



Virginia Herpetological Society

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No.2

5608 Parkland Court, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Nov. 1991

VHS Fall Meeting Report:

Report Submitted by: Doug Eggleston

Were you there? Few members were. Once again I find myself puzzled over why so many members of the VHS do not attend meetings?

The business meetings ran a little long, but there was sufficient material covered to warrant their length. Important material to all VHS members. Things like an updated constitution, a report on the latest proposals of VA regulations pertaining to herps and herpers, a report on the progress of the Educational Poster Project and information about our Newsletter, Bulletin and other herp-related material.

The Blue Ridge Herp. Society participated with the VHS to offer educational workshops during the morning for members and the public. Brian Drewry spoke on VA native snakes and some North American cousins. Jeff Srsic and Shane Carwile presented a talk on exotic herps; Matt Albers and Doug Eggleston covered turtles and tortoises; and Mike Hayslett, (VHS member), gave talks on the amphibians. There were displays of live herps from around the Commonwealth and the world. Shells, skulls, skins, posters and other still displays, helped show those visiting more about the creatures we enjoy.

The afternoon session began with discussion of holding the elections of the Sect./Tres. and President-Elect positions at the Spring Meeting. Nominations for persons to fill these positions should be sent to Dr. Joseph Mitchell, Dept. of Biology, U. of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173 as soon as possible. We would like to have a slate to vote on ready for the Spring Meetings. If you feel that you will not be able to attend the Spring Meeting, we hope to receive your proxy by mail.

A report was made by Doug Eggleston on the contents of the VHS library of newsletters and bulletins from other soci-

Dateline: Oct. 5, 1991.

Place: Liberty University,
Lynchburg, VA.

Event: VHS Fall Meeting.

eties. An eleven page, typed listing of each volume was presented and a motion was made to auction off each "set" of society publications at the Spring meeting. This alone will make that meeting worth attending! Anyone interested in a copy of the listings should send a SASE along with \$1.00 (to cover copy costs), to VHS Newsletter, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528. Some of the offerings are real collector's items and all of them have some valuable and interesting herp material in them. Plan to make the VHS Spring Meeting and bid on these publications or offer your sealed bid in advance, (request info. on procedure for sealed bids when sending for the listings).

Ron Southwick and Sue Bruenderman offered a report on "The New Regulations Concerning the Collection of VA Reptiles & Amphibians." There was some discussion on various points and a couple recommendations for wording changes were offered. Joe Mitchell suggested that the VHS show their support for the new regs, with wording changes. A vote was taken to do so and Joe will present a formal show of support to the DGIF at a future meeting.

Presentations were made by Kurt Buhlmann on "The Ecology of the Tiger Salamander in Virginia," Peter Kramer on "Population Dynamics of the Peaks of Otter Salamander," Joe Mitchell offered "A Review of the Endangered Herps in Virginia" and Richard Hoffman gave an abbreviated talk on "The Decline of Am-

phibians in Southwestern Virginia." If it were not already evident, the subject topics of these talks showed that the amphibians are finding living in Virginia to be a little rough going. More research is needed to find out what we're losing and why. VHS members should take the decline seriously and get involved in the research, conservation and education efforts.

The Fall Meeting ended with a social and raffle. The "prized" autographed copy of the "Conant" Field Guide went to Dennis Williams of Natural Bridge. Other raffle items included other autographed books, post card sets, a video, a nice pen and ink and other herp-related items. The raffle is an event that will be held at each Fall Meeting. The VHS made around \$84.00 from this meeting's raffle. *DE*

Information Request

Have you ever had to field a question from someone about herps that was based in myth? I know I have and I'm not always able to answer some of them.

I would be interested in receiving information about various herp-related myths and their origins; nicknames for herps, "old wives tales," (or "old husband tales" if you prefer), any facts that can lead to explanations for herp myths will all be greatly appreciated.

Some of these myths and truths may end up in the pages of this newsletter. I am trying to compile as many as possible from all over the country for an article. Your assistance will be noted.

Please send any information to: Myths, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528.

TITLE: *Taking Proper Field Notes*

MATERIALS/RESOURCES: Pad or notepaper/pencil
Field Guide — Conant's Field Guide/other resources,
i.e., VaHS-The Virginia Herpetological Survey 1985
Camera and film (slide)



DETAILS: Grade Level: EL, MS, HS, Ad.
Time Frame: N/A

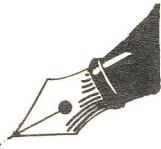
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE: To take proper and useful notes when observing, photographing or collecting fauna in the field.

- PROCEDURES/METHODS:**
1. Format — proper written reports should include:
 - Specimen (general species)
 - County and location (route number and distance from crossroads intersection, distance in miles from town (P.O.), other landmarks [rivers, streams, etc.]
 - Date of observation
 - Observers (species identification for observational records should be verified by a second person)
 - Data and observations (ecology, reproduction, phenology, behavior, etc.)
 - Photograph (preferably a color slide should be sent to VaHS for verification)
 - Weather condition/temperature
 2. After observation /collection is made and data is taken
 - Rewrite field notes and send information to VaHS (Joseph C. Mitchell, President, VHS, Dept. of Bio, University of Richmond, Va. 23173. Your data may be printed in the VHS publication.
 3. Observed/collected specimens may fall into three classifications:
 - A. Locality record — “herp” is a preserved identifiable specimen in a scientific or private collection.
 - B. County record — the first specimen of a represented species ever collected in that county and preserved in a curated collection.
 - C. State record — the first specimen of a represented species or subspecies collected in Virginia and preserved in a curate collection.
 4. Observation may confirm and define the existence of the named species.

EVALUATION: Teacher may check for understanding by assigning a photo collection of herpetofauna observed in the field. Check completed field note identification for accuracy and understanding.
Records may be preserved and placed in curated collection. (A permit may be required.)

SPONSOR: Mrs. Dale L. Brittle
P.O. Box 681, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427, (804) 633-6575

Editor's Note



While attending the VHS Fall Meeting, I received some good feedback from members on what should be found in this newsletter. As a part of my report during the business meeting, I told those attending that I was only able to print those items that I received. This point brings me back to where I've started just about every newsletter...without your support and feedback, there will be no newsletter.

Suggestions at the meeting included adding a Question & Answer section to the newsletter, tips for beginners, information on first aid for herps and more educational materials that could be utilized in a classroom. Here is where YOU come in. Writers are needed in order to print articles. If you feel qualified to handle a Q&A section or an advice column, please volunteer! Send a sample article or idea to this editor. We really could use the assistance of one of our veterinarian members, (and I know we have a few out


there), to offer a column on herp health and first aid. PLEASE, contact us on your willingness to take on such assignments as a regular column or occasional writer.

Educational materials have been requested in the past for a workbook that we could offer to the Science Departments of VA middle and/or high schools. Only a few were ever submitted. I hope to use these in future issues in part or in whole. We need more articles or ideas for educational projects that could be used in a classroom. Submit your ideas to the newsletter and help us out.

Our current roster of members boasts some well respected names in the field of herpetology. Many of you have written for other society publications or other publications on herps and herp issues. Please support this society and this newsletter by getting involved and offering your knowledge and talents to these pages.

Any newspaper, magazine or other society material submitted to us for reprint, should be accompanied by a written release for such use. This will help us get these items in the newsletter. It does take time to put this together and since we must remain careful of copyright violations, we cannot reprint any material without such permission. Your assistance in providing

this will mean the difference in whether a piece makes these pages or not.

As with each issue, I look forward to hearing from you with your comments and suggestions. We do want to make this publication one that all VHS members can benefit from and be proud of. This is not something that one person can accomplish. Without your support and feedback, this newsletter will not meet the goals we set for it in the Spring of 1990. Let's take this publication into 1992 with a new spirit of membership participation. Happy Herping and Happy Holidays! 

The Herper's Marketplace:


- The BJ Pinkie Pump •
 - 5 sizes-surgical stainless steel- sexing probes •
 - 3 sizes-black, ABS plastic-hide boxes •
 - 2 sizes-The BJ "Hot Feeders" •
 - Telescopic snake hook w/pocket clip •
 - Herp ID/INFO cards •
 - Books, collectibles, novelties & MORE. •
- Send S.A.S.E. (45c postage) for list to: **BACK COUNTRY HERPS**
P.O. Box 727
Brookneal, Va. 24528

Society Column

The BLUE RIDGE HERP. SOCIETY has been a very active group of late. Besides their participation at the VHS Fall Meeting, they have been involved in numerous other exhibits and presentations. Included in these were the "Day in the Park" in Lynchburg, the Appomattox Railroad Festival and some school presentations.

November will bring a clean-up day for the "Adopt a Highway" project and Dr. Duncan Augustine, VMD of Laurel Stone Veterinary Hospital will be the speaker for the November meeting.

December will find the BRHS members holding their meeting and holiday party at Monte Carlo Italian Restaurant in Lynchburg. This will be a pizza party and an opportunity for these people to socialize and swap herp tales. Doug Eggleston will speak at this meeting.

Alas, no other regional group sent us information for this issue. 

Virginia Herpetological Society

Joseph C. Mitchell, President
Kurt A. Buhmann, Vice-President
Ron Southwick, Secretary-Treasurer
Douglas W. Eggleston, Newsletter Editor
Paul W. Sattler, Catesbeiana Co-Editor
R. Terry Spohn, Catesbeiana Co-Editor

HERP HAPPENINGS

- Nov. 9-10, 1991 — The San Diego Herpetological Society will sponsor a **REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN SHOW and SALE** in the Bing Crosby Hall at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, Del Mar, CA. For further information, call (619) 689-2582.
- Dec. 7, 1991 — **TIMBER RATTLESNAKE: CONSERVATION & PROTECTION SEMINAR**, western Massachusetts. Send SASE to Rattlesnake Symposium, Conservation Dept., Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773.
- June 4-10, 1992 — **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ICHTHYOLOGISTS AND HERPETOLOGISTS** will be held in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. For further information, contact: ASIHL, Dept. of Zoology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6501.
- June 1992 — **THIRD DECENNIAL HIGHLANDS CONFERENCE ON PLETHODONTID SALAMANDERS** will be held in Highlands, North Carolina. For further information, contact: Dr. Robert Jaeger, Dept. of Biology, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70504-2451; or phone (318) 231-5235; FAX (318) 231-5834.
- Aug. 1992 — **2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TURTLE & TORTOISES: CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**. This three day event will include lectures and workshops, as well as a room for vendors. For Further information, call (212) 459-4803; or write to 163 Amsterdam Ave., Suite 365, New York, NY 10023.
- Dec. 29, 1993-Jan. 5, 1994 — **SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY** will meet in Adelaide, South Australia. For further information, contact Dr. M.J. Taylor, University of Adelaide, Dept. of Zoology, Box 498, GPO, Adelaide, South Australia 5001, Australia.

Publication Deadlines

The VHS Newsletter is published quarterly. Our schedule calls for us to have completed and mailed each issue by the first of Nov., Feb., May and Aug. of each year. In order to meet these deadlines, we request that any submissions for publication by sent to us by no later than the 15th of the preceding month.

This will not automatically mean that a piece will be found in the following issue. Each issue will offer as much information sent to us as space will allow. Some pieces may be held over for a future issue due to space or special need.

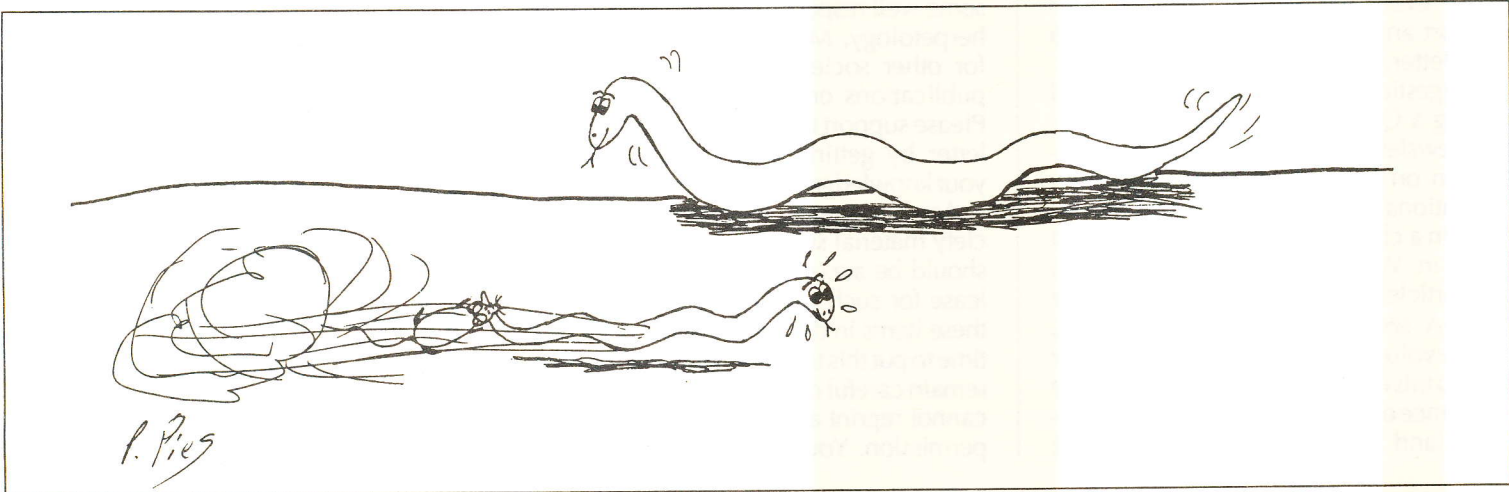
Your assistance in following this schedule, will make putting together our newsletter a much more organized task. Thank you. *MP*

Mark R. Finkler, D.V.M.

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