

# CATESBELIANA



*Rana catesbeiana*  
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## BULLETIN INFORMATION

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Reprints of articles are not available to authors; however, authors may reprint articles themselves to meet professional needs.

(Editorial policy continued on inside back cover.)

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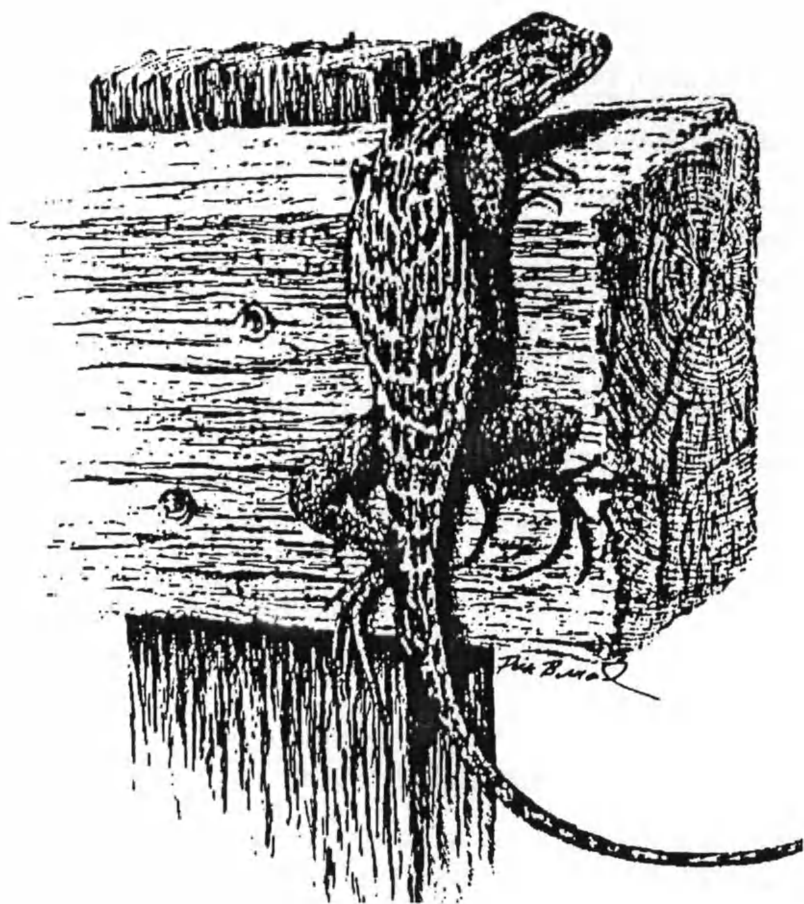
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## MEETING NOTICE

The Fall 1992 VHS meeting will be held on October 24, 1992 at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville. See page 55-56 for details.



## Anuran Population Declines in Western Virginia

Richard L. Hoffman  
Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Martinsville, VA 24112

There is widespread, and justifiable, concern about the status of amphibian populations which appear to be decreasing in size or disappearing altogether, presumably in response to a variety of poorly understood environmental impacts.

In a purely local context, I have been witness to apparent attenuation of frog populations in western Virginia since about 1940 and take the opportunity to summarize the observations and conclusions accumulated during that half-century. The point must be emphasized that no quantitative bases for comparison may be cited, only subjective anecdotal interpretations. In 1940 it did not occur to me (then 13 years of age) to quantify my impressions about frog calls, nor would I have known how to even think about such an approach. Yet the memories are clear enough and may provide some insights into the course of then totally unanticipatable events.

Yes, anurans have declined at many places in western Virginia. As a child I could assume that during the summer, toads gather in the circles of light at street corners in Clifton Forge, to forage on photo-drunk insects. This has not been true for a long time. During the 1950s, when I was preserving material for museum study purposes, it was possible to locate immense choruses of what was then called *Pseudacris feriarum* at many sites in Alleghany County. Now I would have difficulty in finding **any**.

In a broader context, the problem does not seem to be statewide. It is not difficult to find marshy fields full of *P. feriarum* not far from Martinsville, and on a rainy evening not long ago I drove backroads over much of Greensville County without ever being out of ear-shot of that species. The toads (*Bufo woodhousii fowleri* and *B. americanus*) do not seem to be in short supply in central and eastern Virginia; nor, for that matter, does the ubiquitous *Pseudacris crucifer* seem to have suffered reduced numbers.

I recently went back to Clifton Forge, Blacksburg, and some other places that used to be replete with treefrog choruses. At once some

explanations suggested themselves from the vantage point of a time-remove. First and foremost is the pervasive effect of urbanization: marshes and ditches have been drained, filled, and built upon, on a large scale. Houses now stand, for instance, on the site of the only two breeding ponds once used by *Scaphiopus holbrooki* in Radford. Secondly is the effect of normal succession: many former marshy fields have turned into dry pine woods. Thirdly and probably most significantly, is the phenomenal increase in motor vehicles especially since the 1950s. Amphibians moving to a breeding pond usually do not hurry across roads, and the mortality inflicted on warm rainy spring nights is often appalling: one vehicle may take out literally hundreds of frogs **before** they get to water. After some years such heavy losses cannot but exert a real holocaustic effect on local breeding populations.

Of course all of these factors are operational statewide, but are far more concentrated in the Ridge and Valley Province, where flat land supporting lentic habitats is limited to narrow valleys in which the impact of development assumes a major magnitude. Wetlands are more dispersed and isolated in the Piedmont and even more so in the Coastal Plain, although anyone trying to recover roadkills on even remote backroads in these regions can attest to the frequency (and velocity) with which wide-track radials thunder past even long after midnight. It is surely an underestimation to believe that motor traffic is now 100 times greater than in 1935, in every part of the state.

An additional, although un-investigated, impact on frog populations, may be the effect of chemicals used to control highway ice and snow, much of which naturally drains into roadside ditches that used to be a favorite breeding site for *Pseudacris feriarum* in particular. Such ditches are also periodically gouged out by road grading machinery, busy at improving drainage.

"Acid rain" may indeed enter the picture as a detrimental factor, but hardly needs be invoked in the face of the obvious physical impacts noted above (nor, on the basis of subjective observations made at Mount Rogers since 1947, has it apparently reduced salamander populations). The combined effects of ongoing "development", natural succession, and logarithmic increases in vehicular traffic seem entirely adequate to account for dramatic declines which I have observed in parts of western Virginia during the past half-century.

## Narrative of the 1992 VHS Spring Meeting

Michael S. Hayslett  
Lynchburg, Virginia

The annual Spring Meeting of the Virginia Herpetological Society was held on May 2-3 in the counties of Smyth, Washington, and Grayson, with the base for field excursions being Hungry Mother State Park near Marion. The "Spectacular Southwest" has perhaps the most unique diversity of herptofauna for the Commonwealth, especially in the realm of salamanders, and provided for many the opportunity to experience "first encounters" with some fascinating species of herps.

Most of the 19 attendants arrived at Hungry Mother on Saturday morning with introductions and getting re-acquainted lasting until about noon, at which time a caravan assembled, beginning the weekend's forays to observe the regional "herp-diversity".

We traveled north along Primary Route 6 to the southeast side of Walker Mountain's summit in Smyth county for our fist site. Here we examined rock outcroppings, rip-rap embankments, and a roadside dumpsite with the hope of discovering snake species. As any good herpetologist knows, man-made debris (boards, tires, appliances, etc.), though unsightly and environmentally irresponsible when "dumped" in the wild, often provides acceptable habitat for snakes and other herps, by the protection and cool, moist microclimate that is created by the surface area of such objects. Unfortunately, some other factors were at work here, as we found only one Redback salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) under the debris, a small Northern Ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*) under a log, and an Eastern Garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) a bit downslope from the site.

Our convoy moved on to the summit of the mountain, where we stopped at the site of an electrical station and powerline right-of-way, situated at approximately 1120 m elevation. The crest and surrounding slopes had sufficient cover: outcrops, fallen trees, and strewn boulders, but the group's searching only uncovered the Ravine salamander (*Plethodon richmondi*) here. Despite it's slow beginning, our outing soon picked up in excitement and productivity.

Descending Walker Mountain along its northwest slope, we paused by the east shoulder to explore seeping, sheer shalebluff habitats. Along the rock ledges were found variable-patterned Mountain dusky salamanders

(*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*), and nearby in a steep, rocky ravine several robust Northern Slimy salamanders (*Plethodon glutinosus*) were located under large loose stones. Don Merkle proved you don't always have to travel far from the vehicles to find herps - he caught the second Garter snake of the day - crawling under his feet!

North of the mountain, in the valley below, we proceeded in a westerly direction along Va. Rt. 610 to 629 and immediately encountered an unfortunate but common occurrence in the herpetological world - a DOR snake. The species was the Eastern Milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), and Joe Mitchell retained this specimen for preservation.

Our fourth site provided a switch from primarily terrestrial habitats to alluvial floodplain and riverine ones. Our team of researchers and enthusiasts dispersed from the vehicles at the bridge over the north fork of the Holston River, and explored microhabitats upstream and down. From the bridge many of us observed common Map turtles (*Graptemys geographica*) through our field glasses as they basked on streamside logs. Among the numerous turtles was an impressive, dinner-plate sized female that was dominating the best of the sunny spots. This site represents a notable riverine range extension for this species, as did the presence of Map turtles at the last of our subsequent sites on the foray. This find extends the previously known site (Saltville) by approximately 40-50 km (Kurt Buhlmann, pers. comm.). Also captured here was the Common Musk turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*) which possessed a unique morphological feature not found in members of this species from the Piedmont and points east - enlarged palatal crushing surfaces for crushing the snails they consume in their aquatic environment (Joe Mitchell, pers. comm.).

Salamanders located under cover objects along trailside and streamside microhabitats below the bridge included Redback (*Plethodon cinereus*), Ravine (*P. richmondi*), Seal (*Desmognathus monticola*), and Northern Dusky (*Desmognathus fuscus*) salamanders. A Red Eft (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) was also found on the surface, but the most memorable find here was the golden Longtail salamander (*Eurycea longicauda*), of which there were two discovered under stones along the trail on the Holston's south bank. This unique north-facing slope was dominated by a stand of Arbor vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*). Anurans found on the riverbank were the Pickerel frog (*Rana palustris*) and the American toad (*Bufo*



## 1992 SPRING MEETING

*americanus*). Finally, two snake species were observed at this site - the Northern Water snake (*Nerodia sipedon*) and yet another Eastern Garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*).

Although a sizable brigade assembled for seining operations in the riffles downstream from the bridge, their efforts were unsuccessful in producing any specimens of the Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus a. alleganiensis*), which all had hoped to find.

Following the river downstream, via primary Rt. 42/92, our fifth foray site was located at the intersection of Va. 630, where turtle basket traps had been placed in the stream the previous evening. The setup yielded Common Musk (*Sternotherus odoratus*) and a Common Snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) that was nearly too large to be removed from the wire cage. Unfortunately, dipnetting for Hellbenders under streambed rocks proved unsuccessful at this location also.

Further downstream, we made our final stop for the afternoon, at a site 1.1 km E of McCready. Here the trap contained another Common Snapper, and the second range extension for the Common Map turtle. An immature female (carapace 93.5 mm, plastron 82.5 mm, 95 g body wt.) was collected for deposition in the Smithsonian as a voucher specimen. A Southern Two-lined salamander (*Eurycea cirrigera*) was sighted swimming at streamside at this site on the Holston.

The group stopped at an ice cream stand before returning to Hungry Mother, unaware that at least two other teams had dispersed and made herpetological discoveries of their own.

One group had spent the previous night at the Grindstone Campground in the Mount Rodgers National Recreation Area, where they had heard Spring Peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) calling and found a DOR Northern Black Racer (*Coluber constrictor*) on Rt. 603. These two herpteam visited Clinch Mountain in Washington County where they found Seal (*Desmognathus monticola*), Northern Dusky (*Desmognathus fuscus*), and Northern Slimy (*Plethodon glutinosus*) salamanders, as well as the Eastern Garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), and the Ravine salamander (*Plethodon richmondi*) (the most frequently encountered species during the meeting). They then proceeded to Laurel Bed Lake along the Russell/Smyth county line where they noted Red-spotted Newts

(*Notophthalmus viridescens*), the Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), and a Northern Water snake (*Nerodia sipedon*) along the lake's shoreline environment.

When our convoy rendezvoused at Hungry Mother, we learned from the others that in addition to five of the species we had encountered, they had also found the Northern Spring salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*) within the state park.

A spaghetti dinner ensued and the evening relaxed into an enjoyable time of conversation and recounting of herp happenings.

By the time night had fallen, however, these die-hard herpetology enthusiasts had acquired their "second-wind" and were "beaming" for more of the herp-search excitement. About a dozen intrepid souls drove into the night to reach Hayter's Gap on Little Mountain in northeast Washington county. Here we hiked to search seeping rock crevices at roadside cuts where we discovered a variety of terrestrial salamanders engaged in nocturnal activities: Ravine (*P. richmondi*), Mountain Dusky (*D. ochrophaeus*), and Seal salamanders (*D. monticola*), and the Red Eft (*N. viridescens*); however, by far the most abundant species found in these "cavernous" micro-habitats was the Northern Slimy salamander (*P. glutinosus*), of which we saw dozens that were surface active. Northern Spring (*G. porphyriticus*) and Longtail salamanders (*E. longicauda*) were found in the wet, roadside ditches, and a Northern Ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*) was observed foraging along the roadside ledges.

Our first unique find of the night was the discovery of a Cumberland Plateau (*Plethodon kentucki*) salamander, a robust Slimy salamander relative. The fog-laden atmosphere gave way to mild rains, and the herpetologist's "favorite" conditions provided the setting for our "treasure" of the night - the Green salamander (*Aneides aeneus*). Norm Reichenbach was the first to discover one of these chartreuse, lichen-patterned beauties. With their enlarged toe pads, the Green salamanders can climb vertically along the extended shale ledges and outcrops, where the group observed two more. The dripping, moss-covered shelves create the microclimate preferred by this unique, single-species-representative of its genus in the southern Appalachians.

## 1992 SPRING MEETING

Thus our long, action-packed day and night of herping ended back at our cabins in the early morning hours of the next day.

Sunday morning, May 3, began comfortably with "all the modern conveniences" in our park accommodations, and provided adequate re-cooperation for another intensive day afield.

With new arrivals, our largest weekend motorcade proceeded on to the Mount Rodgers National Recreation area, "the salamander capitol of the East", with a diversity that exceeds the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for number of species present.

As we ascended toward Elk Garden Gap in Smyth County, we encountered another Eastern Milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) roadkill on Va. Rt. 600.

The team explored a tributary in the Big Laurel Creek drainage where we uncovered Northern Dusky (*D. fuscus*), Southern Two-lined (*E. cirrigera*), Northern Spring (*G. porphyriticus*), and Blackbelly (*Desmognathus quadramaculatus*) salamanders under stones in and along the mountain stream. On the surrounding slopes, the sleek gray "Metcalf's race" of Jordan's salamander (*Plethodon jordani*) was common under decaying logs and debris. But our targeted species for discovery here was the rare Shovelnose salamander (*Leurognathus marmoratus*), the caudate with one of the most restricted ranges in the Commonwealth.

Some larvae had been located in the stream's pale, pebble-bottomed substrate, but no adults, that is, not until we were preparing to leave, when recent VHS member Gordon Wilson, made a final thrust of his dipnet into a pool, and produced a beautiful, five-inch adult. The group was awed by the unique opportunity to view this rarely seen animal, and many camera shutters clicked before the cat-eyed wonder was released.

Our tenth site of the weekend was the tri-county summit of Whitetop Mountain, where the group explored the remnant red spruce forests of the boreal crestzone, "on the top" of Virginia at 1640 m (5100 feet) elevation.

Under foot-thick moss mats and decaying conifer logs were found Redback (*P. cinereus*), Mountain Dusky (*D. ochrophaeus*), and abundant Jordan's salamanders (*P. jordani*), and copper-studded Weller's salamander (*Plethodon welleri*), and the herringbone-backed Pygmy salamander (*Desmognathus wrighti*), Virginia's smallest salamander species. These latter two species reach the northern limits of their range in the populations of the Mount Rodgers region, where these Special Concern Species are rare.

Here in this specially managed "preserve" area for salamanders, conservation was stressed through a "no collection" policy; this "catch and release" emphasis was observed throughout the meeting forays, with the only exceptions being vouchers for the distributional confirmation of a few previously-mentioned species.

Descending the peak, a subteam tarried at Whitetop Creek where they encountered the Blue Ridge Two-lined salamander (*Eurycea wilderae*), along with more Mountain Dusky (*D. ochrophaeus*), beneath riparian rockcover.

The twelfth and final foray site of the spring meeting was amid the lower slopes of Whitetop's southeastern base. On these rocky, hardwood ridges were found Redback (*P. cinereus*) and Ravine (*P. richmondi*), Jordan's (*P. jordani*) and Mountain Dusky (*D. ochrophaeus*) salamanders. also under the rotten logs, we unearthed another caudate treasure (and perhaps the author's favorite) the magnificent Yonahlossee salamander (*Plethodon yonahlossee*), heftiest of the Plethodontids, with its brick red "road" of namesake "meandering" down its coal-black back.

Not surprisingly, the site of the 1992 VHS Spring Meeting - the "Spectacular Southwest" lived up to its reputation and our expectations for observing incredible herpetological diversity, with many photos and fond memories, the members dispersed for their respective destinations, ending a truly memorable gathering for the Society.

## 1992 SPRING MEETING

### Summary Checklist of Species Encountered During Spring Meeting Weekend

#### Amphibians

##### Salamanders

- Aneides aeneus* (Green salamander)
- Desmognathus f. fuscus* (Northern Dusky salamander)
- D. monticola* (Seal salamander)
- D. ochrophaeus* (Mountain Dusky salamander)
- D. quadramaculatus* (Blackbelly salamander)
- D. wrighti* (Pigmy salamander)
- Eurycea cirrigera* (Southern Two-lined salamander)
- E. l. longicauda* (Longtail salamander)
- E. wilderae* (Blue Ridge Two-lined salamander)
- Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus* (Northern Spring salamander)
- Leurognathus marmoratus* (Shovelnose salamander)
- Notophthalmus v. viridescens* (Red Eft/Red-spotted Newt)
- Plethodon cinereus* (Redback salamander)
- P. glutinosus* (Northern Slimy salamander)
- P. jordani* (Jordan's salamander)
- P. kentucky* (Cumberland Plateau salamander)
- P. richmondi* (Ravine salamander)
- P. welleri* (Weller's salamander)
- P. yonahlossee* (Yonahlossee salamander)

##### Frogs and Toads

- Bufo americanus* (American toad)
- Hyla crucifer* (Spring Peeper)
- Rana catesbeiana* (Bullfrog)
- R. palustris* (Pickerel frog)

#### Reptiles

##### Snakes

- Coluber c. constrictor* (Northern Black Racer)
- Diadophis punctatus edwardsii* (Northern Ringneck snake)
- Lampropeltis t. traingulum* (Eastern Milk snake)

*Nerodia s. sipedon* (Northern Water snake)

*Thamnophis s. sirtalis* (Eastern Garter snake)

Turtles

*Chelydra serpentina* (Common Snapping turtle)

*Graptemys geographica* (Common Map turtle)

*Sternotherus odoratus* (Common Musk turtle)

Totals

Salamanders	19
Frogs and Toads	4
Snakes	5
Turtles	<u>3</u>
Total # species	31
(a 6 species increase from 1991)	

1992 Spring Meeting Attendants

Kurt Buhlmann

Hannah Donahue

Mike Donahue

Chris D'Orgeix

Ned Gilmore

Michael Hayslett

Don Mackler

Don Merkle

Joe Mithcell

Justin Mitchell

Julie Ohanesian

Norman Reichenbach

Paul Sattler

Larry Smith

Mike Smith

Walker Smith

Terry Spohn

Phil Stevenson

Gordon Wilson

Total: 19 individuals

## FIELD NOTES

*Pseudemys floridana* (Cooter): VA: Sussex County, small creek flowing into the Nottoway River 2.0 km NE of intersection of county roads 626 and 632, and 2.5 km S. of intersection of state road 35 and county road 626. 5 June 1992, Don Schwab.

A large male (carapace 219 mm) was found courting a female *Trachemys s. scripta* (Yellowbelly Slider). The cooter was collected. The female was caught, examined, grossly determined to represent a normal yellowbelly slider and released. This turtle has not been reported from Sussex County. The specimen has been preserved, cataloged in the author's personal collection with number D-632-92. The turtle will be given to J. Mitchell for deposition in an appropriate public collection.

Don Schwab  
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Wildlife Division  
Post Office Box 847  
Suffolk, VA 23429-0847

*Cnemidophorus sexlineatus sexlineatus* (Six-Lined Racerunner): VA: Campbell County, 1.8 km SSE of the intersection of county roads 221 and 621. Lynchburg, VA. 30 July 1992, Michael S. Hayslett.

Four or five adult racerunners ranging in size from approximately 130-230 cm in total length, were observed on the above date along a section of the nature trail on the property of J. Crew Outfitters, while accompanied by Shane Barker. The site is located approximately 150 meters NW of the Norfolk and Western RR culvert over Tomahawk Creek at 230 m elevation. The site consisted of a 30 m section of the trail on either side of a drainage pipe and wash-out area. It is characterized by dry, loose, well-drained soil with tall grasses and thickets bordering the trail. The fine-sized "crush and run" gravel the company applied to the trail surface appears to accentuate the arid-like habitat of this microenvironment.

With persistence, two specimens were eventually collected on July 30, 1992. On my entry to the site, a male was observed with a caterpillar-like prey item in its mouth. A male was later collected near this first sighting, but I presumed that it was a different animal as a gut analysis did not yield a caterpillar. The male measured 245 mm in total length, with a SVL of 80 mm. The stomach contents included: one large red

## FIELD NOTES

ant, two field crickets, one gnat/black fly, one grasshopper larva, one 3-4 mm snail as well as miscellaneous plant and invertebrate debris.

A female with a total length of 168 mm and a SVL of 55 mm was also collected approximately 100 m south of the site, along the railway line where the habitat consists of dry, open, thicket-bordered dirt fields. The specimens were collected by means of 1/2" rubberbands after "cat and mouse" waiting games. This locality represents a record for this species in Campbell County (Tobey, F.J. 1985. Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, VHS, Purcellville, VA 114 pp.). The population appears to be stable at this location. The female specimen was forwarded to Joe Mitchell for disposition with the Smithsonian.

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*Ambystoma maculatum* (Spotted salamander): VA: Bath County, 5 meters NE of Rt. 629 and Alleghany County line, Douthat State Park, 27 June 1991, Michael S. Hayslett and Brian D. Moyer.

On 20 May 1990 I discovered an adult *Ambystoma maculatum* under a log at the base of a woodland slope in the George Washington National Forest along the eastern boundary of Douthat State Park. Because of the proximity to Bath County, from which the Spotted salamander has not been reported (Tobey, F. 1985. Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, VHS, Purcellville, 114 pp.) a search was initiated for the salamander's presence in Bath County.

After extensive field searches in the surrounding region, three larvae spotted salamanders were obtained by dipnetting on 27 June 1991 in a temporary woodland pool which was located on the east side of State Route 629, approximately 5 meters Northeast from the intersection of this road and the Bath/Alleghany County border. The pool was bisected by the county line. A voucher specimen was submitted to Dr. Joseph Mitchell for disposition with the Smithsonian Museum.

Subsequently, on 29 March 1992, seven *Ambystoma maculatum* egg masses were found in a gully on the southwest end and below the



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earthen dam of Douthat Lake. This pool, located 2.5 km north of the 1991 collection site, further confirms the presence of an adult, breeding population of this species in southern Bath County.

Michael S. Hayslett  
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*Ambystoma maculatum* (Spotted Salamander): VA: Alleghany County, 3.6 km SE of Clifton Forge. 23 February 1992, Michael S. Hayslett.

An adult spotted salamander was observed migrating across Rt. 701, approximately 20 meters N of Rt. 736 and the Botetourt Co. line at 22:00 hours. The night was mild and foggy at 8°C, and there had been a rain earlier in the evening. The salamander had traveled out of a wooded ravine on the E side of 701 and was proceeding across a plateau. The male, with distinctly enlarged glands on either side of the cloaca, had a SVL of 82 mm and a total length of 190 mm. The salamander continued on its route when released.

It is noteworthy to mention that the animal's proximity to the Botetourt County line and the presence of similar terrain and habitat south of the collection site suggest that this species also occurs in Botetourt County (Tobey, F. 1985. Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles: A Distributional Survey, VHS, Purcellville, 114 pp.).

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*Coluber constrictor constrictor* (Northern Black Racer): VA: Bath County, Lake Moomaw, app. 5.5 km west of Callison, 21 May 1992, Gary S. Hayslett.

The following account was reported to me by my father. While pleasure boating on Lake Moomaw, a snake was observed swimming in open water app. 0.8 km from land. The racer had apparently originated from the beach area at the U.S. Forest Service's Bolar Mountain Recreation

## FIELD NOTES

Area, located on the Lake's northwest shore. It was intent on reaching the farthest of two small islands, a swim of approx. 800 meters distance.

The snake was observed to alternate periods of surface and subsurface swimming with rests, which it accomplished by expanding its body and floating. It also elevated the anterior portion of its body high above the waterline to apparently gain a better perspective on its destination. The racer swam a wide swath to avoid the craft, but returned to and resumed its course toward its objective, the southern island.

An on-site examination of the islands on 8 August revealed a noticeable refuge for nesting passerine birds. It is interesting to speculate on the motive for the racer's orientation, which appeared to be visual (although traditionally squamates are considered effectively "near-sighted"). Perhaps chemoreception, or the smell, of potential prey lured the snake into vulnerable, open waters. Regardless, this sighting raises some intriguing questions concerning such an uncommonly seen activity in this species.

Photos were forwarded to the VHS archives, however, a positive identification could not be made. If the snake was indeed *Coluber constrictor* it would constitute a Bath County record. Anyone working in the Lake Moomaw area should be on the alert for this species and collect a voucher specimen to verify its presence.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Herpetology is not what it used to be. When I first started out as an amateur hobbyist in the early-1960s many professional herpetologists still combined research and publishing with keeping a menagerie of animals for either personal, professional, or educational reasons. Times have changed, as there are fewer professional herpetologists keeping animals in captivity and there are more people who are not professionally trained researchers or professors who are interested in captive husbandry. Indeed, there has developed a split between these two groups. It is not my intent to review the genesis of the division between herpetoculturists and the scientists in this essay. However, the main point of contention seems to be over the removal of animals from wild populations to be sold in the pet trade to persons who contribute little to nothing to education and the conservation of these animals. The pet business is not policed by any governmental organization. Professional scientists on the other hand, do consider that the animals they study in the wild or in museum collections advance the science of herpetology, science education, and conservation. This is not a true division, however, as there are amateurs who educate and practice conservation and professionals who do not educate and do not practice conservation. Some professionals view amateurs interested only in captive husbandry as pet owners little interested in education or real science, and some amateurs view professionals as people who look down on them for not wanting to do science. The feelings are real and in some cases true.

In this essay I want to briefly review some of the literature serving both of these camps. My point is that we can all learn from each other and that both the technical literature and the amateur herpetological literature can be useful and interesting sources of information. Some even make good reading.

The scientific literature:

Copeia. This is the oldest of the professional herpetology journals (founded in 1913). It is named after Edward Drinker Cope because it reflects the areas covered by the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (fish and herps). Cope studied both fish and herps in the late 1800s. The articles in this journal are technical reports of research in these disciplines. It is published quarterly. Membership information and a good pamphlet on careers in herpetology can be obtained from Dr. Brooks M. Burr, Dept. of Zoology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6501.

Herpetologica and Herpetological Monographs. Both of these journals contain highly technical reports of research on amphibians and reptiles. Herpetologica is published quarterly and Herpetological Monographs appears annually. Both are received with membership in the Herpetologists' League. The journal was first published in 1936. Members receive occasional discounts on books. Contact Joseph C. Mitchell (Secretary of the Herpetologists' League), Dept. of Biology, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173 for information on membership.

Journal of Herpetology. A technical journal published quarterly by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR). This society began as the Ohio Herpetological Society in 1958 but changed its name in 1967 to SSAR to reflect its national and international scope. A number of books and other publications have been published by this society. Contact Dr. Douglas Taylor, SSAR Treasurer, Dept. of Zoology, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.

Herpetological Review. Another quarterly publication of SSAR; devoted to news, notes, review articles, research reports, and other miscellany. HR is part of one's membership benefits or it may be purchased separately. Write to Dr. Douglas Taylor at the address above for information.

#### The amateur literature

Chicago Herpetological Society. This is the largest amateur (or regional) society with over 2000 members. They publish a monthly Bulletin that contains a wide variety of basic herpetological research reports, brief reviews of some technical literature, a news section, and a classified section. Members can receive information on care of captive herps and a 20% discount on a large number of books. For information write to Chicago Herpetological Society, Membership Secretary, 2001 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60614.

Reptile and Amphibian Magazine. This magazine is a relatively new one that is published by a veterinarian in Pennsylvania. It contains colorful, easy-to-read articles on herps from around the world, lots of advertisements of products for herpetoculturists, and a classified section. Write to R.D. 3, Box 3709-A, Pottsville, PA 17901 for subscription information.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Vivarium. This is another magazine devoted to captive herps. The color is substantially better in this magazine than in the one above. There are articles on herps worldwide, essays, herp news, personal profiles, and a classified section. For information on membership in the American Federation of Herpetoculturists, write to P.O. Box 1131, Lakeside, CA 92040-0905.

Some new books.

Biology of the Pitvipers. Edited by J.A. Campbell and E.D. Brodie, Jr. and published in 1992 by SELVA, a new publisher of herp books in Tyler, Texas. This book is the best available on various aspects of the biology of this group of snakes. VHS member W.H. (Marty) Martin has a chapter on the seasonal activity of timber rattlesnakes in this book. I highly recommend it to anyone seriously interested in pitvipers. The price is \$75.00. Write to SELVA, P.O. Box 5213, Tyler, TX 75712-5213 for information.

Snakes of Eastern North America. Written by Carl H. Ernst and R.W. Barbour. This is a compendium of information on all the snakes east of the Mississippi. There are color photos of most species. It was first published in 1989 but contained some errors. This printing has included the corrections but the publisher also has substantially increased the price. I cannot understand why this book has to cost \$98.75. Perhaps they do not care if they sell many of them. If you want to spend a lot of money on one book, then write to the University Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706.

Landscape with Reptile. This is a book on many aspects of biology of the timber rattlesnake, its decline in New England, and how it is faring in the face of increasing urbanization. It was written by Thomas Palmer and costs \$19.00. For information, write to Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, Wayside Road, Burlington, MA 01803.

These are just some of the interesting books, journals, and magazines available to anyone who has an interest in herpetology. The VHS Newsletter, which by the way is going to be published twice a year instead of four, will in the future contain information on other regional

societies and notices of books and publications as they appear. Send your book reviews and notices of books and other publications to Doug Eggleston, Rt. 2, Box 828, Brookneal, VA 24528. We need your input to keep VHS members informed about the literature on herpetology.

### NOTICE

As of 1 July 1992 it became illegal for anyone to sell any native species of animal, including amphibians and reptiles, anywhere in Virginia. And because of the Federal Lacey Act, it became illegal for anyone to sell native species from a Virginia population to anyone else across state lines. This means that no pet store in Virginia can sell any species of snake, turtle, etc. that is found naturally in the state. If you know of pet stores illegally selling native species, please contact the county game warden. This is a law passed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Also note that personal possession without a permit is limited to five individuals of each non-endangered species. There may be a permit system put in place for those who have a legitimate need for more than five and for commercial breeding of selected species. Discussions will start this fall. Stay tuned. Some information will be available at the Fall 1992 VHS meeting in Martinsville, VA at the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

## MINUTES OF THE SPRING 1992 VHS MEETING

The Spring business meeting was held at the University of Richmond, April 11, 1992. President Joe Mitchell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., with eleven members present. Ron Southwick gave the treasurer's report. The Society had \$2348.17 in the bank and 105 members as of 10 April 1992.

### Editor's Report

Paul Sattler reported that there was no backlog of articles for *Catesbeiana* and requested material for the next bulletin. A total of 180 copies of *Catesbeiana* were printed and 105 were sent out costing \$249.98.

Doug Eggleston said newsletter costs were finally stable. The last newsletter, along with postage cost \$162.62. The next newsletter would be mailed out May 1. Ron asks Doug to include a "final" renewal reminder in the newsletter and send to those who have not paid dues for 1992. There was discussion over the costs of VHS publications versus dues receipts. In spite of the dues increase to \$10.00, the Society is still barely breaking even after costs of *Catesbeiana*, newsletters and postage. Paul suggested we go to two newsletters/year and alternate with *Catesbeiana* mailings. A motion was made to decrease newsletters to twice a year and was approved by the membership present. *Catesbeiana* will be mailed out in September and March and the Newsletters in January and June.

### Old Business:

The changes to the VHS Constitution (published in *Catesbeiana*) were voted on and ratified.

Sue Bruenderman was elected as President-elect and will serve in that capacity until the Fall 1993 meeting. At that time she will become President and serve for two more years. Joe Mitchell will continue as President until 1993 Fall meeting and Ron Southwick will remain Secretary and Treasurer for the same period.

The VHS will jointly sponsor a "Virginia's Venomous Snakes and Their Look Alikes" poster with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The Society will provide the photographs and captions and the VDGIF will produce the posters. Cost will be shared by both organizations.

The VDGIF donated a copy of Virginia's Endangered Species to the VHS for its contribution to the book. It was decided at the meeting to raffle off the book at the Fall 1992 meeting.

New Business:

Joe announced that Bob Bader (1982 VHS president) was killed in an accident while visiting Bali in February, 1992. An obituary will be published in the next issue of *Catesbeiana*.

The Fall VHS meeting will be held at the Natural History Museum in Martinsville. The date will be announced later.

An auction was held to sell the Society's holding of newsletters, bulletins, etc. from other herp organizations. Ben Greishaw donated several years of the Journal of Herpetology which sparked an exciting bid battle, resulting in \$80.00 for the treasury. A total of \$285.00 was raised from the auction.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m. and Wendy Mitchell provided a variety of snacks and refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Southwick, Secretary and Treasurer



VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
TREASURER'S REPORT  
Spring 1992 Meeting

The balance in the treasury reported at the Fall 1991 Meeting was \$2021.47 which included \$1025.00 (CD) and \$996.47 (checking).

Expenditures since that time included:

11/7/91 ck. #124	Newsletter 2:2 and Postage	\$151.21
02/5/92 ck. #125	Newsletter 2:3 and Postage	162.62
2/13/92 ck. #126	Lodging deposit (Hemlock Haven)	72.00
2/26/92 ck. #127	Endangered species reprints	156.00
3/19/92 ck. #128	<i>Catesbeiana</i> and Postage	249.98
	Check charge	.90

Total Expenditures \$792.71

Receipts from dues	\$856.00
Raffle (Fall Meeting)	86.00
Back issues of <i>Catesbeiana</i>	37.50
Newsletter ads	50.00
Donation (C. Craig)	10.00
Interest	29.05

Total Receipts \$1068.55

Balance in checking as of 04/10/92 \$1272.31

Certificate of Deposit \$1075.86

Total money of VHS treasury \$2348.17

The Society has a current membership of 105 members.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Southwick  
Secretary and Treasurer

**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**FALL 1992 MEETING OF THE**  
**VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

The Fall 1992 VHS meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on October 24, at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, Martinsville. Although Martinsville can be approached from all four compass directions, it is assumed that nobody will be driving up from North Carolina. Otherwise:

1. From the north (e.g., Roanoke, Shenandoah Valley), take US 220 to intersection with Va. 57 at Bassett Forks, just north of Collinsville. There are two options here: either take Business 220 through Collinsville, approximately 5 miles to intersection with US 58, the museum is about 300 feet beyond this junction, on the right; or: continue on US 220 Bypass to exit on US 58, turning left (east), and proceed as follows:
2. For the west (Hillsville, Galax, Abingdon) take US 58 directly into west Martinsville, crossing the Dan River and continuing just over a mile, uphill. There is a large and prominent "dinosaur" sign on the right directly across from the museum. At this point you will need to get into the left-turn lane for a turn at the top of the hill.
3. From the east (Danville, Norfolk, Richmond, NOVA), take US 58 through Martinsville, (about 3 miles) to its junction with US 220 Business, where you will need to get into the right lane for a turn just beyond the traffic light (the museum is visible from here, on the left about 300 feet, old brick school with three flagpoles out front).

Please park in the ample lot on the right as you enter the grounds.

If you would like to present a paper at the Fall Meeting please send a title to Dr. Richard Hoffman at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, Martinsville, Virginia 24112.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I wish to  initiate  renew membership in the Virginia Herpetological Society for the year 19\_\_\_\_.

I wish only to receive a membership list. Enclosed is \$1.00 to cover the cost.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dues Category:  Regular  Family  Under 18  Life  
                          (\$10.00)           (\$12.50)           (\$6.00)           (\$150)

Interests:  Reptiles  Amphibians  Captive Husbandry  
                   Distribution  Research  
 Specifically \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Virginia Herpetological Society and send to the treasurer: Ronald Southwick, ~~5608 Parkland Ct., Virginia Beach, VA 23464.~~  
408 Franklin Drive, Blacksburg, VA  
24060



## Field Notes

This section provides a means of 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 areas are welcomed. Reports can be on single species or fauna from selected areas, such as a state park or county. The format of the reports is species' scientific name (common name): State abbreviation: County, locality. Date. Observer(s) or collector(s). Report or observations given one line below the data mentioned above. Author(s) name and address are given one line below the report or observation. Consult published notes or the editor if your information does not readily fit this format.

If the note contains information on geographic distribution, a voucher specimen or color slide should be sent for verification and deposited in a permanent museum or sent to the Virginia Herpetological Society. Species identification for observational records should be verified by a second person.

The correct citation format: Tobey, F.J. 1989. Field notes: *Coluber constrictor constrictor*. *Catesbeiana* 9(2):35.

## Herpetological Artwork

Herpetological artwork is welcomed. If the artwork has been published elsewhere, we will need to obtain copyright before we can use it in an issue. We need drawings and encourage members to send us anything appropriate, especially their own work.