

# **International Herpetological Symposium**

## **31st Annual Meeting**



**Hosted by**

**The Toronto Zoo &  
The Indian River Reptile Zoo  
Toronto, Ontario Canada**

**June 20 - 23, 2007**

**Program and Abstracts**

Welcome to the  
31<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the  
International Herpetological Symposium



**IHS Officers**

**President**

**JOSEPH P. MAREK, JR.**  
10411 Balsamwood Ct.  
Laurel, MD 20708  
(410) 792-9840

**Treasurer**

**GIOVANNI FAGIOLI**  
32514 NE 77<sup>th</sup> Street  
Camation, WA 98014  
(425) 861-7964

**Vice President**

**KEN FOOSE**  
2105 N. Decatur  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 631-7387

**2007 Program Coordinator and  
Curator, Indian River Reptile Zoo**

**BRY LOYST**  
2206 Hwy 7, R.R. #3 Indian River  
Peterborough, Ontario K0L 2B0

**Secretary/Grants Program Chair**

**STAN DRAPER**  
P.O. Box 16444  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

**Immediate Past President**

**WILLIAM BECKER**  
Curator, Central States Serpentarium  
2340 Massey Lane  
Holts Summit, MO 65043

**Vendor Coordinator**

**ED TUNSTALL**  
Mesa, AZ

**Technical Advisor**

**ROBERT L. KATES, JR.**  
Baltimore, MD

**IHS Advisors**

**BOB ASHLEY**  
**RANDAL BERRY**  
**DENNIS JOHNSTON**

**JAMES BADMAN**  
**DAVID DOHERTY**  
**BILL LOVE**  
**VINCE SCHEIDT**

**JEFF BARRINGER**  
**RUSS GURLEY**  
**VICKY POOLE**

**INTERNATIONAL HERPETOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM  
31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**PROGRAM**

**Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.      Registration – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Markham  
7:00 p.m. - ?        Ice Breaker – Hospitality Suite

**Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.    Open Registration – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Markham

9:00 - 9:15 a.m.        Opening Remarks and Introductions

9:15 - 10:00 a.m.        **Jen Stabile**  
“Captive Husbandry and Marketing of the Coqui *Eleutherodactylus coqui* at  
Central Florida Zoological Park”

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.        **Andrew Lentini**  
“Massasauga Rattlesnake Recovery and Research in Ontario”

11:00 - 11:15 a.m.        *Morning Break*

11:15 - 12:00 p.m.        **Mike Elioff**  
“General Care and Husbandry of Tortoises”

12:00 - 1:15 p.m.        *Lunch Break*

1:15 - 2:15 p.m.        **Shaun Waite**  
“Trials and Tribulations of Keeping the Yellow-Lipped Sea Krait *Laticauda  
colubrina* in Captivity”

2:15 - 3:15 p.m.        **Corey Woods**  
“Breeding of Ball Python Morphs”

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.        *Afternoon Break*

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.        **Wes Von Papineau**  
“Herps in the News”

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.        **Michael McFadden**  
“Captive Efforts to Conserve Australia’s Endangered Amphibians”

**Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

- 9:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Open Registration – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Markham
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. **Ray Ashton**  
“Turtles and Tortoises are Communicating with Low Frequency Sound”
- 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. **William E. Becker & Adam C. Marfisi**  
“The Natural History, Captive Husbandry, and Propagation of the New World Burrowing Python *Loxocemus bicolor*”
- 11:00 - 11:15 a.m. *Morning Break*
- 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. **Bill Love**  
“Herp Photography – Beyond Snapshots”
- 12:15 - 1:30 p.m. *Lunch Break*
- 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **Bry Loyst**  
“Husbandry of Crocodylians in Cold Climates”
- 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. **Marc Spataro and Al Baldogo**  
“Boelen’s Pythons, Natural History, Captive Reproductive History”
- 3:30 - 3:45 p.m. *Afternoon Break*
- 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. **Kyle O’Grady**  
“Natural History, General Description and Captive Husbandry of the Genus *Naja*”
- 5:30 p.m. Shuttle Buses leave for **Field Trip to the Toronto Zoo and Hosted Picnic at the Toronto Zoo**
- 6:00-9:00 p.m. **The Toronto Zoo Reptile Department Open House**
- 9:15 p.m. Shuttle Buses Return to Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Markham

**Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Open Registration – Holiday Inn Downtown/Market Square
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. **Marc Spataro and Al Baldogo**  
“Adventures in Indonesia and New Guinea: Geography, Culture and Herps”
- 10:00 -11:00 a.m. **Nigel Marven**  
“Film Star Herptiles – 20 Years of Making Cold Blooded Movies”
- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. *Morning Break*
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Jim Harrison**  
“Fangs and Consequences: Truths and Misconceptions about Snakebite and Antiserum”
- 12:15 – 1:30 p.m. *Lunch Break*
- 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **Steve Marks**  
“Field Herping in Ontario, the Herps we Love, and Their Plights and Sensitivities”
- 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. **Don Schultz**  
“Herping Africa, The Ins and Outs, as Told by an African”
- 3:30 – 3:45 p.m. *Afternoon Break*
- 3:45 – 4:45 p.m. **Frank Lundburg**  
“Is It Poisonous? Does It Bite? Challenges to Reptile Education”
- 6:30 p.m. - ? Banquet Buffet – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Markham
- Announcement of the Photo Contest Winners
- Banquet Speaker – Nigel Marven**  
“Back From the Dead: How I Walked With Dinosaurs”
- Auction - Proceeds benefit next year’s IHS! (Credit Cards Accepted)
- Presentation of the Joseph Laszlo Memorial Award
- Closing Remarks

## Abstracts

### RAY E. ASHTON, JR.

Ashton Biodiversity Research and Preservation Institute  
14260-331 W. Newberry Rd., Newberry, FL 32669  
e-mail: Tortfarm2@aol.com website: www.ashtonbiodiversity.org

### Turtles and Tortoises are Communicating with Low Frequency Sound

Over the past 12 years, we have been passively observing gopher tortoise, *Gopherus polyphemus* behavior as well as certain behaviors in a number of species of tortoises including several species of *Testudo*, *Pyxis*, *Geochelone* and one emyid. Many observed behaviors have raised the question? Are chelonians communicating beyond the tactile, visual and limited sounds we can hear? In the summer of 2004, we convinced NSF to support a group of animal communications experts to technical guidance and training and provided equipment for us to set up a series of experiments to determine if we were correct. In fact, in the short time we had to work out methods and equipment problems, we were able to record low frequency sound communications, below 40 Hz in a number of species. Most exciting was the complicated communications between gopher tortoises while they were in the bottom of their burrows. We are now are collecting low frequency communications while observing specific behaviors like aggression between two *G. sulcata* males. We want to begin a process of recording a sound profile on all chelonians for storage in a sound reference library like is done with birds.

### WILLIAM E. BECKER

Curator, Central States Serpentarium  
2340 Massey Lane  
Holts Summit, Missouri 65043 USA  
E-mail: beckerherps@socket.net  
Tel: (573) 896-4929 Fax: (573) 896-4861

### ADAM C. MARFISI

Venomous Manager, Central States Serpentarium  
2340 Massey Lane  
Holts Summit, Missouri 65043 USA  
E-mail: taeniata@gmail.com

### The Natural History, Captive Husbandry, and Propagation of the New World Burrowing Python *Loxocemus bicolor*

There is little verifiable data known of the reproductive biology of the New World Burrowing Python, also known as the Mexican Burrowing Python (*Loxocemus bicolor*). This presentation represents the results of a combination of over ten years of field studies, academic research, laboratory analyses, and captive husbandry and propagation studies of this species. The Central States Serpentarium has established a self sustaining captive bred colony of this unique and secretive monotypic genus. With the continued deforestation and habitat destruction within many locales within the range of this species, maintaining a large self-sustaining population is invaluable to the long term survival of this seldom seen primitive snake in the future.

### MIKE ELIOFF

The Ontario Turtle & Tortoise Society  
P.O. Box 52149 - 307 Robinson St. Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6J 7N5  
E-mail: WALDIAL@aol.com website: <http://members.aol.com/WALDIAL/otts.htm>

### General Care and Husbandry of Tortoises (Abstract not available)

**JIM HARRISON**

Director, Kentucky Reptile Zoo

200 L&amp;E Railroad, Slade, Kentucky 40376-9702

Phone: (606) 663-9160

Fax: (606) 663- 6917

E-mail: KYREPTIL@mailhost.mis.net

**Fangs and Consequences: Truths and Misconceptions about Snakebite and Antiserum**

Venomous snakes, both exotic and native, are common captives in herpetoculture today. The purpose of this paper is to address the effects and consequences of snakebite, proper first aid and treatment of snakebite, and proper safety and antiserum acquisition protocols for those facilities maintaining venomous reptiles. Venoms vary widely in toxin content, volume that may be injected, and speed of action. Damage due to snakebite can therefore vary widely, from local necrosis to death. Common myths and misconceptions pertaining to snakebite will also be addressed. Treatment of the bite, starting with the immediate first aid given, can have a large impact on the final outcome for the victim. Appropriate antiserum is the only course of treatment for most bites and is unavailable in many situations. Foreign antisera can be problematic to obtain but perseverance generally pays off in the end and results in a safer environment for the keepers. A proper snakebite protocol is also a must for every venomous facility, and can save time and effort at the time of the bite itself. A little preparation can go a long way in making a snakebite an unfortunate incident instead of a tragedy. **WARNING:** This talk contains graphic photographs and may not be appropriate for younger or sensitive people.

**ANDREW M. LENTINI**

Curatorial Keeper for Amphibians and Reptiles

Toronto Zoo, Ontario, Canada

361A Old Finch Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1B 5K7

Phone: 416-392-5900

Fax: 416-392-5863

website: [www.brocku.ca/massasauga](http://www.brocku.ca/massasauga)**Massasauga Rattlesnake Recovery and Research in Ontario**

Toronto Zoo plays a role in conservation through public education, scientific research, professional training and support of in situ conservation projects. A founding member of the National Recovery Team for the Massasauga rattlesnake, the Toronto Zoo is in a position to respond to the conservation needs of this species. We have the resources to reach an audience of over one million visitors each year, the organizational structure to develop conservation partnerships, and skilled and dedicated staff. Toronto Zoo's massasauga rattlesnake conservation strategy began in the late 1980s. Since then we have developed multi-faceted educational programmes to increase the profile of the massasauga, their threatened habitats, and the efforts of the recovery team. Our massasauga exhibit and interactive graphics are a prominent feature of the Americas pavilion. In order to assist people who have chosen to live with rattlesnakes and other wildlife near their homes and cottages, we have developed a variety of conservation resources that provide factual information about the biology and life history of this snake. We conduct scientific research that supports conservation and recovery of this species. We also provide ongoing training and assistance to other researchers studying this threatened species. We are active partners in projects across the province and also collaborate with colleagues in the United States. In Michigan, we assisted the Detroit Zoo and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory develop outreach and education programmes similar to ours for their massasauga rattlesnake conservation work. Our role in recovery continues to expand and we look forward to further collaborating with our American colleagues as we participate in the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's newly created Massasauga Species Survival Plan.

**BILL LOVE**

BLUE CHAMELEON VENTURES

P.O. Box 516, Alva, Florida 33920 U.S.A.

Phone: 239-691-4414 home / 239-464-6642 cell

E-mail: [bill@bluechameleon.org](mailto:bill@bluechameleon.org)Website: [www.bluechameleon.org](http://www.bluechameleon.org)**Herp Photography – Beyond Snapshots**

Everyone has a new digital camera these days, and images of herps are all over the Internet. With so many pics being shared with the world, how do you make *yours* stand out from the crowd? Let this brand new PowerPoint presentation show you how to improve your photography and get your shots noticed. The kind of camera you use doesn't matter – this 'lesson', by veteran herp shutterbug Bill Love, emphasizes the art and technique of capturing great images, not complicated, confusing gadgetry.

**BRY LOYST**

Curator/Owner - Indian River Reptile Zoo

2206 Hwy 7, R.R. #3 Indian River, Peterborough, Ontario K0L 2B0

Tel: (705) 639-1443

Fax: (705) 639-1620

E-mail: [reptilezoo@xplornet.com](mailto:reptilezoo@xplornet.com)Website: [www.reptilezoo.org](http://www.reptilezoo.org)**Husbandry of Crocodylians in Cold Climates**

The challenges associated with crocodylian husbandry are most extensive in cold climates such as Canada. As these animals must be housed indoors during the winter months, many factors need to be taken into consideration such as housing, diet, heating, filtration, etc. Common husbandry mistakes and their solutions will be outlined, as will safe handling and transportation procedures. A discussion of rare crocodylians and their future both in captivity and the wild will conclude this talk.

**FRANK LUNDBURG**

Reptile Conservation Resources, Inc.

P.O. Box 6329, Boise, ID 83707 USA

Phone: (208) 853-9008

e-mail: [teguix@aol.com](mailto:teguix@aol.com) or [info@ecosnake.com](mailto:info@ecosnake.com)website: [www.EcoSnake.com](http://www.EcoSnake.com)**Is It Poisonous? Does It Bite? Challenges to Reptile Education**

This paper discusses unique challenges to educating an unknowing public about the natural history, behavior, conservation and care of amphibians and reptiles. The two most visible aspects of herpetological education are findings of scientific and biological research usually presented by academicians, and "show and tell" programs usually presented by hobbyists. Another educational approach falls somewhere between the theories of herpetology and the practices of herpetoculture. That approach bridges the gap between theory and practice by utilizing specific techniques in presenting information about amphibians and reptiles to diverse groups and individuals in simple factual terms. Although composition of audiences and venues may vary, one underlying fact prevails: It is impossible to overestimate the level of ignorance people have concerning herpetology, basic biology, geography and awareness of other cultures and societies. Public education begins with the "basics": What are amphibians and reptiles? What are the differences between amphibians and reptiles? What does "cold blooded" mean? How do amphibians and reptiles reflect their habitats? What is an "ecosystem?" How do amphibians and reptiles benefit the planet? Why is the survival of amphibians and reptiles important to our survival? Education venues take place on several levels: Scientific; Research; Zoos; Day to day activities, professional consulting, legislative lobbying and responsible media presentations, to name a few. To have really effective conservation



policies and realistic regulatory policies, awareness and knowledge of amphibians and reptiles by the general public must first be expanded. Methods expanding that public awareness and knowledge include specific techniques of communication which are enumerated and discussed in detail. A summary of problems and potentials for educating the public conclude the paper. The presentation and discussion is in a power point presentation which features original photographs of animals and educational venues.

**STEVE MARKS**

RR#1 Fraserville, Ontario K0L 1V0

Phone: (705) 932-1509

E-mail: cerastes@nexicom.net

**Field Herping in Ontario, the Herps we Love, and Their Plights and Sensitivites**

Looking for herps in this Province is challenging. For various reasons, herps are hard to find here. It may in some cases have to do with the fact that Southern Ontario is home to the most dense population of humans in Canada. Here, we have truly rare species, common species that are rare here just because they are at the northern extremes of their natural ranges, and some that do better here than they do in the US! With input from some excellent photographers, we'll get a great look at the 50 plus herp taxa we have in Ontario, plus a couple that have disappeared.

**NIGEL MARVEN**

John Miles Organisation

Cadbury Camp Lane, Clapton-in-Gordano, Bristol, BS20 7SB

Phone: 01275 856770 E-mail: john@johnmiles.org.uk

**Film Star Herptiles – 20 Years of Making Cold Blooded Movies**

*(Abstract not available)*

**NIGEL MARVEN**

John Miles Organisation

Cadbury Camp Lane, Clapton-in-Gordano, Bristol, BS20 7SB

Phone: 01275 856770 E-mail: john@johnmiles.org.uk

**Back From the Dead: How I Walked With Dinosaurs**

*(Abstract not available)*

**MICHAEL MCFADDEN**

Unit Supervisor, Herpetofauna Department

Taronga Zoo, Sydney. PO Box 20, Mosman, 2088, NSW, Australia

Email: mmcfadden@zoo.nsw.gov.au

**Captive Efforts to Conserve Australia's Endangered Amphibians**

Within the last thirty years, Australia's amphibians have suffered dramatic declines resulting in the loss of several frog species and many more drifting dangerously close to extinction. There have been many reasons for these declines, including disease, habitat loss, introduced predators and possibly climate change. One particular threat that appears to be responsible for the disappearance of at least some species and the serious decline in others

is chytrid fungus or chytridiomycosis, caused by the introduced pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. Australian zoos are now taking up the challenge to conserve a number of these threatened species, often as part of multi-institutional recovery programs. *Ex-situ* programs have already been established for ten species, with more likely to be initiated in future years. The purposes of these programs vary widely, including research, insurance populations, reintroductions and education. Taronga Zoo, located in Sydney, currently has conservation programs established for three amphibian species: The critically endangered Southern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*), the Booroolong Frog (*Litoria booroolongensis*) and the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*). This presentation will focus on these three case studies, detailing their natural history, threats, captive husbandry and the *ex-situ* conservation efforts currently in place.

#### **KYLE O'GRADY**

Curator of Reptiles, Seaway Serpentarium  
9 Steel Street, Welland Ontario, L3B 3L8

Phone: (905) 735 1436

Cellular: (905) 650-5453

E-mail [reptilekyle@hotmail.com](mailto:reptilekyle@hotmail.com)

#### **Natural History, General Description and Captive Husbandry of the Genus *Naja***

The Cobra family have rode the fence dividing inspiration from apprehension. Dating back to the earliest scriptures, only to evolve into what society could perceive as the "classic" venomous snake. Today the genus *naja* is a meandering taxonomical wavelength of changing tides under the microscope. With new species periodically crossing the radar. At the current, it's a generally accepted 21 species complex. Through this presentation I can attempt to dissect this diversity, its captive propagation and personal anecdotes over the years I've spent with this fascinating group.

#### **DON SCHULTZ**

President, Mfezi LLC

2530 Vista Way F 106, Oceanside, California, 92054

Phone: (760) 978-1394

E-mail: [sales@mfezi.com](mailto:sales@mfezi.com)

Website: [www.mfezi.com](http://www.mfezi.com)

#### **Herping Africa, The Ins and Outs, as Told by an African**

Rather than looking at Africa as a big, scary continent torn apart by civil war and murder, it should be seen as a Mecca for herping and ecotourism. Only 150 years ago, we still thought Central Africa was a desolate desert devoid of almost everything. Adventures similar to those that Livingstone and Cameron had are not only possible, but very easily attainable with a small amount of planning, research and guts. I will try to demystify some common myths and misconceptions about the "Dark Continent" and let more naturalists enjoy the wonders that Africa has to offer.

#### **MARC SPATARO and AL BALDOGO**

The Boelen's Python Group

P.O. Box 421, Glen Arm, MD 21057

E-mail: [marc@fitnology.com](mailto:marc@fitnology.com) Websites: [www.boelenspythons.com](http://www.boelenspythons.com) --- [www.baldogoreptiles.com/index.html](http://www.baldogoreptiles.com/index.html)

#### **Boelen's Pythons, Natural History, Captive Reproductive History**

Focuses primarily on the natural history of the Boelen's Python population occurring in the central highlands as well as the current captive population and its history into present day including: captive husbandry, reproduction, medical, and current research projects and who they involve i.e. AZA institutions, Louisiana State University, etc.

**MARC SPATARO and AL BALDOGO**

The Boelen's Python Group

P.O. Box 421, Glen Arm, MD 21057

E-mail: marc@fitmology.com Websites: www.boelenspythons.com --- www.baldogoreptiles.com/index.html

**Adventures in Indonesia and New Guinea: Geography, Culture and Herps**

Focus of talk will be a history of traveling to West Papua, New Guinea and experiences with the Dani people, including their culture and lifestyles, and their willingness to help find reptiles and amphibians to observe and photograph.

**JEN STABILE**

Central Florida Zoological Park

P.O. Box 470309, Lake Monroe, Florida 32747-0309

Phone: (407) 323-4450

Fax: (407) 321-0900

E-mail: jens@centralfloridazoo.org

**Captive Husbandry and Marketing of the Coqui *Eleutherodactylus coqui* at Central Florida Zoological Park**

The Central Florida Zoological Park is currently the only AZA institution to exhibit and successfully reproduce coqui. When properly managed and marketed, this species can be an asset not only to a herpetological collection, but also the zoological facility as a whole. Herein a review of husbandry techniques and reproductive data is presented as is a discussion of "Fiesta de Coqui", an exhibit opening which broke attendance records due to a popular response from the local Puerto Rican community.

**WES VON PAPINEÄU**

Ottawa Amphibian and Reptile Association

Gloucester, Ontario

Phone: (613) 945-7186

**Herps in the News -Toilet-Lurking Ball Python Eats Reputation: Read all about it**

There were over 5,500 separate press items dealing with herps produced by newspapers over each of the past two years. A significant number of these items featured stories based on sensationalism, mis-understanding or distaste for some reptile/amphibian related event. Other stories are sympathetic to the pressures brought against stressed herp populations in various places in the world. Press stories tend to differ in tone and temperament depending on whether the protagonists are involved with the scientific, institutional (herpetologist) or pet-keeping (herpetoculturist) populations. But can these stories affect the public's perceptions about herps, and the people that work with them? Are we all tarred by the same brush in the case of bad press? Can we mitigate damage with good press? During this presentation we'll explore some the press coverage of herp-related press events over the past two years, how they might affect the herp community and how we should react to them . if in fact we should.

**SHAUN WAITE**

Herpetological Consultant and Proprietor of SnakeBites.ca

17 Steel Street, Welland, Ontario L3B 3L8

Phone: (905) 735-2235

E-mail: [shaun@snakebites.ca](mailto:shaun@snakebites.ca)

**Trials and Tribulations of Keeping the Yellow-Lipped Sea Krait *Laticauda colubrina* in Captivity**

With few exceptions, sea snakes are one of the rarest groups of snakes to be encountered in captivity. Owing to husbandry requirements that are near impossible to meet, most specimens soon perish. The yellow-lipped sea krait, one of the more manageable and hardier species, still poses a challenge few zoos have successfully met. This presentation focuses on *Laticauda* in the private sector, and what a keeper's anecdotes can offer to better the record of rearing this intriguing species.

**COREY WOODS**

Corey Woods Reptile, P.O. Box 25006, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 4V9

Phone: (519) 824-7377

E-mail: [info@CoreyWoods.com](mailto:info@CoreyWoods.com)

Website: [www.coreywoods.com](http://www.coreywoods.com)

**Ball Pythons - Husbandry & Mutations**

What can I say other than who doesn't love a ball python (*python regius*)? They have been my passion ever since I started keeping them back in 1994 and they continue to amaze and surprise me over a decade later. Once considered an "unbreedable" animal in captivity the Ball Python is now one of the most commonly kept and bred reptile in the hobby today. One of the reasons behind this, aside from their small size and easy going attitude, is the number of both colour and pattern mutations available to the hobbyist and breeder alike. Topics that will be discussed include captive care, breeding as well as some of the different colours and patterns available on the market today. Hey, it wouldn't be a good talk without some pretty pictures to look at!