

# Gulf Coast Turtle & Tortoise Society Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 5 - November, 1995

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## 1 General Interest Items

### 1.1 GCTTS Endorses Turtle-Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp

The Gulf Coast Turtle and Tortoise Society has joined with the Earth Island Institute of San Francisco and HEART (Help Endangered Animals - Ridley Turtles) of Houston, Texas in encouraging restaurant and grocery store customers to request Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp. Shrimp marketed under the Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> program are certified to have been harvested in ways that prevent the accidental drowning of critically endangered sea turtles.

Six of the seven known species of sea turtles are in danger of being lost forever. Most of the threats come from human activity, and one of the worst is shrimp fishing. Shrimp nets gather in everything in their path. In the Gulf of Mexico, about 10 pounds of 'bycatch' is caught for each pound of shrimp, amounting to some 10 billion pounds of 'bycatch' each year. Unfortunately, this 'bycatch' often includes air breathing sea turtles that drown before the net is brought back to the surface. The fish

in the 'bycatch' are so damaged by the net and pressure changes that even when they are discarded most die.

The 'bycatch' problem can be easily addressed by the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) or Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) in the shrimper's nets. These devices include a trap door and grid in the throat of the net that allows turtles and larger fish to escape, while allowing the smaller shrimp to enter the net.

Responsible shrimpers that provide the Turtle-Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp agree to use TEDs consistently and agree to regular inspection of their boats and gear.

Consumers can help protect endangered sea turtles by insisting on certified Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp at restaurants and markets. Restaurants that are using Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp are allowed to display a distinctive Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> logo with the words 'Turtle-Safe' above a graphic of a sea turtle. The same logo can be found on packages of Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp in the markets.

For more information contact: the Earth Island Institute Sea Turtle Restoration Project (415-788-3666; sea-turtles@earthisland.org), Help Endangered Animals - Ridley Turtles (713-444-6904; heartallen@aol.com), or the Gulf Coast Turtle & Tortoise Society (713-443-8001; GCTTS@pobox.com).

## 1.2 Another Reason We Need Turtles

LONDON (Reuters) - Researchers said recently that they had discovered how turtles are able to stay underwater for hours without suffering brain damage and were developing drugs based on this so-called "turtle effect" to save stroke victims.

They told a meeting of Britain's Biochemical Society they had found out how turtles slow down brain activity to save oxygen when holding their breath.

"This is a protective mechanism that appears particularly promising because we already know it works in animals," Michael Spedding, of the Institut de Recherches Servier in Paris, said in a statement released by the Society.

Drugs being developed could mimic the effect, saving victims of strokes - which starve the brain of oxygen by cutting off the blood supply, usually when a blood clot blocks an artery.

Several pharmaceutical companies were racing to develop such drugs, he added. Results are expected over the next year.

"The very first treatment to be launched will revolutionize therapy because at present there is no drug which can be given after a stroke to reduce damage, although it will be important to administer the drug in the first few hours after the stroke."

## 1.3 Do Turtles Yawn?

from a post on Herp-L

While reading [So Excellent a Fishe](#), I fully appreciated Archie's Carr's enjoyment of "pondering".

Presently I am pondering turtle yawns. (Who said ponderers had to be about serious stuff all the time?)

Yes, turtle yawns. My husband and I are in the process of updating our web-page and I want to write an article about underwater behaviour of the Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle. One of the behaviours that has me baffled is turtle yawns.

I also observe yawning with our Red-Eared Terrapins we keep in our classroom. So freshwater turtles yawn too.

In the Hawaiian greens, the open mouth and "double chin" can be used (and most often is) as a threat display which they use on each other. This involves scuffling over who gets to sit where. If both turtles "yawn", this can then lead to mild biting (which when you photograph it, looks like they're kissing).

They will also yawn from a distance when they see a turtle coming to land. This yawn likely means "think again, this is my spot". So there are clearly turtle to turtle yawns of communication.

They will also yawn at us. We figure the yawn means exactly the same thing it does when they do it to another turtle. We back off, give the turtle room and go on to something else.

There are CLEARLY times when there isn't anyone around - no turtle, we're far away (can't even see the turtle's profiles for identification) and we will see a yawn.

Like yesterday, I am certain my classroom turtle just opened its mouth, let out a little bubble of air and yawned. The other turtle was asleep and I was minding my own business away from the tank. It must have been a pure yawn.

Now for the question. Do turtles yawn?

For those of you who think there are way more important turtle questions, you're absolutely right, but this has got me pondering and I can't stand not knowing something.

Also, observing a Hawaiian Green yawning sets me off sometimes and this is difficult with a regulator in your mouth. If this message has set off some of you, I apologize. (I have been yawning the entire time I have been typing this.)

## 1.4 Texas Constitutional Amendments of Interest

Information from HEART

There are two proposed Texas Constitutional amendments on the November 7th ballot that are of interest to GCTTS members.

Proposition 11 proposes to exempt from ad valorem tax land previously managed for agriculture and then switched over to use as wildlife habitat. This amendment would encourage the setting aside of land for critically needed habitat, perhaps restoring some acres for use by their original occupants.

Proposition 13 will appear on the ballot as: "The constitutional amendment authorizing the governing body of a political subdivision to exempt from ad valorem taxation boats and other equipment used primarily in the commercial taking or production of fish, shrimp, shellfish and other marine life."

So, the industry that makes its living off exploited public resources, the industry that refuses to protect critically endangered sea turtles, the industry that pollutes our beaches, the industry that bilks the federal government for "emergency appropriations", the industry that routinely takes and kills 10 pounds of sea life for every pound of shrimp, now wants to be exempt from paying its share of ad valorem taxes, leaving the rest of us to make up the difference.

## 1.5 J NOAH Call for Papers

The editor of the Journal of the Northern Ohio Association of Herpetologists would like to make a formal call for papers. J NOAH is published twice per year and contains papers on a wide variety of topics within herpetology and herpetoculture. Papers can be based upon original data or summary of other works. Field notes are acceptable, as are husbandry notes on a specific species or group. Topics need not be limited to herps found in Ohio, or the U.S. International authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts.

Anyone interested in submitting a manuscript to J NOAH can contact the editor for complete author guidelines and more information: Gregory J. Watkins-Colwell, Editor, J NOAH, 155 Booth St., Stratford, CT 06497, 203/377-2285, GJWC@AOL.COM

## 1.6 Gastrulation in Space

from GCTTS member Julie Young

Gastrulation is the process that vertebrate embryos, including human, go through wherein surface cells are brought inside and start differentiating into the spine, central nervous system, and internal organs. A recent NASA experiment has demonstrated that African clawed frog tadpoles can go through this critical developmental stage in orbit around the earth. A previous experiment showed that mid term rat fetuses can develop normally in weightlessness as well. There appears to be no reason that vertebrates, perhaps even humans, cannot reproduce in space.

## 1.7 National Geographic Article on Turtles

from Tess Cook

Bob Phelan, National Turtle and Tortoise Society board member and frequent author of articles relating to turtles and tortoises, has several copies of the May 1952 National Geographic magazine that contains the excellent article, "Nature's Tank, the Turtle". It is written by Doris Cochran and contains 8 color paintings by the famous nature artist, Walter A. Weber. He is most remembered for his renderings of birds but he has captured the beauty and character of our beloved chelonians perfectly. If you would like to own a copy of this collector issue, Bob Phelan can be reached in Phoenix, Arizona at 602-990-1007.

## 1.8 Saving the Leatherback Sea Turtle

GCTTS member Bob Smither

An experience of a lifetime started for me one August when I received, as a birthday present from my wife, an innocuous looking package containing the Saving the Leatherback Turtle Earthcorps Briefing and a card requesting that I choose the volunteer team that I would like to join. Earthcorps is the name given to the volunteers of Earthwatch, a private organization whose mission is to improve human understanding of the planet and its diverse inhabitants. Earthwatch volunteers help pay for the field research of scientists engaged in a wide range of interesting projects, as well as provide valuable assistance in the field. After studying the Leatherback project briefing, I confirmed my choice of Team V, scheduled for May 22 through June 1, hoping to be able to share the beaches with both adult and hatchling leatherbacks.

The goals of the project are to protect, preserve, and enhance the population of leatherback sea turtles that nest at the Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

The project at Sandy Point is the longest running, most intensive study of a nesting leatherback population to date. The research has continued from 1982 through the present. Because of the efforts of Earthwatch volunteers, every nesting female can be observed, measured, tagged, photographed, and described. Each nest is documented as to location, and many nests are further described as to temperature, clutch size, and hatching success.

The Sandy Point project has halted poaching at the beach. An overall hatching rate of over 60% has been achieved, allowing some 65,000 hatchlings to make it to the sea. Many behavioral aspects of the leatherback have been learned from the research. The objectives of the project in recent seasons have included tagging each nesting female, using modern PIT tags if applicable, documenting each nesting event, relocating any nests that might be washed out later in the season, and recording beach and nest temperatures. Additionally, blood samples are taken to allow scientists to determine how different nesting populations are related and if there is significant crossover among the populations. A parallel study has used radio-tracking equipment to record dive depth and to determine what the turtles do and where they go between successive nestings.

As my departure date approached, I had many questions and concerns about the project. The Briefing was excellent, but it could not answer questions such as: How will I take to walking nine hours a night, night after night? Will the dormitory style living be hard to adjust to after almost 26 years as a catered-to married person? Will I be able to work as a team member after a career of working alone? How in the world will I be able to prepare a decent meal? Still, I was truly excited and looking forward to participating in a project that I feel is extremely important.

The lead scientists, Peter Dutton and Donna McDonald, must be entertained by the similarities and differences that each ten member team presents. Certainly our team must have been unique in having half its members made up of British MacDonald's employees that had won the trip by participating in an environmental project contest. The company had selected the award. Several of this group, at the beginning of the tour, wondered if they had won or lost the competition! They did not yet appreciate the joys of walking in soft sand for nine hours in the dark. In fact only two members of our team (with myself being one) really selected this project for themselves. I suspect that our group was typical in that by the end of the ten days, the bungling beginners were actually accomplished research assistants recording valuable scientific data on the largest nesting population of *Dermochelys coriacea* in US territory with even those not there by their own choosing completely enjoying it.

Leatherback sea turtles have a flipper span of almost 3 meters and weigh about 300 kilograms. This turtle is the largest in the world, the most ocean-going, and probably the least understood. They are only seen when they nest,

so our estimate of the world's population, currently set at 100,000 is rough. Historically there used to be many more nesting leatherbacks. People kill them for meat, shark bait, and oil; poachers add to the losses from natural predators; and countless leatherbacks die at sea from drift nets and from swallowing plastic bags that are mistaken jellyfish, their staple food. Development of the world's beaches has reduced the available nesting sites. Lights on the beaches can scare off potential nesters and confuse hatchlings on their trek to the ocean.

Before the Sandy Point study, the nesting beach was scheduled for development. Although pristine, the 2.4 kilometer beach is subject to erosion that can wash out half of the nests made from April through July. Poachers were taking perhaps half of the rest of the nests, and natural predators such as yellow crowned night herons and ghost crabs, not to mention the introduced mongoose were so successful that only about one in ten of the eggs survived.

Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge is located just outside Frederiksted, St. Croix, not a popular tourist destination. The town was heavily damaged by a hurricane and is struggling to recover. But my reasons for joining this project did not include shopping or going on guided tours. I wanted to see, touch, and help as many leatherbacks as possible. In this I was certainly not disappointed. The night patrols quickly become somewhat routine, but each encounter with a leatherback is exhilarating. Which ones will I particularly remember? There are two: On the last patrol one morning we came upon a turtle that was having trouble making her nest because a large portion of one of her rear flippers had been removed, probably by a shark. She eventually caved in two nests and received help from Peter in successfully digging the third. By the time she had dug her third nest, deposited some 80-90 eggs, and thoroughly disguised the nest from predators the sun was coming up. This was the best observation of a leatherback that we were privileged to have, since all other encounters were during the night and we were limited to careful use of our flashlights. Although the hour was late (early?) we all stayed on the beach to watch her reenter the water and swim safely away. The second strong memory that I will carry from this trip is of catching eggs as they were laid by a turtle on the part of the beach that erodes away later in the season. The hatchlings that resulted from this nest simply would not have been born if we had not relocated the nest. The PIs on this project, with assistance from the Earthwatch teams, are doing something terribly important. Doing something as concrete as catching the eggs and relocating the nest drove this point home to me.

During the 1993 season 43 individual leatherbacks produced 262 nests. About 1/3 of the nests were relocated. The average nest contained 80 yolked and 37 yolkless eggs. Average emergence success was 69% producing an estimated 14,505 hatchlings.

Peter and Donna were excellent teachers and companions

on the beach. If they tire of the 10 day cycle, where they must repeat the most basic instructions for each new group, they did not show it. During slow nights, we would play spirited rounds of Two Minute Mysteries from Donna's seemingly inexhaustible repertoire. I learned a fair number of the summer constellations, and the meteor showers were spectacular.

As for my concerns at the beginning of the trip, I shouldn't have wasted my time: The walking, although strenuous, became enjoyable after the first two nights and I'm sure I left in better condition than I arrived in. The dormitory living was cordial with the team members rapidly becoming friends. After each night's patrol, a small group of us would wait for the sun to rise while enjoying each other's company, the sounds of dawn, and the local rum. Meal preparation was simply a non-issue. Those of us that were hesitant quickly formed alliances with more experienced chefs and without exception the meals were delicious and appreciated.

Earthwatch sponsors research in a wide variety of specialties and around the world.. They can be contacted at:

EARTHWATCH; 680 Mt. Auburn St.; P. O. Box 403; Watertown, MA 02272; 617-926-8200

## 1.9 Box Turtle Diet Notes

from Marlaina Barr

We are all continually learning about the proper care of our turtles and tortoises. Here are some observations about box turtles and their diet. The GCTTS acquired several baby (3 to 6 month old) box turtles that had been fed a diet of only dog food and hamburger meat. These two foods should *never* be fed to box turtles. The turtles had also been confined to indoors, receiving no natural sunlight. The turtles were, predictably, badly pyramided and exhibited symptoms of early metabolic bone disease.

Two of these turtles were adopted to one of our young members who studied our care sheets extensively, learned from our more experienced members, and did her best to provide proper care. The turtles were kept outside and were fed a varied diet. The main protein content of the diet came from earthworms that were offered only every 4 to 5 days. The remainder of the diet consisted of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables - food that was offered every day or every other day.

The results of this improved diet were evident after only 3 months. The turtles had more than doubled in size and the new shell growth showed no sign of pyramiding.

It is clear that their nutritional needs have been met, even with the days when no food was offered and even when the worms were offered only about every 4 to 5 days. By keeping the turtles less than satiated, they seemed willing

to eat almost anything offered - leading to a varied intake.

Perhaps we are feeding our turtles too much of their favorite foods, and too often. Food for thought.

## 1.10 CMC Action Alert

from the CTURTLE list

PETITION SEEKS END TO TEDS: The shrimping industry is petitioning the National Marine Fisheries Service to repeal the requirements for turtle excluder devices (TEDs) which have protected endangered sea turtles since late 1992. According to an alert from the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC), the petition by the Texas Shrimp Association "could spell disaster to sea turtles" by repealing the TED requirements for "hundreds, perhaps thousands" of large offshore shrimp trawlers. CMC has prepared an action alert on the petition; comments to NMFS must be received by November 13.

Address comments to: Chief, Endangered Species Division Office of Protected Resources National Marine Fisheries Service N.O.A.A. 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14564 Silver Springs, MD 20910

For more information, contact Tim Eichenberg or Debby Crouse, CMC, (202)429-5609.

## 1.11 Shrimp Industry at the Public Trough

The shrimp industry is scheduled to receive \$15,000,000 of our federal tax dollars in "emergency appropriations" from the Clinton administration and the National Marine and Fisheries Service. It seems the shrimpers are complaining of having to deal with "underwater obstructions", obstructions that have been known about long before the shrimpers choose to enter the shrimping business.

Carole Allen of HEART has a reasonable proposal: use the \$15,000,000 to repay the Texas taxpayers who have had to clean up coastal debris for many years, a large percentage (30% - 60% according to the National Park Service at Padre Island Seashore) of which can be traced to the shrimp industry.

Its hard to know who to get angry at here - the shrimpers for having the unmitigated gall to ask for the "emergency appropriations" or the Clinton administration for approving it.

## 1.12 Information on Proposed Reptile Bans

from a post on Herp-L

This from the Aug/Sept 1995 newsletter of the Blue Ridge Herp Soc (Brookneal VA) re other states with or considering reptile bans:

Arizona: Restriction of gila monster breeding permits to no more than 12 statewide and 36 adult animals was defeated in committee.

Kansas: Bills that would amend the state animal dealer act and regulating exotic animals were tabled until next year.

North Carolina: Pending is Sen. Bill 875 which would prohibit ownership of [please sit down for this, ladies and gentlemen -mk]: gerbils, brine shrimp, lizards, anemones, tubiflex worms, tree frogs, ferrets, hedgehogs and virtually \*all wild-caught\* birds, reptiles, mammals and aquarium fish.

Pennsylvania: Under revision is an ordinance in Scranton that would prohibit ownership of certain snakes and other reptiles.

Wisconsin: A bill is pending to regulate the importation of wild-caught animals into the state.

If anyone still has their head buried in the sand thinking that it can't happen here, ya better bury yourself waaaaaay deep.

MelissK

## 1.13 Information on Alligator Snapping Turtles, Anyone?

from a post on Herp-L

To whoever:

Has anybody out there done any population or distribution work with Alligator Snapping Turtles (*Macrolemmys temmenckii*) recently? A colleague and I conducted a survey in New Madrid, Mississippi, Dunklin and Pemiscott Counties in Missouri. We found where there was suitable habitat, they were locally abundant. Unfortunately in this four county area, about 90% of the habitat is gone. Also, some suitable areas lay partially in Arkansas, where up to a couple of years ago, commercial harvesting of this species was allowed. An example is a stretch of the St. Francis River which lays partially in Missouri and partially in Arkansas. The habitat was right, but only two individuals have been captured on this stretch of river during the last two years of this survey.

Our portion of the survey was conducted from June to

August, 1994. Methods were to set turtle traps baited with fresh fish anyplace with water deep enough to set nets (.75 meters at least).

I was just curious to see what other people were finding out about their Alligator Snapping Turtle populations.

Daren Riedle; Emporia State University; Division of Biological Sciences, Box 4050; Emporia, KS 66801  
Riedlejd@esuvvm.bitnet

## 1.14 The Caribbean Conservation Corporation

from the Turtle Trax WWW Page

Archie Carr was a founding member of the Caribbean Conservation Corporation (CCC). This is an endeavor that grew out of a loosely organized group of people, called the Brotherhood of the Green Turtle, that was dedicated to saving the green sea turtle. In *The Sea Turtle—So Excellent A Fish*, Archie wrote: "The Caribbean Conservation Corporation is a non-profit group dedicated to preserving biological resources in the Caribbean. Its first undertaking was the green turtle program, in which information gathered at Tortuguero and by the years of Caribbean reconnaissance was to be used in an effort to bring back colonies of the green turtle to old-time levels of abundance."

The CCC was originally made possible by the generosity of John H. Phipps. Mr. Phipps passed away in 1981, but the CCC continues its efforts on behalf of the green turtle. The Tortuguero station was named the John H. Phipps Green Turtle Research Station in his honor.

Sea Turtles Are Landing In Costa Rica. Here's a chance to be part of the welcoming party!

It's a moon-lit, breezy night on a deserted tropical beach on the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica. Out of the darkness a giant green turtle slowly emerges from the sea to bury her eggs in the black volcanic sand, just as her species has done for millions of years. You are there to witness and record this rare moment as a volunteer in the longest running sea turtle research program in the world. If this sounds rewarding, reserve your space in next summer's Green Turtle Tagging and Monitoring Program.

The Florida-based, non-profit Caribbean Conservation Corporation (CCC) offers the opportunity to work with nesting sea turtles during its annual Green Turtle Volunteer Program, held each summer on the remote Caribbean beach at Tortuguero, Costa Rica—where more green turtles nest than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere. Volunteers are needed to assist researchers in monitoring the beach at night and in tagging and recording various data about the turtles. By recording data about the turtles over a long period of time, scientists are able to piece together information about their life history, their phys-

iology and the status of the population. The more we know about these endangered creatures, the better we can manage and protect them.

"Everyone ought to see a turtle nesting," wrote Dr. Archie Carr. "It is an impressive thing to see, the pilgrimage of a sea creature back to the land its ancestors left a hundred million years ago."

Volunteers will work under the direction of a field coordinator and accompany research assistants nightly to monitor the nesting beach. In addition to the field work on the beach, volunteers are offered several educational sessions and field trips, including guided hikes and boat tours through the tropical rain-forest. Because turtle research is conducted at night, the days are left open for reading, sleeping, exploring the area, or merely enjoying the sights and sounds of this remote Caribbean coastal community.

No experience or expertise is needed because volunteers are taught all they need to know to participate in the turtle research. However, volunteers should be physically fit, as the research may require walking as much as five miles a night in warm, humid conditions. Volunteers are charged a fee which covers airfare from Miami to Costa Rica, all in-country travel, meals, and living expenses at the Caribbean Conservation Corporation's newly-constructed John H. Phipps Tortuguero Biological Field Station, adjacent to beautiful Tortuguero National Park. The fee also helps provide needed funding for international sea turtle research and conservation programs. Provided there is still room in one of the seven scheduled research teams, there is no deadline to become a volunteer and last minute joiners are welcome.

#### Adopt a Tortuguero Turtle

If volunteering for the turtles won't fit in your schedule this summer, then you can still help out by "adopting" a green turtle tagged at Tortuguero during the volunteer program. For a tax-deductible donation of \$25 (US), you will receive an adoption certificate, green turtle photo, sea turtle fact sheet, personal profile of the adopted turtle and a one-year subscription to VELADOR, the quarterly environmental newsletter of the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. Sea turtle adoptions also make unique and thoughtful gifts for anyone interested in the environment.

For more information about becoming a Green Turtle Program volunteer or to "adopt" a Tortuguero turtle from Caribbean Conservation's Sea Turtle Survival League, call 1-800-678-7853.

## 1.15 How Does a Tortoise on its Back Die?

from a post on Herp-L

The length of time varies by kind, condition, and size of the tortoise. What happens is that the animals organs 'fall' against their lungs. If the tortoise had little room to begin with (eg. fatty liver, over hydrated, fat in general) the length of time it might survive is shortened.

As you may already know, tortoises don't have a diaphragm, they have muscles in their hindquarters that enable them to 'pump' their insides to empty their lungs. If you've ever picked up a tortoise you've undoubtedly heard them hiss - which is just their lungs emptying as they retract their head and limbs into their shell thereby reducing, all of a sudden, the volume of their lungs.

The physiological cause of death is suffocation due to carbon dioxide poisoning (which tortoises are less sensitive to than man but still subject to). The greater the temperature the quicker the death.

Predators of Gopherus (specifically Crows/Ravens) actually flip them on their backs and wait for them to die.

I am a herptoculturist (not a herpetologist) but I believe my response to your query is accurate.

Steffan Rhoads swrhoads@ssd.rockwell.com

## 1.16 Desert Tortoise Print

The BAN Waste Coalition is trying to stop a proposed radioactive waste site from being established in Ward Valley, California - home of the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). To raise funds, they are offering a 16" x 20" photographic print of Dr. Robert Stebbins 1995 acrylic painting *Desert Tortoise Matriarch*. The prints are \$25 (signed) or \$20 (unsigned) each plus \$4.75 postage and handling and can be ordered from:

The BAN Waste Coalition  
2760 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94118  
(415)752-8678

## 2 GCTTS Information

### 2.1 GCTTS Educational Presentations

The GCTTS has been busy spreading the word about turtles and tortoises and their proper care. If you can help with these important presentation, please call Janis Hatcher.

October 24 - Tracy Scannel at Alvin Primary  
October 27 - Bob Smither at Armand Bayou Nature Center

November 19 - Janis Hatcher at the Houston Arboretum  
(see the GCTTS Calendar for more information)

### 2.2 1995 GCTTS/ETHS Picnic

The fifth GCTTS/ETHS Picnic was held on October 21st at Bob Smither's home in Friendswood. Approximately 45 turtle and tortoise enthusiasts enjoyed the wonderful weather and each other's company at the annual event. The level of swapping and selling seemed to be reduced this year, with most folks content to talk about turtles and tortoises. We did have a visit from Mike Reader with some nice looking young Sulcata tortoises and Rick VanDyke made it down from Austin with an extensive array of hatchling water turtles and other assorted herps. It was good to see both new and familiar faces. If you missed this year's picnic, start planning for the one in 1996!

### 2.3 Rescue, Adoption, and Rehabilitation

Marlaina Barr

From 9/12/95 to 10/22/95:

Box Turtles:

Taken In:

0.0.9 EBox hatchlings

0.0.13 3Toe hatchlings

0.2.0 3Toe juv.

0.0.1 Ornate adult

0.0.4 3Toe adults

Adopted

0.0.8 EBox hatchlings

0.0.6 3Toe hatchlings

0.0.2 Ornate adults

Available for Adoption:

0.0.7 3Toe hatchlings

0.3.0 3Toe juv. (metabolic bone disease)

0.1.0 Ornate juv. (needs worming)

1.1.0 3Toe adult

In Rehab:

0.0.1 EBox hatchling

0.0.4 3Toe hatchlings

0.0.7 3Toe adults

Water Turtles:

Taken In:

1.0.0 Cooter juv.

1.0.0 REar juv.

0.0.1 REar adult

0.0.1 REar hatchling

0.0.10 Chicken hatchlings

0.0.1 Painted hatchling

Adopted:

0.0.10 Chicken hatchlings

0.0.1 Painted hatchling

Available for Adoption:

none

In Rehab:

0.0.2 REar adults

0.0.3 REar juv.

0.0.1 REar hatchling

0.0.1 Cooter juv.

Awaiting Release

0.0.1 Peninsular Cooter juv. (to Florida)

0.0.3 REar juv.

Please Note: The juvenile and rehab turtles must be overwintered indoors this year only. Adoptions are available to members who can provide a permanent outdoor habitat with a minimum 4' X 4' area for each turtle. Proper diet information will be provided.

The RAR committee can use your help! There is a continuing need for aquariums and aquarium supplies, food such as Repto-Min, small plastic containers, chlorox, newspapers, paper towels, over the counter medical supplies such as iodine, betadine, lotromin, rock salt, and cotton balls.

If anyone could donate a microscope it would be put to good use in helping our rehabilitating turtles and tortoises.

Please Note: We try to adopt any previous captive to qualified members. If you need to get rid of a turtle or tortoise, see one that needs rescuing, have one available for adoption, or want to adopt, call the GCTTS at 443-8001.

Adult GCTTS members that are experienced turtle keepers and want to provide concrete help to turtles and tortoises please call Marlaina at 443-8001 and volunteer to help with our rehabilitation program. We always need help in housing rehabs after they have been stabilized. These animals need a period of TLC, good conditions, and monitoring. Note that these turtles will need to be isolated from any others you might have.

Adoptions are free to GCTTS members. We appreciate any donations. Marlaina has the GCTTS adoption request forms.

## 2.4 Treasurer's Report

Marlaina Barr

From 09/12/95 to 10/22/95:

Income: \$200.00

Memberships - \$130.00; Education - \$55.00;

Donations - \$15.00

Expenses: \$118.89

Newsletter - \$38.40; Rehab - \$70.87;

Education - \$9.62

Balance: \$340.74

## 2.5 Society Contacts

If you have any questions about the operation or programs of the GCTTS or would like to volunteer to help in any way, contact one of the GCTTS Board members:

Leslie Barker (713)431-1358

Marlaina Barr (713)443-8001

Janis Hatcher (713)353-3622

Bob Smither (713)331-2548

For box turtle care information contact Marlaina or Janis. For water turtle care information contact Marlaina or Bob. For tortoise information, contact Leslie.

Address all correspondence (except newsletter items) to:

GCTTS, c/o Leslie Barker

8918 Bateman Blvd.

Rosharon, Texas 77583

GCTTS@pobox.com

## 2.6 Newsletter

The GCTTS Newsletter is edited by Bob Smither and published by Janis Hatcher. Please send any comments, suggestions, articles, or other newsletter material to Bob at: 2600 Ware Dairy Road; Friendswood, Texas 77546; fax: (713)331-4616; voice: (713)331-2548; e-mail: GCTTS@pobox.com. If you can help publish the newsletter (copying, assembling, mailing) please call Janis.

## 2.7 Gulf Coast Turtle & Tortoise Society Calendar

The Gulf Coast Turtle and Tortoise Society meets on the third Saturday of each odd numbered month. We meet at the Central Houston Public Library from 2PM to 5PM. Unless otherwise noted, we meet in the Concourse room in the basement of the new HPL building. The concourse room is next to the children's reading room.

The Houston Public Library is located at 500 McKinney,

Houston, Texas 77002. The library information number is 236-1313. From I-45 southbound take the McKinney exit. The Library is the first building on the right.

There are two convenient places to park. Starting on McKinney heading east:

1) Go past the Library and turn right (south) onto Smith Street. Go past Lamar Street, then enter the parking garage on the right. Covered parking is a fixed (not hourly) \$2.00 on Saturday.

2) Go past the Library, turn right (south) onto Smith, then turn right onto Lamar Street. As you approach the Library there is an entrance to underground parking on your right. The parking lot connects to the Library elevator. Parking here is at an hourly rate and can be expensive.

Our meetings are informal, free, and open to the public. Please note that our programs are not sponsored by the Houston Public Library. Call Leslie Barker (713)431-1358, Marlaina Barr (713)443-8001, or Bob Smither (713)331-2548 for information on our programs or if you require any special physical or communication accommodations.

Care sheets and membership information are available at our programs.

GCTTS Programs and Events:

January 20, 1996 Program: Mr. Karl Peterson, Department of Herpetology at the Houston Zoo will speak to us about his interest in tortoises. Karl is in the unique position of being a tortoise fancier as well as a research herpetologist. He will share with us his knowledge of tortoises and their care, knowledge gained from both practical experience and scientific research. The meeting will be in the Reception Court Room, 3rd floor of the Julia Idesen Bldg. (the old HPL building).

March 16, 1996 Program: Carole Allen of HEART will discuss the critically important role of consumers in protecting the remaining sea turtles through the Turtle Safe<sup>TM</sup> Shrimp Program - perhaps the best hope yet for helping these endangered animals. Find out what you can do to save sea turtles from the shrimper's nets.

Other Events of Interest:

The East Texas Herpetological Society meets every third Friday of each odd numbered month at the Houston Zoo. Call Russ Walker (409)594-5554 for more information.

### 3 Information Sources

#### 3.1 Chelonian Conservation and Biology - International Journal of Turtle and Tortoise Research

When John Behler, Peter Pritchard, and Anders Rhodin put their name on a journal, you expect the very best. The IJTTR does not disappoint. This journal is entering its second year of publication and has rapidly established itself as one of the best scientific journals in the field. Articles in the August, 1995 issue include ones on the leopard tortoise (*Geochelone pardalis*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) and the matamata turtle (*Chelus fimbriatus*). There is something of interest here to all serious turtle and tortoise enthusiasts as well as the professional chelonian herpetologist. A subscription to the IJTTR is \$25.00 a year and can be ordered from:

Anders G. J. Rhodin  
Chelonian Research Foundation  
168 Goodrich Street  
Lunenburg, MA 01462  
(508)534-9440; RhodinCRF@aol.com

#### 3.2 Herp Literature On Line

from Steve Grenard; grenard@herpmed.com

HerpMed is now carrying HERPLIT ONLINE. Herplit Online will review the feature stories appearing in all the popular magazines devoted to the reptile and amphibian hobby including, in the beginning: Reptile and Amphibian Magazine. Reptiles and Vivarium. Others will be added as publishers submit them for review. Overseas (English language) magazines are welcome as well as the publications of specialty groups. Herp Society Bulletins ONLY if they have feature stories of national/international interest.

The first issue of Herplit Online reviews the November, 1995 issue of REPTILES Magazine. You can access Herplit on line by using your web browser and going to:

<http://www.xmission.com/~gastown/herpmed/herplit.htm>

Advance Copies of Publications should be sent via First-Class or Air Mail to:

Steve Grenard  
POB 40825  
Staten Island NY 10304-0825

#### 3.3 The Name Book

The Complete Guide to Scientific & Common Names of Reptiles & Amphibians of the World  
by Norman Frank & Erica Ramus  
information from Herp-L

The book is \$19.95 + 3.00 shipping/handling for US orders. VISA/MC/check accepted. You can e-mail me your credit card # (if you trust the Internet!) (not recommended - editor) and we'll process your order immediately. Otherwise, call the office or fax us and we'll get your book right out to you.

The book is 400 pages, and contains the common and scientific names of 12,000 reptiles & amphibians.

Erica Ramus, Editor; Reptile & Amphibian Magazine; RD 3 Box 3709-A, Pottsville PA 17901; 717-622-6050; fax 622-5858; ERamus@ricnet.pottsville.com; <http://www.pottsville.com/reptile.htm>

#### 3.4 Reptiles and the Law

information from Herp-L

A Field Guide to Reptiles and the Law  
by John P. Levell

This new perfect bound, soft-cover book is essential for anyone involved in conservation, field work, collecting, studying, or breeding reptiles or amphibians in the United States. It contains detailed collecting/possession information, citations, and permit regulations and procedures for all 50 States. It also contains Federal Regulations regarding reptiles/amphibians and useful information about the Endangered Species Act, C.I.T.E.S. (and listings of Appendix I and II herpetofauna.)

It is the best single publication on the topic currently available. It contains 240+ pages and is approx. 8.5" x 11" with a color illustrated cover.

Available by mail from Satronics, P.O.Box 52261, Philadelphia PA 19115-7261 for \$29.95 post-paid book-rate to any U.S. address. PA residents add 6% sales tax. Allow 2-3 weeks delivery.

#### 3.5 Selected Titles from HERP-NET List of New Books

Titles are available from: Herp-Net BookSearch, Div. of Satronics Communications; P.O. Box 52261 Philadelphia, PA 19115-7261 USA; Fax: 215-464-3561; BBS: 215-464-3562; mmiller@tjuvm.tju.edu;

Alderton, Turtles & Tortoises of the World. Hard-bound/dj. 1988. ca. 200pp import. \$25.95

Barnard & Upton, A Veterinary Guide to the Parasites of Reptiles, Vol. 1, Protozoa. 1994. Terrific reference for the clinician or serious hobbyist. Hardbound/dj. 154 pages. \$26.50

Ernst & Barbour, Turtles of the World. 1989 Soft. 313pp. Large format. Best book of its type anywhere. (highly recommended - editor) \$24.95

Frye, Reptile Clinician's Handbook. Soft. 1994. spiral-bound. This chubby little volume is already being praised as the best pocket reference available. 276pp. \$24.00

Frye, Practical Guide to Feeding Reptiles. \$24.00

Halliday & Adler, Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians. Hard/dj. 1986. Included here because it is the best single book that introduces herpetology to the educated public. 143 illus. pp. \$27.95

Highfield, A., Tortoise Trust Guide to Tortoises and Turtles; their Care and Maintenance in Captivity (New Extended Edition). 1994. 60 Pages, illustrated. Great information. soft. \$29.00

Murphy, Adler, & Collins (eds) Captive Management and Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles. 408pp. 35 photos, 1 color plate. Cloth. SSAR Symposium proceedings from 70 leading specialists. \$59.00

Pritchard, Encyclopedia of Turtles. 1979. Hard. 895 pp. Comprehensive review of turtles and tortoises of the world by the leading expert in America. \$59.00

Runquist, Reptiles and Amphibians: Management in Captivity. 1994. Hard. 224pp Well written by owner of "Captive Breeding" Mag. \$29.95

Wareham, Reptile and Amphibian Keeper's Dictionary: An A to Z of Herpetology. 1993. Hard/dj. 248 useful pages \$21.00

Williamson, Hyder & Applegarth, Snakes, Lizards, Turtles, Frogs, Toads, and Salamanders of New Mexico. Soft. 1994. 176 pages. Good reference to western herps. Color. \$19.95

Zimmerman, Reptiles & Amphibians: Breeding Terrarium Animals. 1986. English ed. Hard. 384pp Excellent amphibian coverage from the European perspective. A classic that still is valuable. \$34.50

### 3.6 Treefrog Enthusiasts take Note

from a post on Herp-L

The International Hylid Society is a new organization dedicated to tree-frog enthusiasts worldwide. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in tree-frogs. This includes anyone from the pet-keeper to the professional herpetologist.

The focus of the organization is on tree-frogs; not just those of the family Hylidae, but any of the many tree-frog species throughout the world.

This is a non-profit organization that serves as a resource and information exchange center to benefit the members and the well being of the tree-frog species they keep or study.

Members will receive "The Bulletin of the International Hylid Society" on a quarterly basis. This will contain articles on a variety of topics such as: -species profiles -husbandry techniques -breeding information -vivarium construction -insect culturing methods -up to date information from several zoos -hard to find international articles -various tips and ideas on a variety of subjects The Bulletin will also include classified ads (free to members), a breeder directory, and full color photos.

Volume 1 Number 1 will be published Jan/Feb 1996. We are currently accepting article and photograph submissions. Classified ads are also being accepted.

Membership is \$15.00 per year. Please make check or money order payable in U.S. funds to: The International Hylid Society, and send it with your postal information to the address below:

Mr. William Brown  
Amphibian Conservation and Research Center  
1423 Alabama St. Lafayette, IN 47905 USA  
(317)742-5331; 102436.2415@compuserve.com

Gulf Coast Turtle & Tortoise Society  
Membership Application

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$10.00 per year per address. Please mail this completed form to:  
GCTTS, c/o Leslie Barker, 8918 Bateman Blvd., Rosharon, Texas 77583  
FAX: (713)443-8001, E-Mail: GCTTS@POBOX.COM

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Rosharon, Texas 77583