



# Virginia Herpetological Society

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. II, No. 3

5608 Parkland Court, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Feb. 1992

### Spring Meeting

Plans for the Annual Spring Meeting of the VHS were still being made as we went to press. According to Vice-President, Kurt Buhlmann, the meeting will probably be held in Southwestern VA, in the Mt. Rogers area some time in mid-May.

The next issue of *Catesbeiana* will be expanded to have a copy of the newly proposed VHS Constitution in it. This will give all members in good standing an opportunity to review this proposal before the Spring Meeting. There will be a vote to ratify the constitution at this meeting.

We will accept nominations for new officers to fill the Sec./Tres. and President-Elect positions, which can be mailed

to Dr. Joseph Mitchell, Dept. of Biology, U. of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173. Other nominations can be made at the meeting. Voting will take place during the general business session of the Spring Meeting. Those willing to run for either of these offices should contact Joe.

Another reason to attend the Spring Meeting will be for the auction of the VHS library of exchanged Newsletters and Bulletins. A complete listing (11 pages worth) of the publications being offered at auction can be obtained by sending a SASE and \$1.00 (to cover copying costs) to the VHS NEWSLETTER, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528. For those unable to attend the meeting, we will accept

sealed bids on these publications. You must request information about the procedure when sending for the listing.

The Spring Meeting typically is our most enjoyable time together. We always go into the field to observe and collect herps. With this meeting being planned in May, we should be able to find lots of animals just coming out from their long winters rest.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to vote on our new officers and constitution, the auction or the fellowship and fun that we will have at the 1992 Spring Meeting. Information on date, times and place will be in the next *Catesbeiana*. *JRM*

### Society Column

The BLUE RIDGE HERP. SOCIETY was the only group to report again. They concluded 1991 with a Holiday Pizza Party in Lynchburg in December. Doug Eggleston gave a brief talk on the responsibilities that society members should have in light of all of the negative news information and other events pertaining to herps and their keepers. Two raffles were held at this meeting. One for herp-related items and the other for non-herp items.

1992 began with this society selecting Doug to represent them at a meeting of the Division of Game & Inland Fisheries on new proposals for regulations on possession, importation and sale of "wild

animals" in the Commonwealth. (The meeting scheduled for Jan. 22nd in Richmond did not allow for a report for this newsletter.) A nominating committee of Betty Fratus and Teresa Winston will set a ballot for the March election of new officers. All present officers must be replaced as they have served 2 terms. Ballots will be mailed in February for absentee voting. Jan. 25th should find members along VA Highway 221 collecting the trash as part of their "Adopt-A-Highway" project. The meeting concluded with a "Show & Tell" time for members and the raffle of herp-related books, cage accessories and a gallon of Roccal-D premix.

On Jan. 10th, the BRHS was invited to be on the television show, "Good Morning Virginia." Two members will represent the group and discuss the BRHS, as well as show various herps on the air. "GMV" is a morning show from 13WSET-TV in Lynchburg. The show is to air Jan. 24th at 6 a.m. (I'm sure a video copy of this show will be available for those interested!)

Any other group that would like to report to this newsletter is welcome to do so. Address your information to the Editor. *JRM*

### Renewal Notice

This is a reminder for anyone that has not paid their 1992 dues for the VHS. If your mailing label has a **BLUE** dot on it, this will be the last publication from the VHS you will receive. Please mail your payment to the VHS, 5608 Parkland Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23464 as soon as possible. Don't miss out on the next issue of *Catesbeiana* or future newsletters. Dues are: Regular — \$10.00, Student (18 & under) , \$6.00, Family — \$12.50, and Life — \$150.00. Memberships run from Jan.-Dec. of each year.

#### Virginia Herpetological Society

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

**TITLE:**

*Hidden Life in a Forest/Woodlands — "Salamander Hunts"*

**MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

A woodland with rock cover and/or fallen trees. Personal clothing for the woodland collecting. Plastic bags (zip locks). A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians or similar resources. Small note pads and pencils. Camera and film.

**DETAILS:**

Grade Level: EL, MS, HS  
Time Frame: 1 pd - 2 pds - 3 pds

**INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE:** OBSERVING THE "NOT SO OBVIOUS" IN THE FIELD. (Many people walk into a forest or woods and claim they do not see anything; they may be looking for obvious animals such as deer or song birds. However, the diversity of interesting animals living in this environment is just "a flip of a rock away!" It's amazing to see just what can be found!)

**PROCEDURES/METHODS:**

1. Encourage students to look under rocks, logs, leaf litter, etc. for "life"; as a "herp" activity focus on salamanders, frogs and toads, but encourage interest in everything, i.e., snails, millipedes, insects, etc.
2. Keep students' search to a small area, so when discoveries are made, all can see; then move to a new area and continue the search; photograph students' search and animals found.
3. Encourage stewardship of the habitat by returning rocks and logs, etc. to their original places.
4. Prior to the field trip, students would have been introduced to "herps" they may encounter. When specimens are located, the instructor will review basic instructional information with emphasis placed on three salamander groups (Newts, Plethodons, Ambystomas).
5. Ask some member of the group to research information on the individuals found in their field guides.
6. Discuss protection of the species and its relationship to its environment.
7. Show/demonstrate the distinction between frogs and toads, salamanders and lizards, etc.
8. If invertebrates are found, describe basic features, types found, and individual species' traits (i.e., millipedes coil up when handled, centipedes sometimes bite, snails have shells).
9. Place individuals in plastic bags along with leaf litter. Don't handle specimen too long, they will die. After discussion, return animal to environment from which it came.
10. Ask several students to take notes on the species found, their environment, class or grouping, temperature and weather, time of day, etc.
11. Upon return to school, discuss what was found.

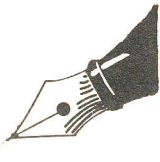
**EVALUATION:**

1. Ask students what they learned. (Check notes, look at photos, check field guide/reference material.) Check for understanding.
2. Ask each student or group of students to write a paper/story about their experiences. Younger children may want to illustrate their experiences.
3. Search for an attitude change — an appreciation for "herp" and the world in which they live.

**SPONSOR:**

Kurt Buhlmann, Field Zoologist, Virginia Natural Heritage Program  
203 Governor St., Suite 402, Richmond, VA 23219, (804) 786-7951

## Editor's Note



The VHS NEWSLETTER is in its second year of publication and the support for and participation in this effort is still surprisingly lacking from our membership. How can I put this without sounding totally redundant? **I need your input in order to publish a quarterly newsletter!!!**

In looking back over past issues, it is clear to me that I have requested the assistance from members. Those that have sent in materials or offered ideas and suggestions seem to be the same few each issue. To those few, I offer my sincere appreciation. To the rest of our members that have not yet offered anything to the Newsletter, I say, make 1992 the year that you get involved in YOUR society!

I personally receive and enjoy numerous newsletters and bulletins from Herp Societies around the country. Most of them are quality publications of which their membership can be very proud. Ours could be too, only if our members choose to submit materials to its pages regularly. We call ourselves herpetologists, both amateur and professional, yet we select not to submit information in our own publications that could benefit the work that we are all trying to do. That never ceases to baffle me.

I would rather this section of the Newsletter contain some profound statements on herpetology or related materials. Instead, I find myself repeating the same request issues after issue. If you are as tired of the same old superfluous column as I am, won't you please send in some fresh material that I can use?

This Newsletter was established primarily to give our student members a special publication to enjoy and learn from. I fear we are not serving them as well as we could. Remember folks, the young people that are members, or will

## HERP HAPPENINGS

- March 21, 1992 — **SPRING EASTERN SEABOARD HERP LEAGUE MEETING.** In Ohio and to be hosted by NOAH. Call the NOAH Hotline for more information, (216) 354-1505.
- April 1992 — **15TH ANNUAL ALL FLORIDA HERPETOLOGICAL CONFERENCE.** Cosponsored by the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Gainesville Herpetological Society. Reitz Union Auditorium at the U. of Florida, Gainesville. Contact: David Auth, (904) 392-1721 for more details.
- May 1992 — **VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING MEETING.** Plans are ongoing at the time of this publication for the Spring Meeting. The Mt. Rogers area in S.W. VA is being considered. An exact date and place will be in the next issue of *Catesbeiana*. To help plan or for more information contact: Kurt Buhlmann, (804) 786-7951.
- May 31-June 2, 1992 — **THE HIGHLANDS CONFERENCE ON PLETHODONTID SALAMANDERS.** Highlands, NC. Contact: Dr. R. Jaeger, U. of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70504 or (318) 231-5235.
- June 4-10, 1992 — **AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ICHTHYOLOGISTS & HERPETOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING.** Champaign-Urbana, IL. Contact: Zoology Dept., Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6501.
- June 25-28, 1992 — **INTERNATIONAL HERPETOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM.** St. Louis, MO. Contact: Ed Tunstall, 2320 W. Palomino Dr., Chandler, AZ 85224 for more information.
- August 1992 — **2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TURTLE & TORTOISES: CONSERVATION & 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.
- August 2-6, 1992 — **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SSAR.** U. of Texas, El Paso, Contact: Kraig Adler, Dept. of Neuro-Biology and Behavior, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-2702.
- August 14-16, 1992 — **NATIONAL BREEDERS' EXPO.** Twin Towers Hotel, Orlando, FL. Organized by Wayne Hill & the Central Florida Herp Society, P.O. Box 3277, Winter Haven, FL 33885.
- September 5, 1992 — **EASTERN HERPETOLOGICAL EXPO.** Sellersville, PA. Contact: G. Leonard Knapp, 215 Lawn Ave., Sellersville, PA 18960 or (215) 257-6088.
- Dec. 29, 1993-Jan. 5, 1994 — **SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY.** Adelaide, South Australia. For information, contact: Dr. M.J. Taylor, U. of Adelaide, Dept. of Zoology, Box 498, GPO, Adelaide, South Australia 5001, Australia.

be, are the future of the VHS! Let's ALL give them a reason to stay with us and make the Newsletter something that they can look forward to four times a year.

Volunteer your abilities and knowledge by trying a regular column for the Newsletter. Tips for herp hunting and captive husbandry can be used. Medical information and first aid procedures have been requested, photography, targeting a special

herp of VA for each issue or any other ideas you may have could be great topics for a regular column. I'm only talking about a few lines four times a year. Surely there are some members that could take on such topics each issue. Just imagine...YOUR name, YOUR own column reaching our membership every issue. Come on and take the challenge and become a part of the VHS Newsletter team!



Mark R. Finkler, D.V.M.

### ROANOKE ANIMAL HOSPITAL



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## Special Book Offer

McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company has a very special offer of interest to us herpers. Their new book, *Virginia's Endangered Species* is being offered in hardback for \$60.00 or paperback for \$32.95. Each chapter was contributed by various authors and the Amphibian and Reptile chapter was written by our own VHS President, Dr. Joseph Mitchell.

This chapter is being offered at a very special low price of \$2.25 for the complete chapter and all color plates (66 pages) or you can purchase just the color plates for only \$.75 (5-6 pages). This 1991 edition is up to date and a real bargain, with 700 pages in a 8 1/2x11 format.

You can purchase the entire book or Joe's chapter by sending a check to: McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, P.O. Box 10308, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0308.

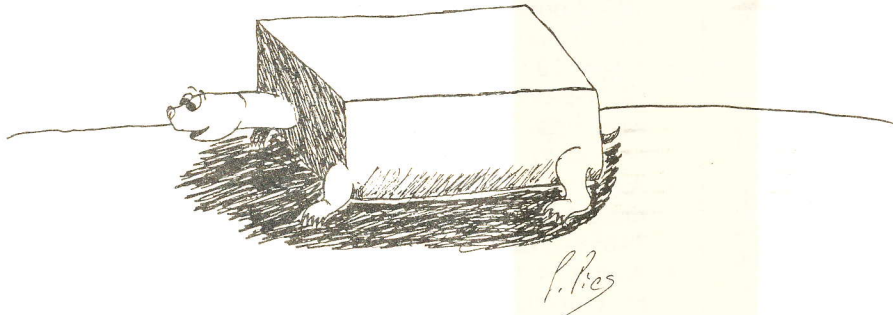
GET WILD WITH  
"WILDLIFE EXPOSED"  
T-SHIRTS!



Starring an amphibian favorite, the Marbled Salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) these fun T-shirts were created from a photograph by LYNDA RICHARDSON in conjunction with her one-woman Virginia wildlife photography show sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Enjoy the upcoming warm weather in one of these short sleeve, heavy weight, 100% cotton T-shirts available in your choice of black or white in sizes small, medium, large and extra large. The design features a black and white salamander on a bright red leaf on a black background. The red and white border encompasses twenty-three black and white miniature salamanders.

For your "Wildlife Exposed" T-shirt send a check or money order for \$12.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling per shirt to: Richardson's Enterprises, P.O. Box 27831, Richmond, VA 23261-7831.



**VHS Newsletter**

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