

# NEW MEXICO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



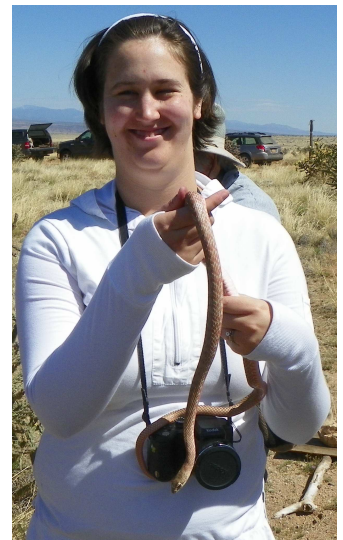
January - May 2011 Newsletter

Volume 48 (1)

## SANDIA PUEBLO HERP SURVEY 2011



Members of the New Mexico Herpetological Society headed out on April 30<sup>th</sup> to set up pitfall traps for the 2011 herp survey for Sandia Pueblo. This year we only had to open the traps that were already in the ground. So the only new thing we had to add were some funnel traps. We added two to each area. A lot of fun was had by all. Several lizards were spotted and captured and one coachwhip was caught. Afterward, several members met up at El Pinto afterwards for some good eats.



**Top (left to right):** Round-tailed Horned Lizard, Long-nosed Leopard Lizards, Zane Dohner & Nancy Bush with Coachwhip, Nikki Emms with Coachwhip.  
**Bottom (left to right):** New Mexico Whiptail, Side-blotched lizard, Scott with a funnel trap. Photos by Josh & Nikki Emms unless otherwise noted. **If you would like to help check traps, contact Scott Bulgrin (email: [sbulgrin@sandiapueblo.nsn.us](mailto:sbulgrin@sandiapueblo.nsn.us) phone: 505-553-3433)**

# HERPER SPOTLIGHT: TED BROWN

## How did you get into herping?

When I was a little boy of 2 or 3 years, I would find little brown striped snakes with black belly spots under the bricks and rocks in my great-grandma Ada Molly Lee Brown's garden in Abilene, Texas, where my mom had taken me to meet my dad's family in 1944 ("Surprise! I'm your son's wife Marion and this is your grandson Teddy Lee!"). My folks taught me not to fear snakes but to enjoy watching them and try to figure out how they moved without legs. My dad's family wasn't so sure about this little kid, but they indulged me, put up with my pleadings for going snake-hunting out at nearby lakes in my teen years and even helped me out by encouraging me to be careful, have fun and don't get bit!



Ted showing off a gopher snake a few years ago.

## How long have you been a member of NMHS?

I was one of the Five Founding Fathers of NMHS, along with Dr. Bill Degenhardt, Mike Williamson and Lee & Lane Anderson, who all agreed to form NMHS way back in October 1963 at the University of New Mexico. We had no idea who would show up at our first meeting and I'm still amazed that we still draw a crowd for meetings, field trips and other endeavors.



Ted and his herp-mobile.

## Do you keep any herps?

Yes, a few. A few too many, wife Sue would say.

## Do you field herp?

Yes, whenever circumstances of time, season, location and health permit. I usually carry a small snake bag in my back pocket from March through October.

## What is your favorite herp to work with?

Tough Question # 1, I'd say. I've had quite a variety in the 57 years I've kept critters, but rat snakes, bullsnakes, king snakes and even garter & water snakes are some of my favorites, along with whiptails, large skinks, fence lizards and salamanders -- and toads (can't forget those cuties). My favorite would probably be common king snakes (I've had all the US subspecies).

## What was your most memorable find?

An 18"-long, thick-as-a-large-pencil Hooded Black-headed Snake (*Tantilla rubra cucullata*) I'd collected in Big Bend National Park, Texas, on 1 July 1968 (legally, as I had a park permit for research I was doing with Dr. Bill Degenhardt). I bagged it and returned to the ranch house where we stayed to show the Degenhardts (he'd collected the 2nd specimen many years before; mine was the 3rd), but the snake had wriggled out of the bag and was hiding in my '64 VW bus. After I'd torn apart the bus from bow to stern that night, I found it after Bill & Paula had left for Albuquerque the next morning -- it was coiled around the floor dimmer switch. It's in the UNM/MSB collection and prompted a paper on those huge Texas black-headed snakes a few years later.

## If you could take a herping trip anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Tough Question #2. Australia, I suppose, for many reasons, as I'd seen some of their critters in the UNM collection when I was an undergrad. But when I really think about it, I'd like to return to the Pacific Northwest, where Sue & I lived when first married in 1970-73. The scenery is fabulous, there are salamanders under every rock or log and you can identify the different garter snakes from a distance by their distinctive odors.

## If you could keep any herp in the world, what would it be?

Tough Question # 3. For years, I'd wanted a large black-and-orange Royal Diadem Snake (*Spalerosophis diadema*) like some I'd seen in a California pet store in 1970, but now, I'd settle for a nice chain king snake, a Pacific giant salamander, a New England milk snake or a nice fox snake. I've had most of the US species at one time or another, and several foreign ones, but I'll stick with domestic brands for now.

## What other interests do you have in nature?

I do take a few photos, still with film in old cameras and mostly of scenics, flowers and buildings from time to time.

## Who would you like us to spotlight in the next newsletter?

How about Dr. Bill Degenhardt? He and I go back to the fall of 1960 when he was a new biology professor at UNM and I was a senior in high school who'd just lost his driver's license for 6 months for a second speeding ticket over the just-completed Lomas Overpass over I-40.

Next newsletter will feature a spotlight on Dr. Bill Degenhardt. If you have any questions you would like to ask him, email me at:

[joshemms@hotmail.com](mailto:joshemms@hotmail.com)

# NEW ADDITIONS AT THE RIO GRANDE ZOO



If it's been a while since you've been to the zoo, you may be in for a treat the next time you go. The reptile house has undergone a huge makeover. Several new species have arrived since Doug Hotie has become the curator for reptiles and amphibians. In November, some members from NMHS went to an event at the zoo to show off the new critters. The zoo went from having a handful of venomous to having several. The building itself has improved as well. It is amazing what a coat of paint will do!



**Clockwise from top left:** Temple Viper, Juvenile King Cobra, Red Spitting Cobra, Snouted Cobra, Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, Reticulated Pythons, Chris Nichols holding an American Alligator.



# MEMORIAL WEEKEND FIELDTRIP - 28-30 MAY 2011

## CERRILLOS HILLS STATE PARK

This year's spring field trip will be somewhat different from previous years. We will not be formally camping as a group this year but will still be meeting to survey. We will be surveying all three days: Saturday, May 28, 2011, Sunday, May 29, 2011 and Monday, May 30, 2011. We will be meeting at the gate at 9:00AM-9:15AM each of the

days, and surveying all day. Come out for one, two or all three days. Please let Scott Bulgrin (phone: 505-553-3433 email: [sbulgrin@sandiapueblo.nsn.us](mailto:sbulgrin@sandiapueblo.nsn.us)) or Ted



Brown (phone: 505-690-8459 email: [brownlizard2279@msn.com](mailto:brownlizard2279@msn.com)) know if you plan on coming and which days if possible. Please remember to bring water, camera, sunscreen and lunch. Please remember you field herping etiquette. Don't flip anything you can't put back and make sure you do put it back. Many lizards and snakes await in those hills! For more information about Cerrillos Hills (kind of redundant isn't it?) Check out their website: <http://www.cerrilloshills.org/> Be sure to check out their reptiles and amphibians list!

<http://www.cerrilloshills.org/nature/reptiles.html> Maybe we can help them out with their list.



## MEETING & ACTIVITY NOTES



**April 29 – Bosque School Presentation** at the Bosque School was a great success with lots of children wandering through the facility to look at and talk herps. A few members were present including: Tom Eichorst, Scott Bulgrin, David and Tara Wheeler and me. We all brought some specimens and were able to answer the children's questions and even allow them to touch some of the specimens.

**April 29 – Earth Day Presentation** Scott Bulgrin presented at the pueblo and everything went well.

**April 30 – Commencement of 2011 Sandia Pueblo Survey.** This year we are continuing our survey of the plains just east of I-25. We had several members show up to open the traps and we even found a few critters active. Logan and Sam had a blast trying to capture lizards, caterpillars and other critters. A lot of fun was had by all and all the traps are ready to go! This year there will be eight funnel traps added to hopefully add some species to the tally. Hopefully Ted will get his diamondback this year! After the work was complete many members went to El Pinto and had some great New Mexican cuisine and only one person got food poisoning, so, not too bad!

**May 28-30 – Spring Field Trip** to Cerillos Hills State Park. Day trips will be taken each day to the park, we will meet at the main entrance at 9:00am each day.

**June 25 – Annual Summer Potluck** will be at 6:00pm at Jaci's house. Her address is 210 Tornasol. Bring your favorite dish!

## HERPS IN THE NEWS



### New snake species discovered in Kon Tum

**VietNamNet Bridge** - A group of Vietnamese, French and German scientists announced their discovery of a new species of stream snake in Vietnam, named *Opisthotropis cucae*.

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en/science-technology/4726/new-snake-species-discovered-in-kon-tum.html>



### New Ruby-Eyed Pit Viper Discovered

Seen coiled around a branch in an undated picture, a new species of snake called the ruby-eyed green pit viper (*Cryptelytrops rubeus*) has been discovered in Southeast Asia, according to a recent study. The snake lives in forests near Ho Chi Minh City and across the low hills of southern Vietnam and eastern Cambodia's Langbian Plateau.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/03/pictures/110328-new-ruby-eyed-pit-viper-species-found/>



### Blind, legless lizard found in Cambodia

**PHNOM PENH** — A Cambodian scientist has discovered a new species of blind and legless lizard that looks like a snake. The small reptile, which mostly lives underground, was given the name *Dibamus dalaiensis*, after the Dalai mountain in southwestern Cambodia where it was found, according to conservation group Fauna and Flora International (FFI).

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hDYItAYyv-10yr3xnPZFHBXflbKA?docId=CNG.e4f462767ca1ace6aa2cd1b04f2c40c5.e1>





## **Memphis Flooding: Snakes and Other Critters Flee Rising Mississippi River**

By MICHAEL MURRAY and BRINDA ADHIKARI  
May 9, 2011

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Dangerous reptiles and other animals have been forced to flee their homes, invading residential neighborhoods in Memphis, Tenn., for instance, as

the Mississippi River continues to swell to record flood levels.

"You'll see your wildlife moving and, of course, their nature is to move to the higher, drier ground ... We'll see this for another couple of weeks," Bob Nations, Director of Shelby County Tennessee's Office of Preparedness, told ABC News' Diane Sawyer. "[It] probably will have a huge impact on our wildlife in this part of the county."

Residents of flooded areas have had to deal with electrical currents, chemicals and sewage in the water, but also wildlife scrambling for safety. Tennesseans have had to be careful of rampaging deer but the real danger lies with the water moccasins, also known as cottonmouths. The venomous snakes are known to be aggressive when agitated, opening their mouths wide to reveal a white lining and deadly fangs when confronted with danger. The snakes are semi-aquatic vipers found near or in water, and are strong swimmers.

"They can cause a fairly serious bite," Dr. James Murphy of Smithsonian National Zoo said to ABC News. "It's normally not fatal, but there's an enormous amount of tissue damage. In fact, I've seen photographs of bites and it looks like somebody's arm has been put in a drill."

They have apparently been popping up everywhere, sometimes clinging to the trees. People returning to their homes after the flooding subsides might encounter them.

"There was a report of two over on the Mississippi banks yesterday," Nations told Diane Sawyer. "After any of these natural disasters, when you get into recovery and start moving things around, snake bites increase. That's a real threat."

Water moccasins are not the only wildlife threat for residents. The flood waters also contain alligators, spiders, rats and even fire ants according to experts.

Tennessee wildlife groups have been fielding dozens of calls from worried residents. The Shelby County Health Department has issued a special alert, warning its residents to be particularly wary of snakes, as a veritable jungle of critters scrambles to find safe ground.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/memphis-flooding-snakes-critters-flee-rising-mississippi-river/story?id=13564805>

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