

Lancaster Herpetological Society

Spring 2008 Newsletter

The Lancaster Herpetological Society is a small club that meets once a month to discuss herps and herp-related issues. The club meets at the North Museum (www.northmuseum.org, 400 College Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603) on the 3rd Friday of every month. Meetings are open to the public, free of charge, and begin at 7pm. Please feel free to attend by entering through the back door (ring bell if locked). The membership requests that all children under the age of 16 be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Chad Arment (lancwildlife@verizon.net).
Hope to see you there!

Upcoming Meetings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Comments</u>
4/18/2008	Phil Dunning	Copperheads in PA	
5/16/2008*	Demian Lewis	Hognoses	http://www.northwindreptiles.com/
6/20/2008	Members' Night	Sharing our own Herps	BYOH & Auction to Benefit the Society
7/18/2008	Carl Ernst	Snakes	Coauthored numerous books about herps

***Meeting for Board Members at 6PM prior to club meeting in May.**

Upcoming Havre de Grace Herp Shows: May 3rd, June 7th, July 12th

Upcoming Hamburg Herp Shows: April 26th, June 14th

Slogan Contest

Lancaster Herpetological Society needs a slogan! Coachwhip Publications has graciously agreed to sponsor a contest to help LHS gain a slogan. Please brainstorm and send all submissions to Zach Barton at zbarton@ycstech.org by May 15th, 2008. The winning selection will be chosen at the Board Meeting in May. The winning slogan will appear on the header of the newsletter and other associated LHS products. The writer of the winning slogan will receive a free copy of the **Herper's Life List**, published by Coachwhip and a must have for any serious field herper.

Club Happenings

We have had several very good speakers in the past three months! In January, Billy Brown enlightened us on the surprising joys of urban herping in the Philadelphia area. Can you say Dekay? February brought our very own Roy Mellot with a power point presentation on the common garter snake. Garter snakes are often over looked in the hobby, but it was evident that Roy has looked over these wonderful ophidians on many occasions. Most recently, Tom Vargo informed the club in March on the wonders of poison dart frog keeping. It sounds like you need to develop a side hobby in botany and horticulture to enjoy these little fellows!

The club also setup an informative table at the February Hamburg show. The table was donated by the organizers of the Hamburg show. The table did raise some money, new memberships, and newsletter signups. We are still learning how to properly utilize this resource when it is available to us: any ideas would be great to hear!

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In the News

There is never any shortage of herp news, but a recent article in Science News revealed a secret of alligator mobility: its lungs! According to the March 15th, 2008 issue, researchers have found that gators use their lungs not only to affect buoyancy but also locomotion. The piece summarizes a more in depth article appearing in the *Journal of Experimental Biology* where scientists theorized that lungs affect buoyancy and movement so much that that may have been the original function of the organs in vertebrates. The lungs are instrumental in the most dramatic example of alligator movement: the death roll. Gators don't use their legs during death rolls and muscular squeezing of the lungs help to perpetuate the roll.

Recent articles about a variety of scientific topics, herps or otherwise, can be found at Science News, <http://www.sciencenews.org/>. A better source for exclusively herp news can be found at HerpDigest, <http://www.herpdigest.org/>. HerpDigest will email you directly an electronic newsletter twice a week. Both services are free, though you must subscribe to Science News to read archived articles.

Forgotten Friends Reptile Rescue Update by Jesse Rothacker

(Jesse will be providing a regular update of the rescue in future LHS newsletters.)

Forgotten Friend achieves official nonprofit status

2008 has brought lots of great news at Forgotten Friend! For the last couple years we have been in the long application process for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, which is the official federally recognized nonprofit status for charitable organizations. We hit many bumps along the road and waited in line for months before the IRS even glanced at our application for the first time! Once the IRS reviewed our application, we spent several more months going back and forth with an IRS agent over technicalities. Although he was generally helpful, he only answered his phone one single time out of dozens of calls that we made to him over many months. Furthermore, the IRS is still in the stone-age without email, which made the communication process take even longer!

Finally in January, after a very long and expensive struggle, the IRS determined that Forgotten Friend, Inc. meets the guidelines to be designated a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rescue and education organization! This status opens new doors to us as an organization, and gives us a new level of credibility. Because Forgotten Friend is listed as an "educational" charity, we are able to use our resources to partner with groups like the Lancaster Herpetological Society.

Educational Outreach at Forgotten Friend on the rise

In 2007, Forgotten Friend provided more than 200 educational outreach programs! We now have weekly after school reptile clubs at many elementary schools in Lancaster and Lebanon School Districts, and scores of reptile programs at community events around the state. We even talked to the Conan O'Brien Show about doing a reptile demonstration for them on NBC, but it has not been confirmed yet. In June the Herp Society teamed up with Forgotten Friend for an outreach event at French Creek State Park, and another outreach event in September at the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge near Philadelphia, and more partnering events are planned in 2008 for both Forgotten Friend and the Lancaster Herp Society.

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PA Herp Video Project in 2008

Forgotten Friend has started a project to film Pennsylvania's reptiles and amphibians in their natural habitats, and highlight some of the conservation work that is essential to their survival. I will be filming many species independently, and also shadowing conservation researchers in the field. The video is geared for educational outreach to young learners, although we will likely have many versatile uses for the footage. If you have any suggested habitat sites or herp conservation projects that could be featured in the video, please contact Jesse at info@forgottenfriend.org.

Reptiles on the radio!

With the help of the Lancaster Herp Society and other colleagues, Forgotten Friend recorded 25 Reptile Fun Facts for the WJTL Kids Cookie Break, a Saturday morning kids radio show. Currently they are playing one reptile fun fact every hour during the three-hour show each week. This is a great avenue to offer young minds intriguing knowledge about the reptile world, instead of fears. Thanks to everyone who submitted fun facts already. We are planning to record more, so please send any herp fun facts you can think of to Jesse at info@forgottenfriend.org. A sample of our reptile fun facts are online at www.forgottenfriend.org/funfacts.

Reptile Adoptions at Forgotten Friend

In the last few months we have had a few bearded dragons, corn snakes, red tail boas, and tortoises through the rescue. A couple unusual species that came in were a Jungle Carpet Python, which was surrendered through Lancaster Humane League, and a Burmese Mountain Tortoise, which was surrendered to the rescue directly from the owner. We also had a large male iguana come into the rescue after it bit someone on the arm, causing a great deal of damage. This was an important reminder that many large herps may become "tame" while still remaining seasonally aggressive or capable of using their primal instincts. As responsible reptile owners, we must always give them the respect they deserve. On that note, we continue to receive about one call a week about unwanted crocodilians. The most common species the rescue receives calls for is the American Alligator (*A. mississippiensis*), and the next most common species is the Spectacled Caiman (*C. crocodilus*). We don't generally list crocs for adoption, because very few owners have demonstrated the ability to care for this large semi-aquatic reptile, which may exceed fifteen feet and 1,000 pounds! For more info about reptiles currently available for adoption, please visit www.forgottenfriend.org/adopt.

Requests

LHS exists solely as a volunteer organization. The club would not survive without the constant and continual input of its members. Arranging speakers, organizing field trips, and producing the newsletter take volunteered time. If you have ideas for and are willing to take the lead in arranging speakers or field trips, please contact Chad Arment (lancwildlife@verizon.net).

If you wish to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Zach Barton (zbarton@ycstech.org). Possible original contributions include: book reviews; species care sheets; notes from a field herping trip; herp news summaries; and opinionated essays. The deadline for the Summer 2008 Newsletter is approaching fast!

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Lancaster Herpetological Society would like to thank our sponsors and partner organizations:



FORGOTTEN FRIEND



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