

ALBINISM IN SOUTHEASTERN AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

The Virginia Herpetological Society would like to have sober reports of "unusual" snakes or other reptiles and amphibians. Rare finds may reward the careful observer. Your local museum, zoo, university, college, or high school biology department will be interested in any unusual specimens.

Live or preserved, they should be accompanied by careful notes on the locality where captured; nearest landmark -- highway intersection, distance and direction from landmark; date, time; weather conditions and approximate temperature. Unsupported sightings should be accompanied by "field note" description and sketch, where seen, type of environment, date and time when seen last.

Such data are bound to aid the projected --- slow starting -- census of Virginian Amphibians and Reptiles. Next year we got to be organized!

Residents of Arlington Forest (and vicinity) in southern Arlington County need not fear a three to four-foot white snake with large dark brown to black saddle blotches on its back. It is a harmless Pine Snake (Pituophis melanoleucus). The mother of a teen-age girl evicted it from its temporary quarters when it overstayed its welcome.

While some "exotic" species will turn up in the state as the result of accidental or intentional release, escape, or accidental transportation, these occurrences are the exception rather than the rule. Normally, they will not winter over because either the local climate or food is not suited to them. In the case of animals brought in from other areas or states, these may dig in, adapt and cross with similar or identical subspecies native to the new area. Mixing of these genes may establish unusual characteristics in the future individuals of the native species.

Every once in a while an off-beat appears. Such a one is the albino. Scouts on a hike in Hanover County, Va. reported seeing a "cream-color" snake of fairly small size. This, undoubtedly was an albino specimen. An albino Worm Snake (Carphophis a. amoenus) was captured alive in Damascus, Maryland in 1959 and members who attended the National Zoo meeting that year saw the specimen. It is now preserved in the U.S. National Museum and on color slides.

Dr. Max Hensley, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, and the instructor of one of our members, has sought out isolated and scattered records of albinism in amphibians and reptiles. He uncovered 87 references to albinism in the scientific literature; 96 records not previously reported were received by him in response to 200 inquiries. The records are for the United States and Canada. We have taken the report which Dr. Hensley published in 1959 and excerpted from it the records relating to the Virginias, Carolinas, Tennessee and Maryland. It may give an indication of the occurrence of albinism as noted to the time of the report. It is assumed that Dr. Hensley would be very interested in any additional records that may be turned up by readers.

SEE: "ALBINISM IN (SOUTHEASTERN) AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES" Page Two

ALBINISM IN (SOUTHEASTERN) AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

The following is excerpted from a publication of the Museum of Michigan State University, Biological Series, Vol. 1, Number 4, dated 1959. The original article by Dr. Max Hensley, East Lansing, Michigan, is entitled "Albinism in North American Amphibians and Reptiles."

Complete albinism, for the purpose of this study, refers to those animals that exhibit no apparent melanin in their body patterns and that possess a pink, or red, eye color. Varying degrees of melanin concentrations are expected and definitions of albinism are largely ones of individual interpretations. Body patterns, on most albinistic specimens, are usually evident and apparently are caused by secondary pigments and by color from underlying blood vessels exposed by the absence of melanophores. It is possible that chemical constituents of the environment, or the metabolic condition of the animal, may be factors contributing to the yellowish or whitish appearance of some specimens. Certainly non-genetic causal factors are involved if a darkening effect is noted when light-colored animals are introduced into other environments. With these considerations in mind and the fact that preservatives are also responsible for color aberrations, the writer (Dr. Max Hensley) has been obliged to rely on the data on specimen labels and interpretations supplied by the collaborators. Animals exhibiting partial albinistic tendencies have been so designated when known. When pertinent, notations of collaborators have been included.

(Additional explanatory text on Dr. Hensley's survey omitted -- the following are records of albino specimens noted for southeastern states: Virginia, West Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Maryland.)

FROGS AND TOADS

Bufo americanus American Toad Bufonidae

VIRGINIA, Fairfax County; J.E. Avery, Coll.; October 5, 1956. Specimen sent to U.S. National Museum, Washington, DC. Reported by J. Lear Grimmer, National Zoological Park.

Pseudacris sp.? Chorus Frog Hylidae

VIRGINIA, Frederick County, 5 miles NW of Winchester. J.F. Ackroyd and R.L. Hoffman (Copeia, 4:257-258, 1946). Adult normal in every respect except for lack of pigmentation.

Scaphiopus holbrooki Eastern Spadefoot Pelobatidae

VIRGINIA, New Kent County, 1 mile SE of Lanexa; Neil D. Richmond, Coll. Several albino tadpoles observed and some were collected and reared through metamorphosis. Reported by Neil D. Richmond, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Rana catesbeiana Bullfrog

Ranidae

Maryland, Maryland Frog Farm; March 1939, AMNH 43685. Adult.

Reported by Richard G. Zweifel, Amer. Mus. of Nat'l History, New York City.

Rana pipiens Leopard Frog

Maryland, Prince Georges County, A.B. Cowan, Coll.; 1955 Adult.

collected, photographed and released on the Refuge. Reported by Wm. H. Stickel, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland.

SALAMANDERS

Ambystoma maculatum Spotted Salamander Ambystomidae

Maryland, Prince Georges County, Patuxent Research Refuge; L.M. Llewellyn, Coll.; April 25, 1957. USNM 139672. Adult. Reported by Dr. Doris Cochran, U.S.N.M., Washington, DC

Tennessee, Washington County, Johnson City. B.B. Brandt Collection (HERPETOLOGICA, 8(1):3, 1952). Mature male.

Amphiuma means Two-toed Amphiuma Amphiumidae

South Carolina, Barnwell County, near Blackville. A Schwartz (HERPETOLOGICA, 13:75-76, 1957) Reports three white individuals with dark eyes and two brown-spotted specimens. Two other small white amphiumae were seen but not collected.

Plethodon cinereus Red-backed Salamander Plethodontidae

Maryland, Baltimore County, Hartford Road and Gunpowder River; F. Groves, Coll.; April 5, 1936. Article and photo of adult specimen in Baltimore Sun on or about June 24, 1936. Reported by F. Groves, Baltimore Zoo. Balto. Md.

Plethodon jordoni Metcalf's Salamander

VIRGINIA, Smyth County, Whitetop Mountain; J.A. Organ, Coll.; August 5, 1957. UMMZ Field No. CD, 5985. Complete description to be published in forthcoming paper. Reported by J.A. Organ, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

SNAKES

Cemophora coccinea Scarlet Snake Colubridae

North Carolina, Rockingham County. C.S. Brimley (Reptiles and Amphibians of North Carolina. Installment No. 22, 1939-43). Albino specimen 15 inches long.

SNAKES (continued)

Diadophis punctatus Ringneck Snake Colubridae

West Virginia, Anne Arundel County, near Bayrd. John E. Cooper, Coll. (HERPETOLOGICA, 14:55, 1958). Adult specimen now in the private collection of Dr. C.J. Stine, Jr., Balto. Md.

Elaphe guttata Corn Snake

North Carolina, Stanly County, near Albemarle; Efried, Coll.; October 1953. Specimen alive in the Children's Nature Museum Charlotte, North Carolina. Reported by James W. Manley, Children's Nature Museum, Charlotte, N.C.

Tennessee, Obion County, Reelfoot Lake. M.V. Parker (Report, Reelfoot Lake Biol. Station, 12:20-30, 1948). Two juvenile albino specimens given to the Memphis Zoological Garden in 1938 but survived only a few months. Presumably not preserved.

Elaphe obsoleta Black Rat Snake

Maryland, Prince Georges County, Silver Spring, J.E. Cooper (HERPETOLOGICA, 14:55, 1958). Alive at NZP. Washington, DC
 Maryland, Prince Georges County, near Upper Marlboro, J.E. Cooper. (HERPETOLOGICA, 14:54, 1958). USNM 130299. Pale white-tan specimen five feet in length.

North Carolina, Stanly County, near Albemarle; D.E. Holbrooks, Coll.; August 8, 1945. NCSM 45/9/10. Reported by Harry T. Davis, Raleigh, North Carolina

North Carolina, Stanly County, near Stanfield. F.B. Meacham (COPEIA, 2:102, 1946). Pure white in color with bright red eyes. Specimen 1153 mm in total length.

Tennessee, Shelby County, Memphis. Overland Park Zoo (alive). An albino specimen 16 inches in length escaped from zoo in 1955 and another specimen, 36 inches in length, taken from the same locality in 1956, was assumed to be the same individual. Reported by R.S. Graves, Memphis Zoological Garden, Memphis.

VIRGINIA, Westmoreland County, 15 mi. South of Colonial Beach; A Dillion, Coll. June 3, 1957. Alive in NZP. Reported by J. Lear Grimmer, National Zoological Park, Washington.

Farancia abacura Mud Snake

North Carolina, Hertford County; D. Shakleford, Coll.; July 18, 1947 NCSM 47/7/22. Specimen mounted in N.C. State Museum Reported by Harry T. Davis, Raleigh, N.C.

SNAKES (continued)

Lampropeltis doliata Milk Snake

VIRGINIA, Montgomery County, near Blacksburg; C. Hanson, Coll.;
September 30, 1955. USNM 137315. Reported by Dr. Doris
Cochran, US National Museum, Washington, D.C.

Natrix sipedon, Banded Water Snake

VIRGINIA, New Kent County, 1 mi. SE of Lanexa. Sight record of a
specimen with a very faint pattern. Not collected.
Reported by Neil D. Richmond, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh.

Crotalus horridus, Timber Rattlesnake

North Carolina, Yancey County, Mt. Mitchell. AMNH 63821. Faint
pattern present. Specimen jar labeled xanthic.
Reported by Dr. Richard G. Zweifel, AMNH, N.Y.

TURTLES

Chelydra serpentina, Snapping Turtle

Chelydridae

Locality Unknown. Albino specimen alive in the Children's Nature
Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina. J.W. Manley.

Chrysemys picta, Painted Turtle

Testudinidae

Maryland, Prince Georges County, Upper Marlboro, Marlboro Branch,
John E. Cooper (HERPETOLOGICA, 14:55, 1958). USNM 116458.

Malaclemmys terrapin Diamond-backed Terrapin

South Carolina ?, locality unknown. S.F. Hildebrand (Journ. Elishua
Mitchell Soc., 46(1) :47-48, 1930). Two albino
specimens hatched from different broods in 1913
and 1929 in propagation experiments at the U.S.
Fisheries Biological Station, Beaufort, S.C.

End of excerpts from Dr. Max Hensley's publication on "Albinism
in North American Amphibians and Reptiles" (MSU).
(Publications of the Museum, Michigan State University, Biol. Series)

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COLLECTING NOTES:

Pittsylvania County, VIRGINIA

Tantilla coronata

Collected by W.H. Martin III, VHS member from Leesburg, Virginia
The fourth specimen found in the state of Virginia and preserved
in a scientific collection. The specimen, presented to the National
Zoological Park (NZP) has since been preserved and will be turned
over to the U.S. National Museum (USNM) soon. It measures about
eight inches. CONGRATULATIONS TO W.H. (MARTY) MARTIN, III !

(Continued) SENeca

MARYLAND MEETING NOTICE
FACULTY, GRADUATE COLLEGE, HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH MEMBERS
OF THE VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

are invited to an informal meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. Darrell Drummond in Seneca, Maryland.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 12, 1961 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM

BRING BAG SUPPER, FLASHLIGHT, SLEETER REPELLENT, DUES.

PROGRAM: MOVIES, COLOR SLIDES, INFORMAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.
EVENING: COLOR SLIDES FOR ARCHAIC HERPETOLOGISTS
FIELD EXERCISE FOR ACTIVE HERPETOLOGISTS.

AREA: Drummond Home is adjacent to Chesapeake and Ohio Canal - an Interior Department, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NATIONAL MONUMENT. C&O Tow Path -- specimens may be examined and returned to the habitat. Collection may be possible away from the park area.

HOST: Darrell Drummond, VHS member, is audio-visual aids expert for Montgomery County Board of Education. He is a former "Time-for-Science" Instructor and was our projectionist at the VHS 2d annual meeting at the National Zoological Park.

HOW TO GET THERE: Va. members approach via Glebe Rd, Arlington, or Chain Bridge Rd (Rt.#123) Fairfax, crossing Potomac at Chain Bridge. Arizona Ave. to MacArthur Blvd. to Persimmontree Rd. just past the Cabin John Firehouse. Turn right on Persimmontree to River Rd. Left on River Rd to end. Left on Seneca Rd to bottom of hill. (See Md.) Md. members: Approach via Rt#28 to Darnestown (or River Rd.) turning south at Darnestown and keep on Seneca Rd to bridge over Seneca Creek. Cross bridge and immediately turn left on Tschiffely Mill Rd to end.

REMEMBER, IT IS VHS-ESTABLISHED TRADITION TO BRING OWN BAG-SUPPER!