Mendoza nominated to this position after serving as Vice President, and has accepted. Vice President- open floor nominations for Jason Gibson, David Perry, and Kelly Greer. David Perry has been nominated for the position and accepted.

Four out of the five members of our advisory committee will continue with their position. The incoming president will be able to appoint someone to the newly vacant spot.

Herp IDs: John White, Mike Clifford, and Kory Steele will continue on the team. John Orr will join the team in helping with the identification process. Eastern ratsnake continues to be the most common request for ID. Not very many requests for salamander IDs are received. Discussed making some form of documentation for recording all of the observations, distributions, and photos of the

identified animals.

Changes to *Catesbeiana*: Discussed changing from paper to electronic. Allowing members to opt-in for electronic, and keeping the paper copy as default. This would help cut costs in production and postage. This would also allow the use of color pictures. We would continue with paper copies for the museums and institutes that are members. Should consider removing the membership list from the issue. This will help cut down on the number of pages being printed. Could also pose a concern of privacy. No longer need this list as a means of networking since the internet provides a huge source of finding herpetologists in your area.

2012 Survey sites: Locations to consider Dismal Swamp, Shenandoah River, Dyke Marsh, joint survey with NCHS, and a specialized fossil/herp survey with Dr. Weems.

Memberships: Need to consider changing our “youth” option to “student”, so high school and college students can be included. Look into changing from an electronic membership card to a paper copy.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Emily Steele

**Virginia Herpetological Society  
Treasurer's Report**

Balance on hand 08/31/2011                      \$7,210.34

Receipts

Donation "In gratitude to the Whites for copperhead knowledge"	\$ 25.00
New memberships	\$1,106.00
Renewed memberships	\$1,660.00
Fall Meeting:	
Items sold	\$ 337.00
Live Auction	\$ 145.00
Silent Auction	\$ 69.00
Lunch	\$ 280.00
GoodSearch & GoodShop commission	\$ 43.24
Frogs and Toads of Metro DC poster	\$ 20.00

Total Receipts    \$3,685.24

Disbursements

PayPal transaction fees	\$ 91.47
Catesbeiana 31(2)	\$ 435.94
Fall Meeting:	
Lunch and refreshments	\$ 386.47
Keynote speaker	\$ 200.00
Oral presentation award	\$ 100.00
Awards	\$ 166.23
USPS, book of stamps	\$ 7.92
Organizational needs	\$ 130.11
Domain renewal	\$ 104.90
Poster production	\$ 12.58
State Corporation Annual fee	\$ 26.00
VDGIF Scientific Collection permit	\$ 40.00
Grants in Herpetology	\$2,000.00
Donation: Wildlife Ctr of VA	\$ 100.00

Total disbursements:                                      \$3,801.62

Balance on hand 04/01/2012                      \$7,093.96

Emily Steele VHS Treasurer

## VHS Annual Spring Meeting and Survey

The VHS will hold its Annual Spring Survey & Meeting at Shenandoah River State Park, in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. The park is 1,604 acres with 5.6 miles of river frontage along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The land is rolling and mountainous with steep slopes and mostly forest habitat. Shenandoah River State Park is in Warren County, 8 miles south of Front Royal and 15 miles north of Luray off Rt. 340 in Bentonville.

Schedule:

### **Friday, May 19**

7 pm - Business meeting followed by Slide Show of expected species, Survey planning and coordination. Massanutten Picnic Shelter.

### **Saturday, May 20**

8:00 AM - Meet at the parking lot of the Visitor's Center. Organize into survey groups. receive instructions and conduct surveys. Lunch on your own.

5:00 PM - Meet back at Visitor's Center Parking Lot to turn in survey reports and digital photos.

### **Sunday, May 21**

8:00 AM - Meet at Visitor's Center Parking Lot. Break into survey groups and conduct surveys at any remaining sites to survey.

12:00 PM - Regroup at Visitor's Center Parking Lot, eat lunch, and turn in survey reports and digital photos.

For additional details and maps see the VHS Web site at:

<http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/2012-events/2012-vhs-events/index.htm>

For questions check with Larry Mendoza at [president@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:president@vaherpsociety.com) or Andy Davis at Shenandoah River State Park.

## Field Notes

The field notes section of *Catesbeiana* provides a means for publishing natural history information on Virginia's amphibians and reptiles that does not lend itself to full-length articles. Observations on geographic distribution, ecology, reproduction, phenology, behavior, and other topics are welcomed. Field Notes will usually concern a single species. The format of the reports is: scientific name (followed by common name in parentheses), state abbreviation (VA), county and location, date(s) of observation, observer(s), data and observations. The name(s) and address(es) of the author(s) should appear one line below the report. Consult the editor if your information does not readily fit this format. All field notes must include a brief statement explaining the significance of the record (e.g., new county record) or observation (e.g., unusual or rarely observed behavior, extremely early or late seasonal record, abnormal coloration, etc.). Submissions that fail to include this information are subject to rejection. Relevant literature should be cited in the body of the text (see Field Notes in this issue for proper format). All submissions will be reviewed by the editor (and one other person if deemed necessary) and revised as needed pending consultation with the author(s). If the field note contains information on a new county (or state) record, verification is required in the form of a voucher specimen deposited in a permanent museum (e.g., Virginia Museum of Natural History) or a photograph (print, slide, or digital image) or recording (cassette tape or digital recording of anuran calls) deposited in the archives of the Virginia Herpetological Society. Photographs and recordings should be sent to the editor for verification and archiving purposes; the identity of voucher specimens must be confirmed by a museum curator or other qualified person. Include the specimen number if it has been catalogued. Prospective authors of distribution reports should consult Mitchell and Reay (1999. Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia), Mitchell (1994. The Reptiles of Virginia), and Tobey (1985. Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey) [both atlases are available on-line on the VHS website] as well as other recent literature to determine if they may have a new county record. New distribution records from large cities that formerly constituted counties (Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach) are acceptable, but records from smaller cities located within the boundaries of an adjoining county will only be published if the species has not been recorded from that county. Species identification for observational records (e.g., behavior) should be verified by a second person whenever possible.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

High contrast photographs (prints, slides, or digital images) of amphibians and reptiles will be considered for publication if they are of good quality and are relevant to an accompanying article or field note. Digital images are preferred. Published photographs will be deposited in the VHS archives.

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