

SYMPOSIUM ON ENDANGERED  
VA. PLANTS AND ANIMALS TO  
BE HELD IN BLACKSBURG, VA  
MAY 19-20, 1978

A symposium on endangered and threatened plants and animals will be held at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, May 19 and 20, 1978. All VaHS members and friends are invited to attend.

The symposium features work sessions on Friday, May 19th for the several committees: plants, birds, fishes, amphibians and reptiles, mammals, marine invertebrates, freshwater and terrestrial molluscs, and freshwater and terrestrial arthropods. There is also a committee on geographic areas of special concern.

The Saturday (May 20th) session will be devoted to short reports by the committee chairman. All of the proceedings will be published by Virginia Tech and State University.

Scene of the symposium is the Donaldson Brown Center for Continuing Education. The Center for Environmental Studies, VPI & SU, is the sponsor. Dr. Don W. Linzey\* is chairman of the Steering Committee for the symposium. VaHS is well represented on the amphibians and reptile panel. A special report on the panel will be carried in VaHS-B soon

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the symposium is to generate carefully considered, well-documented lists of Virginia flora and fauna deemed endangered, threatened, or otherwise of concern, on the basis of the best biological expertise available. All data compiled (status, distribution, habitat, relevant life history, etc.) will go into a comprehensive publication.

It is becoming increasingly important that vulnerable plants and animals be identified. Knowledge of their distribution, and biology is essential for assessing environmental quality and for land-use planning by various state and federal resource-oriented agencies and organizations. By identifying those forms about which little is known, it is hoped that significant future research efforts may be directed toward these species.

The symposium will bring together conservationists,

professional biologists, teachers, students, and interested laymen. You are urged to attend the workshop of your choice and the general assembly. The registration fee, \$17, assures you of a copy of the results of the entire symposium to be published by the Center for Environmental Studies, VPI & SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061 ...

DEFINITIONS

Five categories have been selected by the steering committee:

Endangered: survival in immediate jeopardy -- in danger of extinction over all, or a significant part of its VA range.

Threatened: likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future-- including forms that have shown decreases in numbers beyond the limits of normal fluctuation of populations; or documented range contraction.

Special concern: should be continually monitored -- exists in only one or a few small geographic areas, and is rare over a relatively broad range.

Continued on the next page.

VaHS BULLETIN is a newsletter appearing at least four times a year. Its pages are open for articles or comment on topics related to Virginian herpetology. The principal activity is the state survey of reptiles and amphibians.

VaHS BULLETIN is sent free of cost to Virginia's university and college biology, zoology, and natural science departments. Science and biology teachers --high school or junior high-- may receive the VaHS BULLETIN with membership at \$1 yearly.

VPI and SU Symposium, May  
(continued)

Status undetermined: has been suggested as "possibly threatened or endangered" but there is not enough data to accurately determine the status.

In preparation for the symposium panel on amphibians and reptiles, the VaHS distribution maps have been examined along with such population data as are known to exist. A fact that constantly surfaces is the lack of good population data on many species of amphibians and reptiles.

Going over the issues of VaHS BULLETIN, population studies are not frequently encountered. \*Clifford's the most frequently seen snakes in Amelia County, Dr. Charles R. Blem's\*\* work on barking treefrogs and other amphibians and the eastern cottonmouth on the Coastal Plain, W. H. (Marty) \*Martin's census of rattlesnakes of the Virginia Highlands, and, Rob Simpson's\*\* fine article on the status of the wood turtle in northern Virginia, are among the population studies appearing most recently.

Those who are looking for a project in herpetology may well benefit from the symposium proceedings. We are not going to try to anticipate at this time.

Dr. Richard Highton, Univ. of Maryland, College Park, has volunteered that the Plethodon populations of Virginia are apparently in good health. There are some fears that local populations (e.g., those at White Top - Mt. Rogers) may be under great stress as a result of recreational activities in the area.

A thorough examination of amphibians and reptile status in Virginia is long overdue.

PROGRAM

Registration for the VPI and SU symposium is on Friday, May 19 at 10:00. The program gets underway at 1:00 p.m. with workshop sessions (panels) at 2:00 p.m. On Friday evening at 7:30, Dr. James D. Williams will give a talk on the activities of the Office of Endangered Species, Washington, D.C.

Saturday, May 20, is the general assembly. Registration starts at 8:00. Dr. William A. Lavery, President of Virginia Tech and State University, will welcome the group. Opening remarks will be made by Dr. John Cairns, Director of the Center for Environmental Studies, VPI & SU, Blacksburg, VA.

The May 20, 1978 program:

The panel report schedule is as follows:

- 9:30 a.m. Plants
- 10:00 Molluscs
- 10:30 (break)
- 10:50 Arthropods
- 11:20 Marine Invertebrates (Lunch)
- 1:30 p.m. Fishes
- 2:00 Amphibians & reptiles
- 2:30 Birds
- 3:00 Mammals
- 3:30 Geographic areas of Special Concern
- 4:00 (Closing remarks).

The VPI & SU symposium on Endangered and Threatened Plants and Animals of Virginia is co-sponsored by:

The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, VPI and SU, Blacksburg, VA

Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, VA, and,

Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), Gloucester Point, VA.

Reptile & Amphibian panel:

- Ashton, Mr. Ray E., Jr.  
N.C. State Museum
- \*\*Brooks, Dr. G.R.  
College of William & Mary  
Dodd, Dr. Kenneth E.  
Ofc. of Endangered Species  
Washington, D.C.
- \*\*Giles, Dr. R.H., Jr.  
VPI & SU, Blacksburg, VA
- \*\*Hoffman, Dr. Richard L.  
Radford College, VA
- \*\*Krakauer, Dr. Thomas H.  
Roanoke V. Science Museum
- \*Tobey, Franklin J., Jr.

Advisers to R & A panel:

- Dr. Harry G.M. Jopson<sup>8\*\*</sup>  
Bridgewater College, VA
- Dr. Jack A. Musick  
Marine Scientist, VIMS
- Dr. Charles R. Blem<sup>8\*\*</sup>  
Virginia Commonwealth U.

DISMAL SWAMP, REPORT OF A 1977 YCC PARTICIPANT

During summer 1977, I was a youth leader for the Youth Conservation Corps, (YCC). The location of my work was in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge with headquarters at Suffolk, VA. The camp lasted for eight weeks, and during that time the refuge staff and all of us working for the YCC saw and recorded many species of animals.

Included in the records were many sightings of reptiles and amphibians. My camp director, Mr. John Hutchinson, encouraged me to present these observations to VaHS BULLETIN. Unfortunately, in many cases, detailed descriptions of the animals were not recorded, but, I hope the following information may be of some use.

Specimens observed were:

SNAKES

Northern black racers: On three separate occasions I found large specimens crossing road along the Washington Ditch.

Copperhead: Two found on Washington Ditch road.

Southern ring-necked snake juvenile (5 inches) seen crossing Washington Ditch road by Tom Gwynn.

Canebrake rattlesnake: A 5 1/2-foot specimen seen by Don Schwab along Interior Ditch.

Rough green snake: Newly hatched (9-inch) specimen found by Don Schwab in shrubbery along trail at Dismal Town site.

Brown water snake: One large specimen observed by writer close up in the Jericho Ditch.

Eastern kingsnake: Two found along Lynn Ditch, 1 near the Jericho end, and the other near the Washington end of the ditch. Two more specimens were found at Corapeake. A fourth specimen was found along Washington Ditch Rd. near Lake Drummond.

LIZARDS

Five-lined skink: Found one specimen hiding under rocks at Washington Ditch pier at Lake Drummond.

Ground skink: Six hatchlings were found in Don Schwab's desk drawer.

SALAMANDERS

Red-backed salamander: Four or five specimens, 2 to 3 inches, were found by Don Schwab in Interior Ditch.

Slimy salamander: Four or five were found by Don with the red-backed salamanders at the same spot.

Amphiuma: Two specimens found by Don Schwab in the Washington Ditch; one was two feet and one was one foot in length.

Marbled salamander: One specimen found by Don at Jericho Ditch.

FROGS AND TOADS

American toad: Two found at Washington Ditch near Dismal Town Site.

Leopard frog: Several were seen throughout the swamp, mostly along the Washington Ditch.

Eastern spadefoot: Its low-keyed call was heard often in nearly every ditch throughout Great Dismal Swamp. Several of these were caught at the Washington Ditch.

Narrow-mouthed frog: One specimen found by Don Schwab in the Washington Ditch.

Fowler's toad: One specimen found by Tom Gwynn along the south loop of the trail at Dismal Town.

Continued on the next page.

VaHS COLLECTING DATA SLIP DUPLICATE (mail to VaHS BULLETIN, P.O.Box 1376 LEESBURG, VA 22075) (1) SLIDE (2" X 2" color) accompanies this slip. (2) Specimen deposited at

Collected by: (name) Nearest P.O. in County, VA Nearest X-road (I)(US)(VA)(Co.)# and (I)(US)(VA)(Co.)# Elev. ft. Direction from X-rd to collecting site Distance (X-rd to site) mi.yd.ft. Date of capture / /19 Time: a.m/p.m. Weather (°F) Description of site: Activity of specimen:

Identification: ( ) Confirmed by: at

Preservative used: Other data on back: VaHS B# Map Donated by:



Dismal Swamp YCC Report:  
(continued from p. 3)

TURTLES

Common mud turtle: One 1-inch specimen netted by Gwynn in plant material in the Washington Ditch.

Yellow-bellied turtle: One hatchling (1 1/2 inch) netted by Tom Gwynn with mud turtle, same location.

Red-bellied turtle: One specimen found by Don Schwab on Lynn Ditch road.

Spotted turtle: One found by Don Schwab at Washington Ditch.

Common snapping turtle: A 30-lb. specimen found by Don Schwab 1/2 mile west of Lynn Ditch. Three other specimens were found along the Washington Ditch.

Eastern box turtle: Male specimen found by Gwynn in blackberry patch along slope of Washington Ditch.

(Ms.) Deborah A. Leavitt  
5733 Barberry Lane  
PORTSMOUTH, VA 23703

(Mr.) John Hutchinson, Dir.  
Dismal Swamp YCC Camp  
Suffolk, VA 23434

(Mr.) Tom Gwynn, Env.Coord.  
1420-D Meads Road  
NORFOLK, VA 23505

(Mr.) Donald Schwab (BIOL)  
4233 White Marsh Rd.  
Suffolk, VA 23434

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EARLIEST REPORTED 1978 VA  
COLLECTION RECORD GOES TO  
R. J. GAGNON & RESCUE SQD.  
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"On 26 January 1978, a few of my (rescue) squad friends who work for the county told me about a snake they had seen in a water meter enclosure. They took me to see it. It was an eastern garter snake (Thamnophis s. sirtalis) about 24 inches in length. It was a little sluggish but I brought it home and put it in a cage and gave it a water dish. Of course, I put a small light bulb in the cage. It is now real alert. I am amazed that the snake was o.k. after all of the cold weather we have had. The meter hole had a cement elliptical enclosure with a metal cover. The metal cover may have acted as a solar collector to the benefit of this individual specimen or it might never have made it!"

(Mr.) Robert J. Gagnon\*  
1408 Fullview Ave.  
MECHANICSVILLE, VA  
23111

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ANNUAL MEETING of SOCIETY  
for STUDY of AMPHIBIANS  
and REPTILES 31 MAY 1978  
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The 21st annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR) will be held at the Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. It will feature a symposium on reproduction in captive reptiles, contributed papers, exhibits, etc.

Afternoon of 1 June 1978, has been set aside for a regional herpetological society conference hosted by the SSAR committee for liaison with regional herpetological societies and the Arizona Herpetological Association (AHA). The session is to be moderated by Dr. Jeffrey H. Black (OkHS) and Tom R. Johnson (SSAR). Members are invited to attend the regional and general SSAR sessions.

(Mr.) Joseph T. Collins\*  
Conference Coordinator  
Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas,  
LAWRENCE, KS 66045

(If you are a member of VaHS and attend the SSAR meeting at Tempe, AZ; as a representative of your state society, please use VaHS-B #85 for VaHS policy guidance.)  
VaHS

LETTERS, COMMENTS, IDEAS:

"Some time ago you sent me a letter of introduction to VaHS. ... I have meant to answer ... but, an inordinately full life has prevented that until now.

I have spent most of my life in Va., initially in Fairfax Co., and for the past 5 years in central Va. I graduated from Herndon High School in '65, and Univ. of Virginia (with a degree in biology) in 1969. I completed my M.A. at Charlottesville in 1976. I have been a naturalist since my earliest days, as my grandfather was before me.

Until a few years ago, my major capability in the out-of-doors was birds, I naturally tend to see, however, whatever else happens my way. I also keep notebooks of day-to-day information on whatever turns up (carried) under the headings: BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS, and PLANTS.

Into these notebooks goes anything of interest, whether it be occurrence, numbers, actions, habitat, musings as to correlations and inter-relations, etc. I have, for instance, kept records of when Anurans begin calling, the intensity of the chorus, and deviations from what I

subjectively feel to be the norm. Some of this data is still a bit suspect as I have only learned the majority of Anuran calls (from a record) in the past 2 years. I have a lot of such observations for the Boswell's Tavern area of Louisa Co.

I am hampered in my work on reptiles and amphibians by several things. The first is the lack of any knowledgeable enthusiasts, locally. This is a problem because it forces one to learn mostly by one's self and the nagging doubts as to mistakes one might be making are always there. The second is that I am not especially good at finding reptiles (especially snakes) and could use some instruction there. The third is that I presently have no way to document specimens. I have a single lens reflex camera that is inoperative and hasn't been repaired as yet. Findings of the past year are lost in this respect. ... I have shot pictures of a few herpetiles that fortuitously appeared while I had a working camera, but, have only a few such pix. Most of this work, too, has been done alongside a large avifaunal project

that I have been working on in my local area for the past several years. Birds are a difficult group as there is a large number of species to deal with, they are highly mobile, and they present often extreme identification problems. Thus, my time has been tied up to

Anyway, the area I have been concentrating on is a dioritic igneous intrusion into the metamorphics of the Piedmont. It has become a somewhat famous area because of a battle preservationist landowners have fought for years to keep a state prison out of the area. And, more recently, to keep part of the area from being strip-mined for vermiculite.

Some of my naturalist work has been used to aid in this fight. The area intensively worked extends roughly 3 1/2 miles from, and 6 mi. S from the intersection of Rts. 22 & 15 (Boswell's Tavern) in west-central LOUISA Co. This area is well-watered but is heavily farmed open country. It is moderately rolling. I've made up a list of all the herpetiles I thought had at least a remote chance of being found here and have used this as a checklist.

Continued on the next page.

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APPLICATION FOR VaHS MEMBERSHIP -- INTRODUCTORY (1978) . (cut for your records)

VaHS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (19\_\_\_) INITIAL YEAR(19\_\_\_) . Place stub in your tax files for future use.

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VIRGINIA ZIP CODE \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

(title) DR.MR.MRS.MS. \_\_\_\_\_ (other) VaHS Treasurer notes. PLEASE DON'T MAIL CASH

(occupation) Rec'd \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .

Card sent with #\_\_\_\_ . Keep with your personal records; donations

tel: (703)(804) MAIL TO: Mr. Louis C. Baker . to non-profit org.,

(circle one) \_\_\_\_\_ YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL . science-research.

age: under 18 over 5201 N. 28th Street .

Enclose with your check for VaHS ARLINGTON, VA 22207 . THANKS for your

support; 3" X 5" card for VaHS files. . support of the VaHS

. program.

Continued from page 5:

(Letters, Ideas, etc.)

"On the list are all those amphibians and reptiles that I believe have been satisfactorily identified (my notebook details the specific observations). I hope this will be useful."

(Mr.) John B. Bazuin, Jr.  
Brackett's Farm,  
Trevilians, VA 23170

The list will be found in "LOUISA COUNTY COLLECTING NOTES" (pp.4-5) VaHS-B/#87.

ARTICLES WORTH READING  
IN RECENT PERIODICALS

"The Value of Virgin Birth"  
by (Dr.) Charles J. Cole  
with photographs and illustrations by the author.

NATURAL HISTORY MAGAZINE  
(American Museum of Natural History, New York)  
January 1978 Vol.87, No.1

"Some female lizards can reproduce without mating, enabling them to quickly establish new colonies that are devoid of males." Dr. Cole is an associate curator in the Department of Herpetology, American Museum of Natural History New York City, N.Y. His study of parthenogenesis in lizards was an outgrowth of investigation into evolutionary relationships of reptiles and amphibians and how species are formed.

(Continued top next col.)

"A BAD TIME TO BE A CROCODILE" by Rick Gore  
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC  
January 1978 Vol.153,#1

photos: Jonathan Blair

Pages 91 to 114 - Surveys the current status of crocodilians, worldwide. It includes a 2-page (94-95) of the crocodilians' shrinking realm. "...The once flourishing order Crocodylia largely inhabits tropical and semi-tropical regions. Only 21 species and seven subspecies remain. . . ."

Twenty are illustrated in the article with their ranges indicated on a map of the world. Fifteen are tagged as endangered, two species are noted as declining in numbers, and three, including the American alligator are tagged as "safe". While the alligator is only an occasional escapee or released specimen in Va., this review is worthwhile.

When you contribute to the support of the VaHS program please be certain that your check is accompanied by a VaHS membership application form. A form should be filled out for renewals, as well, but it is ESSENTIAL when it is the first contact. See VaHS form p. 5.

LONGEVITY IN AMPHIBIANS  
AND REPTILES

"LONGEVITY of REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS in NORTH AMERICAN COLLECTIONS" by J. Kevin Bowler, has been published jointly by SSAR, the Society for the Study of Amphibians & Reptiles and the Philadelphia Herpetological Society (PHS). This circular has a wealth of information on known life-spans of amphibians and reptiles. The work has been in progress since the mid-1920's at the Philadelphia Zoological Garden, primarily, and has been up-dated by J. Kevin Bowler, curator of Reptiles there. The price is \$2 a copy, from Douglas H. Taylor, Dep't of Zoology, Miami Univ., Oxford, OH 45056

FIRST N.C. HERPETOLOGICAL  
CONFERENCE: STATE MUSEUM  
SATURDAY, 13 MAY 1978, NC

The N.C. State Museum, at Raleigh, N.C., will host the 1st N.C. "Herpetology Conference and tour" of the museum's herpetology section on Saturday 13 May 1978 from 10 a.m. to 4 pm.

The program will include: talks on the reptiles and amphibians of Carolinas & Virginia; Jamaica; what to do about rattlesnake round-ups; and discussion of the formation of a N.C. Herpetological Society.

VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN  
Editor, P.O. Box #1376  
LEESBURG, VA 22075

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VaHS STARTING OUR 21st YEAR  
1958-1978

\*CLIFFORD, Mr. Michael J.  
Extension Agent, Box 311  
AMELIA, VA 23002 (AMIA)



ANNOUNCING

The First North Carolina Herpetology Conference

Sponsored by the North Carolina State Museum

Saturday, May 13, 1978  
(10:00-4:00 pm)

In the NC State Museum classroom

Program

- 10:00-11:00 Tour of the NC State Museum herpetology section
- 11:00-12:00 "The Reptiles of North Carolina", a preview of Jack Dermid's photos to be used in the Reptiles and Amphibians of the Carolinas and Virginia by B.S. Martof, W.M. Palmer, J.R. Bailey, J. Harrison, and J. Dermid.
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch at the Museum (no charge)
- 1:00-2:00 "The Reptiles and Amphibians of Jamaica", by Ron Crombie, US National Museum
- 2:00-3:00 "Rattlesnake Roundups, A Course of Action", Howard Lawler, Atlanta Zoological Park
- 3:00-4:00 Discussion about the formation of a North Carolina Herp. Society, Ray Ashton, NC State Museum
- Evening-- informal social (plans will be announced at the meeting).

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Registration: Please return your registration by MAY 5 to:

Annee Moxley  
Education Division  
NC State Museum of Natural History  
P.O. Box 27647  
Raleigh, NC 27611

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number in Party \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in attending the luncheon at the Museum.  yes  no

Note: If enough people need them, we will try to make arrangements for a discount on room rates at a local motel.