

# NEW MEXICO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



August – December 2011 Newsletter

Volume 48 (3)

## MILLS CANYON FIELD REPORT BY SAMUEL MULDER



Clockwise from top left: Scenery from Mills Canyon, spider, Plains Spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*), Red-spotted Toad (*Anaxyrus punctatus*), Barred Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma mavortium mavortium*)

This year's NMHS Fall field trip was an excursion to Mill's Canyon in the Kiowa National Grassland. We were there jointly with the North American Field Herping Association (NAFHA) - Rocky Mountain Chapter, and the trip was well attended. Having only joined the group a couple of months previously, this was the first field trip for my son, Eirik, and I. We had quite a surprise upon driving up Saturday, running into a massive hail storm about half an hour from the canyon. We pulled under a gas station cover to weather the storm and continued on when the hail stopped. Given the very wet conditions and without 4-wheel drive, we decided we'd better stick to the rim campsites, although trying to reach them also proved a challenge. We witnessed the largest flash-flood that I've personally seen completely turning the road to the campsite into a raging river (see images below). The water resided fairly quickly however and within an hour or so we were able to reach the campsite.

That evening we poked around a bit on the rocks above the canyon and located several Red Spotted Toads. The flood conditions turned out to be ideal for amphibians and we saw dozens of Tiger Salamanders when we were out road driving once it got dark. The

boys caught around 15 or so pretty quickly. We also saw a Plains Spadefoot Toad and a New Mexico Spadefoot Toad that night. Sunday was very pleasant for hiking and we explored part of the canyon including the ruins of an old stop on the trading route. In the canyon, we spotted several whiptails. Sunday afternoon we headed to the ponds above the canyon and saw several Plains Garter snakes and a Yellow-bellied Racer.

Overall, the trip was an excellent experience for both of us, and really brought to life my son's interest in herps. I really appreciate all of you who spent time talking to him and took an interest in his attempts to share what he's learned. We're both looking forward to future meetings and field trips with the group.



Left to right: Flooding in the canyon, Eirick holding an Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer (*Coluber constrictor flaviventris*), Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*)

## SANDIA RESERVATION PLAINS SURVEYS CONCLUDED

The traps produced right up to the end. On the last Tuesday of surveying Tara Wheeler caught a Mountain Patch-nosed snake! Eastern side-blotched lizards were found every time surveyed and are still found by Scott in the traps that were left open throughout the winter. The funnel traps have been a success and we plan on adding some more next year. The traps will be reopened in May of 2012.

## HERPER SPOTLIGHT: TARA WHEELER

### HOW DID YOU GET INTO HERPING?

I've been herping since I was three years old. My Mother wrote in my baby book "I can't keep her from picking up lizards and frogs. Yick."

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF NMHS?

About a year now.

### DO YOU KEEP HERPS?

Yes. Snakes, salamanders, lizards, frogs, toads and a waterdog.

### DO YOU FIELD HERP?

Every time I'm in a car.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE HERP TO WORK WITH?

I really do love my frogs and toads.

### WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE FIND?

I road herped with Tim Cole and caught 12 *Atrax* in two hours. That was a great night.

### IF YOU COULD TAKE A HERPING TRIP ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

I'm not interested in exotics; I'd be perfectly happy taking a trip back to Tucson.

### IF YOU COULD KEEP ANY HERP IN THE WORLD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I was born in Tucson and caught my first Gila Monster at 7. I'd adore having one now that I know how to properly care for it.

### WHAT OTHER INTERESTS DO YOU HAVE IN NATURE?

I adopted two BLM Mustangs in Texas and they were totally amazing animals.

### WHO WOULD YOU LIKE US TO SPOTLIGHT IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?

I'd like to hear more about Garth Graves.

Tara playing in a stream when she was a child.



## MEETING & ACTIVITY NOTES



**September 2-5 - Fall Field Trip** to Mills Canyon near Roy, NM went well. Representing the NMHS were Ted & Sue Brown, Scott and Logan Bulgrin, Dave and Jean Burt, Carl Johnson, Sam and Eirik Mulder and Tara and David Wheeler. Representing the NAFHA were Kaylee Brooks, Ty Burtard, Travis Dockter, Chris Newsom, John Ruyak, Erika Velasquez, Tim Warfel, Paul and Sandy White and Cameron Young and sons. Bill Gorum holds dual membership in both groups and stayed and hunted with the NAFHA members. Several species were found by both groups and a

great time was had by all! Here is a link to some pictures from NAFHA: <http://www.fieldherpforum.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=8065>

**October 8 - Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge Day** went well! Josh & Nikki Emms, Scott Bulgrin, August Breithaupt, Nancy Bush, Tara Wheeler & her mother presented some herps that could be found on the refuge.

**November 20-21 - Festival of the Cranes** was great success! Ted & Sue Brown, Josh & Nikki Emms, Scott, Rebecca & Logan Bulgrin, August Breithaupt, Nancy Bush, David & Tara Wheeler & Dave & Jean Burt presented a wide assortment of herps and were able to raise some money for the society.

**Saturday, December 10, 2011. This year's holiday banquet** will begin with a social hour at the Rattlesnake Museum at 5:30pm. Dinner will cost \$15 and can be paid at the social hour. You can also pay your membership dues at this time. **Dinner will begin at 7:00pm at Garcia's.** Doug Hotle, curator of reptiles at the Rio Grande Zoo, will be presenting about upcoming plans for the zoo and current topics in herpetology. He will also bring along the new amphibian keeper. There will also be a silent auction to benefit the society. If you have an item you'd like to donate, please contact Scott Bulgrin.

**Saturday January 21, 2012, 10:00am - 2:00pm. Reptile & Amphibian Awareness Day Rio Grande Zoo.** Learn about the unique ways these cold-blooded animals eat, live and cope with the winter blues. Touch snake sheds, met an American Alligator and create some clever critter crafts inside the Reptile building! Cost is included with admission.

**Saturday January 28, 2012, 10:00am - 2:00pm. Sea Turtle Awareness Day.** Visit the aquarium to learn all about endangered sea turtles and how you can help protect them in the wild. Cost is included with admission.

**Thursday January 5, 2012. Monthly meeting** 7:00pm at the Rattlesnake Museum.

## HERPS IN THE NEWS



### Two-Headed Albino Snake Gets Thanksgiving Dinner, With a Price Tag: \$25,000

Published November 21, 2011  
| FoxNews.com

Table for two -- but beware the bill!

A rare two-headed albino Honduran milk snake was [hatched a few days before Halloween](#) in an incubation chamber by University of Central Florida biologist Daniel Parker. Now, just in time for [Thanksgiving](#), the extraordinary snake has taken its first meal: a baby mouse.

The right head of the snake ravenously engulfed the small mouse soon after it was offered, Parker said. The snake consumed its meal in the typical

serpentine manner, other than the extra head on hand to [watch](#).

Parker, owner of reptile enthusiast site [Sunshine Serpents](#), also announced that he was putting the rare creature up for sale -- at a whopping \$25,000 (a bargain at \$12,500 per head). Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/11/21/two-headed-albino-snake-gets-thanksgiving-dinner-with-price-tag-25000/#ixzz1eyqSh7Ip>

### Claims that Asian geckos cure AIDS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia - Claims that a nocturnal Asian lizard can be used to help treat the HIV virus have led to a sharp boom in smuggling of the reptile, putting it at risk, a conservation group said Tuesday.

Demand for the Tokay Gecko has skyrocketed in recent years after online blogs, newspaper articles and wildlife traders extolled the consumption of the lizard's tongue and internal organs as a miracle cure for HIV, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia said in a report.

[http://articles.nydailynews.com/2011-11-16/news/30404592\\_1\\_malaysia-lizard-kuala-lumpur](http://articles.nydailynews.com/2011-11-16/news/30404592_1_malaysia-lizard-kuala-lumpur)





### Baby dragon born at Memphis Zoo

The Memphis Zoo announced today that it welcomed a tiny version of the world's largest lizard species into its family last month.

After 222 days of incubation, a baby Komodo dragon was hatched on October 8. Zoo keepers still don't know the sex of the lizard, who weighed just 99 grams when it was born. Fully grown Komodo dragons can weigh up to 250 pounds.

"We'll keep the baby until it measures about three to four feet in length," said Dr. Steve Reichling, the zoo's curator of reptiles and amphibians. "Then, we will most likely send it to another institution based on Species Survival Plan

recommendations from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums." The lizard was the first born at the zoo.

<http://midtown.wmctv.com/news/urban-wildlife/65068-baby-dragon-born-memphis-zoo>

### Ecologist says business can go on in endangered species' habitat

Permian Basin residents await a decision, expected a month from now, on whether or not the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will list the dune sagebrush lizard as endangered. Residents are concerned that such a listing will put a halt to oil and gas and even ranching operations in areas containing the lizard's habitat.

Speaking this week to members of the Natural Gas Society of the Permian Basin, Olivia Munzer, senior ecologist and project manager with SWCA Environmental Consultants, attempted to ease those concerns.

"We have endangered species all over the United States and business goes on," she pointed out.

[http://www.mywesttexas.com/business/oil/top\\_stories/article\\_aab09d69-c667-54ba-8519-2f88d44a6635.html#ixzz1ezAkc900](http://www.mywesttexas.com/business/oil/top_stories/article_aab09d69-c667-54ba-8519-2f88d44a6635.html#ixzz1ezAkc900)



### BioPark Rattlesnakes Used In Ground-Breaking Cancer Research

Four western diamondback rattlesnakes from the Albuquerque BioPark will soon be part of the first clinical trials for venom as a cancer treatment. The snakes traveled on November 10, 2011 to the Kentucky Reptile Zoo, one of the four premier venom laboratories in the United States. The snakes' venom will be extracted and sent to Paris, France where the clinical studies are underway.

Snake venom contains hundreds of proteins which impact the human body in various ways. When combined, the proteins can be devastating. In isolation, these proteins can be used to treat health issues from strokes and heart attacks to Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

<http://www.cabq.gov/biopark/zoo/news/biopark-rattlesnakes-used-in-ground-breaking-cancer-research>



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# New Mexico Herpetological society

## Ballot for officers for 2012

Please vote for one person for each office. You may write in the name of a member if they have agreed to run for that office. Return your ballot to NMHS by mail no later than 9 December 2011 or bring it to the December Banquet on 10 December 2011 and give it to a member of the nominations committee.

**PRESIDENT**

\_\_\_ **Scott Bulgrin**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

\_\_\_ **Ted L. Brown**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**SECRETARY**

\_\_\_ **Jean Burt**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**TREASURER**

\_\_\_ **Garth Graves**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

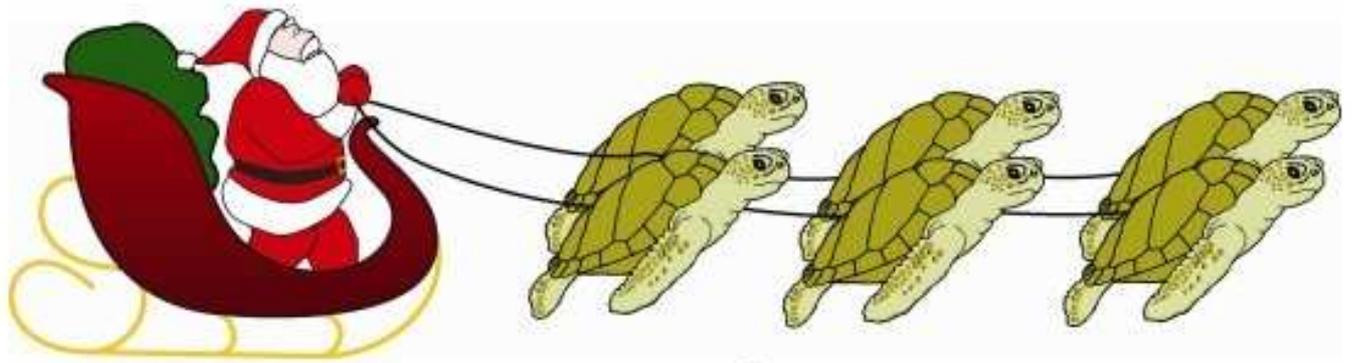
\_\_\_ **Josh Emms**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**PARLIAMENTARIAN**

\_\_\_ **Dr. William G. Degenhardt**

(write-in) \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_



# NEW MEXICO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BANQUET DECEMBER 10, 2011



5:30PM - MINGLE AT  
THE RATTLESNAKE MUSEUM  
202 SAN FELIPE NW SUITE A



ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87104-1426

7:00PM - DINNER AT GARCIA'S. FOLLOWING DINNER  
WILL BE A PRESENTATION BY DOUG HOTLE, CURATOR  
OF REPTILES AT THE RIO GRANDE ZOO. HE WILL TALK  
ABOUT UPCOMING EXHIBITS AT THE ZOO AND CURRENT  
TOPICS IN HERPETOLOGY. THERE WILL BE A SILENT  
AUCTION. THE COST FOR THE BANQUET IS \$75 AND IS  
PAYABLE AT THE EVENT. DUES ARE ALSO DUE.

1736 CENTRAL AVENUE SOUTHWEST  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87104-1159

