



Virginia Herpetological Society Newsletter

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The Fate of *Catesbeiana* is in your hands

It was discussed during the fall 2002 business meeting to limit the publication of *Catesbeiana* from two issues to one if more people do not participate. Please help by sending any of your field notes, articles, and artwork to Steve Roble. It takes a village to make an edition of *Catesbeiana*!

The snakes need you, man...A call for officer nominations

– The VHS will elect three new officers at the Fall 2003 meeting. Please send nominations for the positions of president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer to Jason Gibson at frogman31@earthlink.net. Each of these positions is a two-year commitment and is critical to the functioning and viability of our society.

THE 2003 VIRGINIA BIOBLITZ

By Arthur V. Evans, D.Sc.
Research Associate
Smithsonian Institution and Virginia Museum of Natural History

The 2003 Virginia BioBlitz will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 17-18 May at Douthat State Park (DSP), approximately 5 miles north of Clifton Forge in Bath County. Between 75-100 participants will count as many species as possible during the 30-hour survey period, beginning at 9 AM on Saturday and ending 3 PM on Sunday.

The Beach Conference Center at DSP will serve as a base camp for processing and identifying specimens, data entry, and volunteer housing. The Division of Natural Heritage and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will handle data entry. Because of the remoteness of the park, arrangements have been made

to camp Friday and Saturday nights. All meals, from dinner Friday night through lunch on Sunday, including vegetarian fare, will be supplied for a nominal fee by the DSP restaurant.

The Virginia BioBlitz is designed to raise awareness of the incredible diversity of the Commonwealth through the media, public programs, and through popular and scientific publications documenting the event. The BioBlitz connects professionals with naturalists and volunteers, and researchers with students. It also provides Virginia's biologists time together in the field. The synergy created by last year's event at Pocahontas State Park is still reverberating throughout the natural history community!

As a survey tool, the BioBlitz can only provide a snapshot for any group of organisms. Nevertheless, this single snapshot can and has revealed new state and seasonal records, providing another layer of data that might suggest further directions for investigation. In last year's event at Pocahontas State Park, volunteers tallied 1,377 species in five Kingdoms. Efforts are currently underway to publish the list in *Banisteria*.

If you would like to raise awareness of Virginia's biodiversity as part of a national program, work with other Virginia biologists in the field and add to our knowledge of the state's flora and fauna, the 2003 Virginia BioBlitz is for you. Please contact Art Evans at (804) 264-0488 or arthurevans@earthlink.net if you would like to sign up or receive further information.

VDGIF seeking volunteers

Jeff Cooper, regional nongame biologist for the Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries is seeking volunteers to help with herpetofaunal surveys of Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) located in northern Virginia. Past help of VHS members was extremely valuable in surveys of WMA's in this region.

Please contact Jeff Cooper at jcooper@dgif.state.va.us or 540-899-4169

Report from 2002 VHS Fall Meeting and Symposium

Jason Gibson, VHS President

The fall 2002 meeting was held at Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center on October 12, 2002. Approximately 35 members were present for the business meeting and symposium on Mole salamanders. Eight people went through the teacher workshop in the morning. Special thanks go to Mike Hayslett, Mike Pinder, John White, and Jason Gibson for helping to organize and present at the teacher's workshop. The afternoon paper session was a complete success. Six people presented papers at the symposium. Below is a list of speakers and their topics. The VHS thanks each person for preparing and speaking at the fall meeting.

- Steve Roble "Natural History of the Mabee's, Marbled, and Jefferson salamanders in Virginia"
- Lori Williams "Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) habitat use in a central Appalachian Industrial Forest."
- Mike Hayslett "Natural History of *Ambystoma talpoideum*."
- Dawn Kirk "Population Ecology of Eastern Tiger Salamanders at Maple Flats, Virginia."
- Fred Huber "Radiotelemetry of Eastern Tiger Salamanders at Maple Flats, Virginia"
- Donald Mackler "Recent Developments on a Unique Ambystomid Individual / Population in Virginia."

Developers Rush to Build In Wetlands After Ruling

from USA Today 12/5/2002

Thousands of acres of wetlands across the country are being bulldozed or filled with dirt because of a 2001 Supreme Court decision that stripped them of federal protection. Millions of acres more are still vulnerable. When these swamps and bogs vanish, so does their capacity for preventing floods, cleansing water of pollutants and sheltering waterfowl and fish. The wetlands singled out in the court decision are "isolated," that is, no channel connects them to a larger body of water. Wetlands are too unstable to support heavy structures, so a developer must fill a wetland with dirt, destroying it, before building on top of it. The fate of isolated wetlands is nearly undocumented. Acres are

disappearing fastest where state wetland laws are weakest. The results, many biologists say, will be devastating, especially as more landowners learn of the decision. Since the Supreme Court ruling, a few states have taken action.

Wisconsin took the most drastic step, passing a wetland- protection law four months after the Supreme Court ruled. Even so, isolated wetlands are still at risk in most other states. Developers have filed suit against several states, including Indiana and Virginia, for their efforts to protect isolated wetlands. Some state legislatures won't grant regulators the power or the cash to do the job.

For more on how your state can protect wetlands, visit www.serconline.org/wetlands/index.htm.

Copy of Supreme Court ruling available in pdf format.

Email request to asalzberg@herpdigest.org

Brahminy blind snake finds its way to Virginia

Another exotic species has found its way into Virginia's species list, the Brahminy blind snake, *Ramphotyphlops braminus*. This species is native to the Phillipines and southeast Asia. According to NatureServe, it has been documented in Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Massachusetts as well as Virginia. One mode of distribution is in importation of plants from its native region. It is usually found under cover except on wet nights. More information on its distribution can be found in: Savitzky, B.A., A.H. Savitzky, R.T. Belcher, and S. Ewers. 2002. Geographic distribution: *Ramphotyphlops braminus*. *Herpetological Review* 33(2): 150-151.

VHS 2003 SPRING MEETING AND ANNUAL SURVEY

This year we will be surveying Greensville County. Expect to get wet! There are many swamps, ponds, vernal pools, and streams that we will be sampling. Make sure that you bring hip boots, waders, dip nets, flashlights, turtle traps, and seine nets. Anyone who has a canoe or small boat is encouraged to bring it. Four major sites (Fountains Creek, Taylor's Millpond, Emporia Dam, and the Goose Pond located at the end of route 666), which can only be surveyed with canoes, have been selected for the 2003 survey.

Schedule:

Friday May 30, 2003

- 7:00 PM. Business meeting. Meeting place to be announced (check website or spring issue of *Catesbeiana*).
- 8:30 PM Road cruise for herps or survey breeding pools for calling anurans.

Saturday May 31, 2003

- 8:00 AM Meet at Gibson Farm. (Map will be posted on website and in the spring issue of *Catesbeiana*).
- 8:30 AM Break into survey groups and travel to designated survey locations.
- 12:30 PM Regroup, eat lunch, and begin afternoon surveys.
- 5:30 PM Meet back at Gibson Farm to turn in survey reports and photo collected specimens.
- 8:00 PM Individuals may want to survey breeding ponds for calling anurans or road cruise.

Sunday June 1, 2003

- 8:00 AM Meet at Gibson Farm and organize survey groups.
- 12:30 PM Meet at Gibson Farm to turn in all survey forms.

Accommodations:

- There are numerous hotels/motels located in Emporia Virginia.
- Camping is available at:
Cat Tail Creek RV Park and Campground
3901 Moore's Ferry Road
Skippers, VA 23879
(804) 634 9935
Greensville County
- Jim Gibson (a private land owner) has graciously offered his farm and hunting cabin for our use. Tents can be put up outside the cabin. He has room for about 8 people to sleep. The facilities are primitive. There is running water, a stove, refrigerator, but the bathroom facilities will not support many people (there are woods nearby). Feel free to contact Jason Gibson (frogman31@earthlink.net) about staying in the cabin. The first 8 people who contact him will reserve their bed.

Potential species list:

Toad, oak	<i>Bufo quercicus</i>
Amphiuma, two-toed	<i>Amphiuma means</i>
Bullfrog	<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>
Frog, Brimley's chorus	<i>Pseudacris brimleyi</i>
Frog, coastal plain cricket	<i>Acris gryllus gryllus</i>
Frog, eastern cricket	<i>Acris crepitans crepitans</i>
Frog, northern green	<i>Rana clamitans melanota</i>
Frog, pickerel	<i>Rana palustris</i>
Frog, southeastern chorus	<i>Pseudacris feriarum</i>
Frog, southern leopard	<i>Rana sphenoccephala</i>
Newt, red-spotted	<i>Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens</i>
Peeper, northern spring	<i>Pseudacris crucifer crucifer</i>
Salamander, Atlantic Coast Slimy	<i>Plethodon chlorobryonis</i>

Salamander, eastern mud	<i>Pseudotriton montanus montanus</i>	Skink, five-lined	<i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>
Salamander, four-toed	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Skink, little brown	<i>Scincella lateralis</i>
Salamander, many-lined	<i>Stereochilus marginatus</i>	Skink, southeastern five-lined	<i>Eumeces inexpectatus</i>
Salamander, marbled	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>		
Salamander, northern dusky	<i>Desmognathus fuscus</i>		
Salamander, northern red-backed	<i>Plethodon cinereus</i>	Snake, black rat	<i>Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta</i>
Salamander, northern red	<i>Pseudotriton ruber ruber</i>	Snake, corn	<i>Elaphe guttata</i>
Salamander, southern dusky	<i>Desmognathus auriculatus</i>	Snake, eastern garter	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>
Salamander, southern two-lined	<i>Eurycea cirrigera</i>	Snake, eastern hognose	<i>Heterodon platirhinus</i>
Salamander, spotted	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>	Snake, eastern milk	<i>Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum</i>
Salamander, three-lined	<i>Eurycea guttolineata</i>		
Siren, greater	<i>Siren lacertina</i>	Snake, eastern mud	<i>Farancia abacura abacura</i>
Waterdog, dwarf	<i>Necturus punctatus punctatus</i>	Snake, eastern ribbon	<i>Thamnophis sauritus sauritus</i>
		Snake, eastern worm	<i>Carphophis amoenus amoenus</i>
Spadefoot, eastern	<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>	Snake, northern brown	<i>Storeria dekayi dekayi</i>
Toad, American	<i>Bufo americanus</i>	Snake, northern red-bellied	<i>Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata</i>
Toad, Fowler's	<i>Bufo fowleri</i>		
Toad, eastern narrow-mouthed	<i>Gastrophryne carolinensis</i>	Snake, northern ringneck	<i>Diadophis punctatus edwardsii</i>
Toad, southern	<i>Bufo terrestris</i>	Snake, northern scarlet	<i>Cemophora coccinea copei</i>
Treefrog, Cope's gray	<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>	Snake, northern water	<i>Nerodia sipedon sipedon</i>
Treefrog, green	<i>Hyla cinerea</i>	Snake, red-bellied water	<i>Nerodia erythrogaster erythrogaster</i>
Treefrog, pine woods	<i>Hyla femoralis</i>	Snake, rough green	<i>Opheodrys aestivus aestivus</i>
Treefrog, squirrel	<i>Hyla squirrela</i>	Snake, southern ringneck	<i>Diadophis punctatus punctatus</i>
Copperhead, northern	<i>Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen</i>	Turtle, eastern musk (= stinkpot)	<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>
Earthsnake, eastern smooth	<i>Virginia valeriae valeriae</i>	Cooter, eastern river	<i>Pseudemys concinna concinna</i>
Earthsnake, rough	<i>Virginia striatula</i>	Cooter, northern red-bellied	<i>Pseudemys rubriventris rubriventris</i>
Kingsnake, eastern	<i>Lampropeltis getula getula</i>		
Kingsnake, mole rhombomaculata	<i>Lampropeltis calligaster</i>	Slider, yellowbellied	<i>Trachemys scripta scripta</i>
Lizard, eastern slender glass	<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus longicaudus</i>	Turtle, eastern box	<i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>
Lizard, northern fence	<i>Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus</i>	Turtle, eastern mud	<i>Kinosternon subrubrum subrubrum</i>
		Turtle, eastern painted	<i>Chrysemys picta picta</i>
Racer, northern black	<i>Coluber constrictor constrictor</i>	Turtle, eastern snapping	<i>Chelydra serpentina serpentina</i>
Racerunner, six-lined	<i>Cnemidophorus sexlineatus sexlineatus</i>	Turtle, spotted	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>
Skink, broadhead	<i>Eumeces laticeps</i>		

Atlantic Gillnets Restricted to Protect Sea Turtles

Washington, DC, 12/5/02 (from ENS)

Gillnet fishing will be banned in federal waters off much of the Mid-Atlantic coast during most or all of the year to protect migrating sea turtles, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has announced. The closures, based on historic sea surface temperatures, will bar fishing with gillnets with a mesh size larger than 8 inch (20.3 cm) stretched mesh in the Mid-Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone. The closures will take effect on January 2, 2003.

Large mesh gillnet fisheries, particularly the spring monkfish gillnet fishery off North Carolina and Virginia, pose a major threat to migrating sea turtles, particularly if gear is set in or near temperature fronts where turtles may congregate. An interim final rule was enacted for the 2002 season and was shown to be effective in protecting migrating sea turtles. Federal waters north of the North Carolina/South Carolina border at the coast, and south of the Oregon Inlet, will now be closed at all times to large mesh gillnets. Waters north of the Oregon Inlet and south of Currituck Beach Light in North Carolina are now

closed from March 16 through January 14. Waters north of Currituck Beach Light and south of Wachapreague Inlet, Virginia, are closed from April 1 through January 14. Waters north of Wachapreague Inlet and south of Chincoteague, Virginia, are closed from April 16 through January 14. Waters north of Chincoteague are not affected by the final rule.

With the January closure period approaching, the groups filed suit seeking an injunction to force the Bush Administration to adhere to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. "We are simply asking the government to play by its own rules. Either it closes the fishery or we get the courts to," said Brendan Cummings, attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. "We refuse to let sea turtles become the victims of bureaucratic footdragging." "You pick a species and this fishery kills it," added Todd Steiner of Turtle Island Restoration Network. "Loggerhead sea turtles, sperm whales, humpback whales, fin whales, leatherback sea turtles, Olive Ridley sea turtles, green sea turtles, Steller sea lions, and the list goes on. The continued, illegal drowning of sea turtles in gillnets is truly one of California's hidden environmental crises." A copy of the

complaint can be found at: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>

New Species of Snake Discovered in the U.S.

from Press Release, 11/23/02, The Center for North American Herpetology www.cnah.org

A new species of snake, Slowinski's Corn Snake, has been discovered in north-central Louisiana and eastern Texas by Dr. Frank T. Burbrink, a professor at the College of Staten Island-CUNY. The new species has been formally named *Elaphe slowinskii*, in memory of the late Dr. Joseph B. Slowinski, who was curator of herpetology at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and a close friend and colleague of Dr. Burbrink's. Dr. Slowinski was bitten by a venomous Krait in Burma on September 11, 2001, and died the next day.

Published in a print version (Volume 25, Number 3) of the December 1, 2002, issue of "Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution," the new species is most closely related to the Eastern Corn Snake (*Elaphe guttata*), found east of the Mississippi River in the southeastern U.S., and to the Great Plains Rat Snake (*Elaphe emoryi*), found on the Great Plains from Texas north to Utah and Nebraska. An electronic color image by noted wildlife photographer Suzanne L. Collins of an adult Slowinski's Corn Snake from Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, can be viewed at <http://www.cnah.org/detail.asp?id=1235>

UV Radiation May Not Be Linked to Frog Declines

from ENS, SAN DIEGO, California
December 4, 2002

Two new reports cast doubt on the importance of ultraviolet-b radiation (UV-B) as a factor driving amphibian population declines. Because UV-B has been shown in field and laboratory experiments to cause deformities and increased mortality in amphibian embryos, some scientists have contended that increases in UV-B from thinning of atmospheric ozone have contributed to declines of frog populations worldwide. However, one of the shortcomings of this earlier research has been a lack of knowledge about the actual exposure of amphibians to UV-B in their natural habitats. New field studies presented in the journal "Ecology" suggests that UV-B may play little or no role in amphibian declines. The research was performed by scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the University of Washington, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"This is only the second study to look at how the distribution of amphibians relates to potential UV-B exposure," said USGS research ecologist Michael Adams. "Most previous studies only addressed physiological effects of UV-B but did not provide

evidence that any negative effects translated into population losses."

Research by Adams and his colleagues showed that dissolved organic matter in the water absorbs UV-B in amphibian habitats and protected 85 percent of the amphibian habitats the researchers sampled.

The second study, which began in 1986, discussed the breeding behavior of boreal chorus frogs at a pond in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains west of Fort Collins, Colorado. USGS researcher Stephen Corn and his colleagues observed that the timing of breeding depended on snow.

In years with below average snow frogs bred in mid-May because the snow melted earlier, and in years with heavy snow accumulation breeding was delayed until mid to late June. These observations were combined with satellite-based estimates of UV-B.

The scientists found that frogs breeding in May are exposed to less UV-B than frogs that breed in June. Another study by scientists at Oregon State University had shown that boreal toad eggs developed in shallower water in years with low snow accumulation. Because penetration of UV-B in water diminishes with increased water depth, scientists in that study had suggested that toad embryos received greater UV-B exposure in low water years and that the UV-B exposure could be a factor in the species' decline.

"The results of our study suggest that the timing of breeding must also be taken into account, and that the earlier breeding after dry winters may alleviate some of the UV-B exposure resulting from shallower water," Corn said.

Both reports can be found in the November 2002 issue of *Ecology* (Volume 83, No. 11).

100 new frog species show up human ignorance

from Quickwire, October 11 2002

By Steve Connor

London - Scientists have identified more than 100 new species of frogs inhabiting a small and threatened patch of tropical rainforest in a discovery that underscores our ignorance of the natural world's immense diversity.

The new species are all tree frogs living in the rainforests of Sri Lanka and are the latest additions to the estimated 1,7 million species of animals and plants known to science. However, increasingly scientists believe that the actual number of species on Earth is many times this number - possibly 10 million or more.

An international team of biologists led by Christopher Schneider of Boston University describes up to 140 new

frog species they found in a survey of Sri Lankan rainforests published the week of October 11 in the journal *Science*. The researchers say that the island is an "amphibian hotspot of global importance" in terms of biodiversity.

The discovery of so many new species on Sri Lanka increases the number of frogs there by fivefold. The concentration of amphibian diversity on the relatively small island puts the country on a par with much bigger islands, such as Madagascar and Borneo, in terms of biodiversity, the scientists say.

Rohan Pethiyagoda, a researcher at the Wildlife Heritage Trust in the capital Colombo, began a census of Sri Lanka's disappearing species in 1993. To his surprise he kept finding frogs he could not identify during these treks through the 750 square kilometres of Sri Lankan forest - which once covered 15 000 square kilometres.

From studies of about 1 000 specimens the researchers narrowed down the number of possible species to about 200. Subsequent genetic studies and other forms of analysis confirmed that between 120 and 140 were new to science.

The scientists also compared their frogs with other specimens kept in museums and collected more than 100 years ago. They found that up to 100 species that had been collected in Sri Lanka more than 100 years ago were not among the current finds, suggesting they have since gone extinct.

Such research exemplifies the problems facing scientists trying to study and preserve global biodiversity. Animals and plants may be going extinct at a faster rate than they are being documented and classified.

Stephen Blackmore, the Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, says in a separate article in *Science* that documenting the world's animals and plants represents one of the most important goals following the World Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg this summer.

"The documentation of life on Earth, on which our own well-being ultimately depends, surely deserves to be amongst our most urgent priorities for investment," Dr Blackmore says. - Independent Foreign Service

Snake Said to Be Largest in Captivity Dies

from Reuters, 10/22/02

Samantha the python, believed to be the world's largest snake in captivity, has died of old age in the Bronx Zoo. Scientists at the New York zoo were unable to say exactly how old Samantha was when she died on because she

was brought to the zoo in 1993 from Borneo when she was already 21 feet long and weighed 175 pounds. The Wildlife Conservation Society, which runs the Bronx Zoo, believes she was born in Borneo about 1970. Samantha, featured in TV nature documentaries and visited by a million people a year, grew to more than 26 feet long and weighed 275 pounds.

Research Shows Exposure to Chemical Affects Frog Sexuality

from The Daily Californian, By David Minh, Contributing Writer

October 31, 2002

Male leopard frogs in the wild have been found to be "feminized" by a common agricultural chemical, according to research by a UC Berkeley integrative biology professor.

Tyrone Hayes' study complements earlier work in which similar results were found in captive African clawed frogs. Amphibians, because of their sensitivity to environmental change, are akin to coal mine canaries while canaries are sensitive to air pollutants, amphibian health is an indicator of water safety. "Water is life. If there's enough atrazine in rainwater to produce gross abnormalities in these animals, then that's significant," Hayes said. In ponds, ditches, rivers and streams across the Midwest where the herbicide atrazine was detected, Hayes' group observed frog feminization.

The highest degree of feminization was seen along the North Platte River in Wyoming, where 92 percent of male frogs were affected. Atrazine runoff from agriculture may have contributed to a decline in amphibian populations, Hayes said. "Anything that's having an impact on individuals that can be translated to an impact on a population or possibly even species tells us something important," he added. Hayes' team previously showed very low levels of the herbicide about one-thousandth of a grain of salt in a four-liter tank could cause the African clawed frog to demasculinize and essentially become a hermaphrodite. Atrazine's effect has also been studied at higher doses in alligators, turtles, fish and mammals.

Hayes' group is now looking at the chemical's effects on other species, as well as how it works at the biochemical and molecular level. Kelly Haston, a member of Hayes' group who helped raise the leopard frogs in the laboratory, recognized the limits of the controlled environment. "It's not really close to the wild. The wild fluctuates," Haston said. "It's really hard to simulate the wild conditions."

This research was published in the Oct. 31 issue of the British journal *Nature*.

Literature cited

This section contains a collection of literature published in the last year related to herpetofauna (especially of Virginia). This is not intended to be all inclusive. Most of the citations come from the following websites. These sites contain more complete bibliographies on herp literature.

<http://www.squamata.de/papers.html> contains herp-related citations from non-herp journals

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Job postings

Bog Turtle Contractual Positions In Maryland

Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife & Heritage Service

POSITIONS: Contractual Field Biologists (2) - Bog Turtle Monitoring & Vegetation Management

PERIOD: April - October 2003 (6 months)

PAY: \$11/hr - 40+ hours/week

LOCATION: Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil & Harford counties, Maryland

DUTIES: Survey potential and historic bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) wetlands on private properties in Maryland from mid-April to mid-June following standardized survey methodology (USFWS 2001) to determine presence/absence and, in some cases, estimate population size. Collect morphometric data on marked individual turtles, GPS locations and collect habitat and threats data. Maintain and/or develop good relationships with all landowners and discuss habitat conservation and management with them. Work with and train volunteers and others to assist with surveys. Update bog turtle database. Conduct vegetation management on select bog turtle wetlands from mid-June to October, including cutting and girdling of trees and shrubs, herbicide application, woody plant removal and preparation of draft burn plans. Coordinate vegetation management with volunteer work crews and landowners. Conduct mid-summer bog turtle trapping effort.

REQUIREMENTS: Undergraduate or graduate in zoology, conservation biology, herpetology or related field with a strong interest in field herpetology and a dedication to conservation. Must be willing and able to live in hip boots, "muddle" for turtles and perform strenuous physical labor. I am looking for two self-motivated individuals who are good at dealing positively with people (landowners) and who have the ability to orally communicate complex subjects. Person(s) with a demonstrated ability to accurately identify flora and fauna, particularly reptiles, amphibians and wetland plants will be given strong consideration. !

TO APPLY: Mail, fax or e-mail resume, names and contact information for 3 references, and a cover letter explaining why you are the best candidate for this position to Scott Smith, Regional Heritage Ecologist DNR-Wildlife & Heritage Service/P.O. Box 68/Wye Mills, MD 21679/Phone: 410-827-8612/Fax:410-827-5186/E-mail: sasmith@dnr.state.md.us
CLOSING DATE: Feb. 15, 2003

Meeting and Event Announcements

Virginia BioBlitz 2003 (see earlier article for more info)

The 2003 Virginia BioBlitz will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 17-18 May at Douthat State Park (DSP), approximately 5 miles north of Clifton Forge in Bath County. Between 75-100 participants will count as many species as possible during the 30-hour survey period, beginning at 9 AM on Saturday and ending 3 PM on Sunday.

Please contact Art Evans at (804) 264-0488 or arthurevans@earthlink.net if you would like to sign up or receive further information.

The Virginia Living Museum is having its annual "Reptile Weekend", Feb 15th and 16th, (9-5 on Sat. and 12-5 on Sun.). If you would like to help with a VHS booth, contact John White at john.white161@verizon.net

For more information on the event, contact

Kory Steele - Herpetologist and Aquarium Manager

The Virginia Living Museum

524 J. Clyde Morris Blvd.

Newport News, VA 23601

Phone: (757) 595-1900

Fax: (757) 599-4897

Website: <http://www.valivingmuseum.org/>

The Tenth Annual Conference of Association Of Reptilian And Amphibian Veterinarians

October 5-9, 2003

Minneapolis, Minnesota/Hyatt Regency Hotel

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Get Hands On Experience In: Surgery, Endoscopy/Basic Clinical Techniques/Venomous Snake Techniques/Others To Be Announced/Special Focus Groups/Behind-The-Scenes Tour Of Minneapolis Zoological Garden

Program Chair Richard S. Funk, Ma, Dvm/Mesa Veterinary Hospital/858 N. Country Club Dr., Mesa, Az 85201/480/833/7330/Fax 480/833-0124/Email: Azfunks@Aol.Com

SSAR To Auction Robert E. Gordon Library

SSAR is pleased to announce that the family of the late Robert E. Gordon (1925-1996), the society's president in 1971, has recently donated his collection of herpetological books and stamps to SSAR. The society intends to auction the individual items on "BiblioBid.com" beginning in April, with proceeds being used to set up The Robert E. Gordon Endowment for the support of book-length publications. If you wish to be notified about this auction, contact the SSAR Publications Secretary, Breck Bartholomew, email: SSAR@herplit.com, phone/fax: 801-453-0489

Websites of interest

Bibliomania Adding A New Web Site To A Group Of Existing Resources For Herpetologists

<http://www.BiblioBid.com> - Although not limited to Herpetology, it will always be an emphasis on this site.

BiblioBid.com is a book auction site which allows anyone to list their books for sale. With an emphasis on herpetology this may prove to be a great way to sell the books you no longer need. It is also a great place to buy books.

To open the site there are 132 herpetological auctions and more than 600 herpetological items available on a "buy-now" basis.

Unique Feeding Behavior Found Among Tadpoles

November 6, 2002 (from Press Release Univ. Berkeley, CA)

A University of Utah biologist used a high-speed video camera to identify a tiny tadpole's distinct way of eating dinner. Instead of filtering food from water like other species of frog larvae, the petite polliwog extends its tube-shaped mouth, and then sucks in immature shrimp, water fleas or other prey in a mere six one-thousandths of a second. See the video of this and many other amphibian species' feeding behavior at the following website:

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~deban/hymenomovie.html>

Directory of Research Systematics Collections

<http://159.189.176.70/index.html>

The Directory of Research Systematics Collections (DRSC) offers online access to information about the natural history research collections of museums and institutions across the US. The DRSC's simple interface allows searches by parent institution name or by taxonomic and geographic criteria combined. Extensive scrollable lists are provided for each search method.

Virginia NativeMole Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata*)

photo by John White

Status and Threats:

This species is widely distributed and not immediately threatened with extirpation from the state. However, the increase in urbanization, particularly in the eastern portion of the state, creates some concern. Maintenance of hardwood corridors and open fields will ensure the continued success of this species in Virginia.

Characteristics:

The mole kingsnake reaches a maximum total length of 47 inches (119 cm). The dorsal coloration is tan to dark brown with a series of chestnut-brown to tan blotches that are wide than long. Blotches typically have a darker border. The venter is cream to yellow with varying numbers of brown smudges. A short brown eye to jaw stripe may be present but does not extend beyond upper margin of supralabials. It is a cylindrical snake with a small head that is indistinct from the neck. This species may sometimes be confused with *Elaphe guttata* or *Lampropeltis triangulum*.

Habits and Habitat:

This is a secretive species that uses burrows. It is known to dig burrows in sandy or loamy soil or use existing rodent burrows or rotting tree root paths. They are found in agricultural fields, early successional abandoned fields, pine woods, and mixed pine woods. They can sometimes be found in open areas in urban environments and woodlots. Occasionally, this species can be found crossing the road or under surface objects. Mole kingsnakes prey upon small mammals, birds, and lizards. Little is known about the reproduction or population biology of this species.

Distribution:

It is found in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions of Virginia. In the Roanoke River Valley, this species can be found in the Blue Ridge Province. The southeastern limits of its range are uncertain.

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