

Virginia
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NEWSLETTER

CATESBEIANA CO-EDITORS

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VHS Declaration Adopted

“Most of the world’s tortoises and many freshwater turtles have declined precipitously because of human activities. Some are near extinction. This alarming situation is symptomatic of the overall decline in global environmental health. Conservation efforts to curb further losses of these and other species with which they live must work in concert with controls on the fundamental causes of environmental degradation, namely, economic inequities and an ever growing human population.

We recognize that there is no one recipe for nature conservation. Specific measures, such as ecosystem management, conservation of flagship species, and species by species protection, must fit local circumstances. The success stories told at this conference were those that described the protection of habitats and landscapes, and how conflicts between people and natural

In July, 1993, the *International Conference on Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Tortoises and Turtles* was held in Purchase, New York. A declaration, authored by VHS Past-President Joseph C. Mitchell and others, was adopted by the conference and is reprinted here. Applause to Joe and his co-authors for this insightful and important action in turtle conservation.

ecosystems were resolved. Most reports, however, demonstrated that population declines and threats of species extinction were due to habitat loss and alteration. Removal of animals from wild populations for the wildlife trade were shown to further endanger many of these animals. While recognizing the fact that tortoises

and freshwater turtles constitute sources of protein for indigenous people, their uncontrolled exploitation for such use jeopardizes the survival of many species.

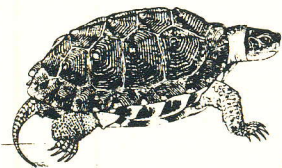
We, the conference delegates, support the following measures: (1) the protection of natural habitats harboring turtles and tortoises and the organisms with which they interact, (2) a ban on the wholesale removal of animals from wild populations for the wildlife trade, (3) the development of educational and community participation programs to engender public support for biodiversity conservation, and (4) the sharing of expertise and technological advances in conservation among the people of all nations. It is imperative that these measures be implemented on a worldwide basis and integrated with efforts to conserve global biodiversity”.

A m p h i b i a n s

- Eastern tiger salamander, *Ambystoma tigrinum tigrinum* (SE)
 Barking treefrog, *Hyla gratiosa* (ST)
 Mabee's salamander, *Ambystoma mabeei* (ST)
 Shenandoah salamander, *Plethodon shenandoah* (FE)
 Carpenter frog, *Rana virgatipes* (SSC)
 Oak toad, *Bufo quercicus* (SSC)
 Cow Knob salamander, *Plethodon punctatus* (SSC, C2)
 Eastern hellbender, *Cryptobranchus allegheniensis* (SSC, C2)
 Mole salamander, *Ambystoma talpoideum* (SSC)
 Peaks of Otter salamander, *Plethodon hubrichti* (SSC)
 Pigmy salamander, *Desmognathus wrighti* (SSC, C2)
 Shovelnose Salamander, *Leurognathus marmoratus* (SSC)
 Weller's salamander, *Plethodon welleri ventromaculatus* (SSC)

R e p t i l e s

- Bog turtle, *Clemmys muhlenbergii* (SE, C2)
 North. diamondback terrapin, *Malaclemys terrapin terrapin* (C2)
 Eastern glass lizard, *Ophisaurus ventralis* (ST)
 Canebrake rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus atricaudatus* (SE)
 Mountain earth snake, *Virginia valeriae pulchra* (SSC)
 North. pine snake, *Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata* (C2)
 Bog turtle, *Clemmys muhlenbergii* (SE)
 Eastern chicken turtle, *Deirochelys reticularia reticularia* (SE)
 Wood turtle, *Clemmy insculpta* (ST)
 Atlantic green sea turtle, *Chelonia mydas mydas* (FT)
 Hawksbill sea turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata* (FE)
 Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, *Lepidochelys kempi* (FE)
 Leatherback sea turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea coriacea* (FE)
 Loggerhead sea turtle, *Caretta caretta caretta* (FT)



Note: Federal E&T species (listed by the USFWS) are protected throughout their entire range, across all political (i.e. state) boundaries.

State E&T species are afforded protection throughout their ranges only within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Are You Familiar with Virginia's Rare Herps?

SE = State Endangered
 ST = State Threatened
 FE = Federal Endangered
 FC = Federal Candidate (C2)
 SSC = State Special Concerned

D e f i n i t i o n s :

Endangered - any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range

Threatened - any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range

Federal Candidate (C2) - taxa for which information now in the possession of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates that proposing to list as endangered or threatened is possibly appropriate, but for which conclusive data on biological vulnerability and threat are not currently available to support proposed rules.

Special Concern - any species, on a list maintained by the director, which is restricted in distribution, uncommon, ecologically specialized or threatened by other imminent factors.

The Decline of North American Box Turtles

by Clifford Warwick, Consultant Herpetologist, *The People's Trust for Endangered Species*

(reprinted from *Animals International*, newsletter of the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Summer/Autumn 1987)

The Growth of the Terrapin Trade

Box turtles face several unnatural threats in the wild. Habitat is claimed by a wide range of land-development projects. There is also persecution from farmers who regard them as pests because they occasionally feed on plantations. However, box turtles are probably more an asset than a problem; begin omnivorous feeders, they will also feed on agricultural pests such as snails. Many are killed on roads, not always by accident. Another very avoidable pressure which contributes to the decline of box turtles is the pet trade.

Prior to the 1984 ban on the Mediterranean tortoise market, the *Terrapene* species was only occasionally seen at British pet dealers. However, they were already long-standing favorites in America as a common "pet" rather than in specialist chelonian collections. According to the records kept under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (C.I.T.E.S.), for example, 10,000 Mediterranean tortoises were imported into the United States during the period 1980-84. By comparison, 150,000 tortoises were imported into the United Kingdom over the same period.

In 1981, the year in which the tortoise ban became imminent, only 22 specimens of *Terrapene* are said to have been imported into the British Isles. From January 1986 to March 1986, however, a minimum of 3,959 specimens had been imported into the U.K. The European market also reported an upward trend.

The increase arises at a time of deep concern in America over the status of

In 1984, the trade in Mediterranean tortoises for the pet trade was banned on conservation grounds. However, a new trade in chelonians (tortoises and turtles) has developed to fill the demand for this type of exotic pet. Box turtles from North America are

**150,000 TORTOISES
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THE UNITED KINGDOM
DURING THE PERIOD
1980-84.**

more akin to their tortoise relatives in that they lead a less aquatic life than most turtles. The increasing demand for these reptiles for the pet trade in both America and Europe is of concern to WSPA. British herpetologist Clifford Warwick has been investigating this new trade and describes below the plight of the box turtle in a report for the readers of *Animals International*.

several population of wild box turtles. Last year, two species became protected in Florida and from the first year of July this year, all commercial trade in box turtles has been prohibited by Florida authorities. Missouri also provides protection for its box turtles against commercialization.

A major factor which led to the popularization of these reptiles by traders in Europe was the casual use of the word "tortoise". Although this can be a convenient way to describe these chelonians, there are several reasons why it is inappropriate to refer to them as "box tortoises".

The generic term, *Terrapene*, for example, indicates the family's relationship with terrapins rather than tortoises. Box turtles are relatively good swimmers, though far less efficient than the typical terrapins. They can, however, drown if land is not easily available or if in deep water for with a strong current. The term "turtle" in the United States can apply to any chelonian, tortoises included, as indeed it does in the U.K. However, the term "tortoise" is reserved for the true land-dwelling species and subsequently, box turtles do not receive this recognition. (Note: the term "terrapin" in England is commonly used to refer to a freshwater aquatic turtle).

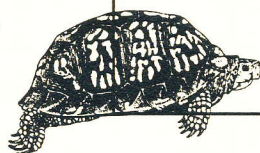
Hunters and Collectors

Almost without exception, box turtles are collected straight from the

wild to supply the national and international markets. Although in some states this is illegal, dealers can still trade, provided that the turtles are caught outside of state offering protection. Many people who want "pet" box turtles collect them from the wild. There are also professional turtle hunters who, apart from catching their own turtles, arrange with people to collect whatever they find and then store the turtles until the wholesaler calls. During an lengthy trip, numerous stops may be made and this can result in several hundred box turtles being accumulated by the end of the trip. During these collection trips, the box turtles rarely receive food and water, and in warm weather, turtles require food and water more frequently than at cool temperatures, because in such conditions the reptiles' metabolisms speed up.

Suffering from depravation during transportation and neglect before collection, the turtles frequently arrive at wholesalers dehydrated and thin. Some do not make it alive at all. Furthermore, the conditions they frequently endure at the dealers are very inhumane. At one dealer's premises in Florida my colleagues and I saw two large, galvanized steel bathtub-like containers in which were held two batches of the three-toed box turtle species. The metal container made it difficult for the occupants to avoid the heat of the day. There was no food or water available, and the open plug holes at the lower end of the sloping bins would have ensured that any water from rain showers would be lost. During a heavy shower the bins could accumulate water and the turtles could drown.

We removed a deal individual from one container and then attempted to find some water for them. Water was provided from a hose which immediately got a response from the turtles who tried to suck it from the enclosure floor. A few heat-withered lettuce leaves were found and were quickly devoured. A corral was also



Virginia's regulations have tightened up considerably over the past three years, and to some, it may seem that these new rules are unnecessary or overly restrictive. As the following article by Clifford Warwick attests, the commercialization of species is a significant factor contributing to the decline of our native fauna, with box turtles getting hit especially hard. Keep this story in mind when filling out your captive breeding permit, or when you feel like cursing the 5-individuals-per-species personal possession limits.

discovered containing more three-toed turtles left over from another consignment. These were grouped together underneath a piece of wood to avoid the heat. For these there was a bowl of water away from the inadequate shade. There was no food whatsoever.

In addition to the two bins and corral that we discovered, a cardboard box arrived containing approximately on hundred box turtles, some of which were pile up three deep in some places. Many of these were thin and dehydrated. During the duration of our stay, the dealer offered no attention except to sell a few. The most commonly sold turtle in America is the three-toed species, but other are regularly seen at dealers.

Factors Precluding Captivity

Box turtles, like other reptiles, are very sensitive to climatic and environmental variations, even within the United States. Box turtles live in extremely varied climates. The ornate species, for example, suffers out of its arid natural habitat and the Gulf Coast species can dehydrate away from its southern and central environment. Britain and much of southwestern Europe (areas where the box turtle trade is rife) are lacking in both environmental extremes. Also there are considerable difference in length of seasons. The natural environment for box turtles generally has long summers and short winters, so that the animals are used to relatively long periods of activity and short periods of hibernation. Once imported into Europe for the pet trade, these turtles are exposed to the reverse conditions, i.e. long winters, which would generally mean an unnaturally long hibernation period. Often, the already considerable stress which these chelonians have been subject to prior to their arrival into the hands of the public, is additionally affected by poor or

..... H e r p H a p p e n i n g s

The Fall Meeting of the VHS was held at Liberty University in Lynchburg in October, 1993. In addition to a number of fine presentations in the afternoon, one of the main accomplishments at this annual event was the election of new officers and support staff. Here are the results of that election:

President: Ron Southwick

President-Elect: Paul Sattler

Secretary/Treasurer: Bob Hogan

Co-editors, *Catesbiana*: Paul Sattler, Terry Spohn

Newsletter Editor: Sue Bruenderman

Service Awards were presented to both Joe Mitchell and Doug Eggleston for their hard work and achievements in their previous roles as VHS President and Newsletter Editor (respectively). We also owe many thanks to Ron Southwick for serving the VHS so well in his previous role as Secretary/Treasurer. We owe you an award, Ron! Thanks Joe, Doug and Ron for many years of devotion and hard work, and congratulations to the new officers!

VHS Members Ron Southwick and Sue Bruenderman represented the VHS and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) at the Reptile Trade Show held in Richmond, December 5, 1993. An Endangered Species display was set up which included live specimens of a wood turtle and tiger salamander, photos of other Virginia threatened and endangered herps, and information on Virginia's Endangered Species programs. VHS wood turtle t-shirts were sold along with DGIF's new endangered species' shirts. Permitting information and permits also were made available at the show. The display attracted several hundred visitors and appeared to generate a great deal of interest in Virginia's endangered species.


The VHS Executive Committee met on December 13, 1993 at Liberty University to discuss various items of business and future plans for the Society. Some noteworthy results of that meeting include: (1) Paul Sattler & Terry Spohn are looking for a major article for the next issue of *Catesbiana*; (2) The annual spring VHS meeting was scheduled for 23-24, April, 1994. Slated for this year's event is a trip to southwest Virginia (Russell/Scott counties) to sample Copper Creek. This Clinch River tributary is known for its incredibly rich aquatic fauna, to include numerous species of freshwater turtles, salamanders, snakes and much more. Detailed information about the trip is forthcoming in the next issue of *Catesbiana*; (3) Reptiles of Virginia, by Joseph C. Mitchell is nearing completion! Citation will read: *Mitchell, J.C. 1994. The Reptiles of Virginia. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.* This long-awaited book will be 7x10 in size, 400 pp., with 63 color photographs. The publication will include identification keys, species accounts, and historical perspectives of studies in Virginia. Estimated price is \$45; hard cover only. A total of 3000 copies will be printed.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, through its Nongame and Endangered Wildlife

..... H e r p H a p p e n i n g s

Program, has committed to a \$5,000 donation to VHS for the development of a "Snakes of Virginia" poster. The plan is to follow the format of North Carolina used for their "Turtles of North Carolina" - a collection of photographs accompanied by short narrative descriptions by each species. Here are the species decided upon by the VHS EXCOM for the poster:

Canebrake rattlesnake	N. brown snake
Copperhead	E. garter snake
Cottonmouth	E. ribbon snake
N. pine Snake	Mole kingsnake
E. hognose snake	N. ringneck snake
N. water snake	Queen snake
Corn snake	Scarlet kingsnake
Black rat snake	N. red-bellied snake
N. black racer	E. worm snake
E. kingsnake	Rough green snake
E. milk snake	



Photographs Needed: We are soliciting photograph donations from the VHS membership for this effort. Does anyone have good slides of these species, preferably in their native habitat? We sorely need your help on this. Please mail your slide donations (securely packaged and properly labeled) to either Sue Bruenderman (703-552-6992) or Ron Southwick (703-951-7929) at VDGIF, 2206 S. Main Street, Suite C, Blacksburg, VA, 24060. Please call us if you have questions. Thanks you for your cooperation. The sooner we get help on this, the sooner you'll see your poster! Anticipated completion date is 30 June, 1994. Send your slides now!

VHS Member, Michael Hayslett recently adopted the new title of "Naturalist/Adventure Programmer" for the City of Lynchburg's Department of Parks and Recreation. Michael's role is to promote public programming and educational/recreational activities in the areas of Natural History, Environmental Education and Outdoor High Adventure. Good luck with your new job, Mike! Congratulations!

Turtle Lovers! The first issue of a new turtle and tortoise scientific journal entitled, *Chelonian Conservation and Biology, Journal of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group and International Bulletin of Chelonian Research*, was published in November, 1993. The editorial staff of this publication include highly respected herpetologists such as J.W. Gibbons, M.W. Klemens, and G.R.Zug (a VHS member!). Subscription rates are for a full volume of 4 issues, with 2 issues planned per year: \$25 individuals and \$50 for institutions. Make checks or money orders to Anders G.J. Rhodin, Chelonian Research Foundation, 168 Goodrich Street, Lunenburg, MA 01462, USA.

HERPS in Hand

The Red Rat Snake, commonly known as the "Corn Snake" is one of the most beautiful snakes found in Virginia. It is also the most common of the Rat Snake family to be kept as a pet. Their natural range is from southern New Jersey to the Florida Keys and west to Louisiana. Habitat preferences include pine forests and open brush areas. Often found in farming areas, this animal is a welcome visitor to barns and grain storage buildings. The diet is primarily rodents, but as an arboreal animal they will include birds and their eggs in the diet occasionally.

There is a lot of color variations throughout their range. Those located in Virginia will usually have a gray or silver background, with brick-red markings down the back and sides, bordered with black. It is sometimes mistaken for the Eastern Milk Snake, *Lampropeltis t. triangulum* by those unfamiliar with local snakes. Unfortunately, they are also mistaken by the uneducated for Copperheads, *Agkistrodon contortrix*, and killed. The belly pattern is a give away to their identity. It is checkered with black markings on white. Some other colors may blend into this theme.

The record length for the corn snake is 72 inches, but it averages 30-48 inches. This snake species have been successfully maintained in captivity many years. Longevity has been noted at 20-25

As reported in Vol. 13, No. 2 of CATESBEIANA, a Captive Breeders Committee has been established, with past-newsletter editor Doug Eggleston as its Chair. Currently Doug IS the committee, and is seeking help with this newly established entity. The intent of this committee is to help bridge some gaps that have been evident between hobbyists and professional biologists within the Society. As suggested by President Ron Southwick, the committee will be utilizing the *Newsletter* to transfer information about captive care, breeding, and other helpful tips concerning herpetoculture. This column, Herps in Hand, now will be a regular feature of the VHS newsletter, and today's article on the corn snake is the first of many to come. Members can look forward to Doug's forthcoming articles on the eastern king and mole kingsnakes, the other two native species which can be legally propagated and sold (with proper permits). Persons interested in joining the Captive Breeder's Committee should contact Doug at 804/376-5229, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, Virginia, 24528.



years.

Although corn snakes can be found in a variety of color, most color morphs seen today are a product of selective captive breeding. Bright red to true albinos now are being produced. The so-called "albino" is actually an amelanistic snake, meaning that it lacks the melanin, or dark skin pigmentation. The true albino or "snow corn" is white with pink eyes and little or no markings visible. The anerythristic specimens are lacking the red pigment and are primarily gray. However, striped, zigzag, and motley mutations are available.

Corn snakes will breed in the last spring through early summer. The female will usually clutch between 12020 eggs. The incubation period averages 65 days at 85 degrees Fahrenheit. In captivity, these snakes must be "seasoned" for breeding success. Normally only one clutch of eggs is layed per female per year. A very healthy pair may be double-clutched with proper seasoning, but this breeding technique is recommended **only** with a very large female in good physical health.

Maintaining a corn snake can be as simple as housing them in a container the size of a ten gallon aquarium, with adequate ventilation and heat. A water container and hide-box should be provided. Some people prefer to offer more space and add such cage

Literature Review

accessories as branches, rock and live plants. One must keep sanitation and maintenance in mind when designing a cage. A suitable substrate will be required and here there are choices as well.

Newspapers, astro-turf, pine or aspen shavings are all good selections. The use of stones, gravel and soils are not recommended for substrates due to the high maintenance involved.

The preferred temperature range is between 78-90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Try to set up the cage to offer a warm area (and preferable an addition, even warmer area) for their comfort. Be sure to include an escape-proof lid on your cage! When the snake is introduced to this new home, it will invariably inspect the entire cage and seek a way to escape. Once they have settled into their captive life, they will generally accept the enclosure as their new home.

There is a lot of new information in print on the care of rat snakes. There are even books available about the corn snake and its care and breeding. Take the time to explore this literature and utilize the tips offered by the writers, usually keepers or handlers themselves. Researching the animal and its proper care and feeding should be first step when considering keeping any animal in captivity. The more you know, the better success you will have with your animal and the longer it will live.

The purpose of this column is to inform members of recent herpetological research which is pertinent to Virginia or of special interest to the Society's membership. Papers or notes from professional journals, new books, "grey literature" reports, and popular magazine articles are acceptable for inclusion in the column. Members are encouraged to send recently published items of interest to the editor. Submissions will be accepted subject to the approval of the editor.

- Brisbin, I.L.Jr., and C. Bagshaw. 1993. Survival, weight changes, and shedding frequencies of captive scarlet snakes, *Cemophora coccinea*, maintained on an artificial liquid diet. *Herpetol. Rev.* 24(1):27-29.
- Britson, C.A. and W.H.N. Gutzke. 1993. Antipredator mechanisms of hatchling freshwater turtles. *Copeia* 1993(2):435-440.
- Bruce, R.C. 1993. Sexual size dimorphism in desmognathine salamanders. *Copeia* 1993(2):313-318.
- Bruenderman, S. and K. Terwilliger. 1994. Swimming beyond boundaries: the uncertain future of Virginia's marine mammals and sea turtles. *Virginia Wildlife* 55(1):12-27.
- Conant, R. 1993. The oldest snake. *Bull. Herp. Soc.* 28(4):77-78.
- Lazell, J.D. 1993. Life history notes: *Heterodon platirhinos* (Eastern Hognose Snake) melanism heredity. *Herpetol. Rev.* 24(1):35.
- Lee, D. 1993. Alligators. *Wildl. N. Carolina* 57(5):8-12.
- Martin, W.H. 1993. Reproduction of the timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) in the Appalachian Mountains. *J. Herpetol.* 27(2):133- 143.
- Mitchell, J.C. and R. Southwick. 1993. Notes on the spiny softshell, *Apalone spinifera* (Testudines: Trionychidae), in southeastern Virginia. *Brimleyana* 18:99-102.
- Strong, D., B.Leatherman and B.H.Brattstrom. 1993. Two simple methods for catching small fast lizards. *Herpetol. Rev.* 24(1):22-23.
- Weldon, P.J., B.J. Demeter, and R.Rosscoe. 1993. A survey of shed skin-eating (dermatophagy) in amphibians and reptiles. *J. Herpetol.* 27(2):219-228.

Compilers: J.C. Beane, A.L. Braswell (source: July 1993 NC Herp. Soc. Newsletter), Sue Bruenderman

Recent changes in State laws and regulations pertaining to native and naturalized species make it necessary to obtain a permit for certain activities dealing with native species. These activities include: 1) the collection of snapping turtles, crayfish or hellgrammites for commercial purposes; 2) holding to sell minnows and chubs, catfish, snapping turtles, certain captive-bred snakes and frogs, crayfish and hellgrammites; and 3) propagation to sell certain fish, snakes, frogs, crayfish, and hellgrammites. Permit packets for each activity can be obtained by contacting the Department's Permits Section in the Richmond Office or at any of the Department's field offices. Permits will be issued at no charge until June 30, 1994.

Anyone who collects snapping turtles, crayfish or hellgrammites for the purpose of resale must now obtain a "**Collect and Sell**" permit. The permit will allow collectors to sell their catch to individuals and to properly permitted bait dealers and processors. Additional information is included in the permit packet.

A "**Hold and Sell**" permit will be required by anyone who deals in the sale of certain native species. These would include establishments which sell bait, pet stores wanting to sell the

selected native species, or any other person or facility wanting to deal with any of the species listed in the permit packet. **Note: This permit is not required by those holding and selling exotic (non-native) animals.**

Individuals or businesses who want to raise and sell certain native fish, captive bred snakes and frogs, crayfish, and hellgrammites must have a "**Propagate and Sell**" permit. This permit will allow for the propagation of game fish for stocking purposes, trout and catfish for food purposes, minnows and chubs, crayfish, hellgrammites, and selected frogs and snakes. More specific information is included in the permit packet.

Beginning July 1, 1994 there will be a charge for permits issued. The fees will be set by the Board of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Permits shall be issued on a fiscal year basis (July 1 - June 30).

While these new requirements may appear to place some additional paperwork on the affected individuals or businesses, the increased commercialization of wildlife and tremendous potential for contamination of native gene pools leave the Department with few options with regard to these issues.

PERMITS NOW REQUIRED

BY THE
DEPARTMENT
OF GAME
AND INLAND
FISHERIES FOR
CERTAIN
ACTIVITIES
DEALING WITH
NATIVE AND
NATURALIZED
SPECIES

Questions concerning these permits can be directed to DGIF Fisheries Supervisor, Ron Southwick (703-951-7923) or DGIF Assistant Chief of Fisheries, Fred Leckie (804-367-1000).



BULLETIN BOARD

The Bulletin Board accepts limited categories of advertisements (products and services only). These ads are free to VHS members, and will be accepted subject to the approval of the editor. Ads for live animals are not accepted. Bulletin Board ads should be submitted directly to the VHS Newsletter Editor, 2206 S. Main Street, Suite C, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060.

WANTED: Person or persons having experience with snakes wanting to earn extra money. Must have own transportation, flexible hours, and knowledge of local snakes and state laws pertaining to their protection. Call Michael Weeks (804) 427-9864.

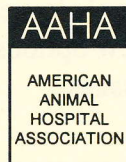
SNAKE! is a stand-alone computerized directory of breeders, importers and other dealers of reptiles, amphibians and other exotics. Names can be instantly scrolled on the screen by name, city, state, zip, product, phone and/or FAX. Cost: \$79.00 (8/92). For the captive breeder who needs to sell surplus stock, as well as the large wholesaler who needs to keep in touch with dealers. Sandy Hook Scientific, Inc. 51 Main Street, P.O. Box 432, Gloucester, MA, 01931, (508)281-8011.

PUBLICATION: 1993-94 Directory: A Guide to North American Herpetology. A comprehensive listing of pet shops, manufacturers, government agencies, private breeders, veterinarians, national distributors, and other providers of herp-related services and products. 120 pp. \$15.00. Call or write: Reptile & Amphibian Magazine, RD 3, Box 3709-A, Pottsville, PA 17901, (717) 622-6050.

T-SHIRT: "Preserving the Diversity". Abstract design features endangered species under coastal, piedmont, and mountain headings. \$12.00 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. Available in sizes med., large, and x-large from: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104. (Attn: Toni Harrison)

Mark R. Finkler, D.V.M.

ROANOKE ANIMAL HOSPITAL



2814 Franklin Rd. S.W.
Roanoke, Va. 24014
(703) 343-8021

NEWS RELEASE

Carnival Snakehandler Arrested, Convicted for Poaching Rare Rattlesnakes, Concluding 10-Year Probe.

By U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
 Contact: Diana Weaver(413) 253-8329
 (Excerpts from May 1993 News Release).

A carnival snakehandler whose aggressive and persistent poaching activities severely diminished the population of Eastern timber rattlesnakes was sentenced on April 23 to four months in federal prison. His arrest by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents concludes a decade-long investigation.

According to Sam LiBrandi, the Service's special agent in Lawrence, N.Y., Rudy Komarek, 64, of Little Ferry, N.J., known in the reptile world as "The Cobra King", was arrested Nov. 5 for interstate trafficking in snakes, a violation of New York state law, after he sold Eastern timber rattlers in New York. He was convicted and sentenced in U.S. District Court in Ft. Meyers, Florida. Komarek worked at carnivals in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, exhibiting Egyptian cobras and thrilling audiences with his seemingly hypnotic powers over the deadly snakes, LiBrandi said. Service agents believe Komarek poached and sold thousands of Eastern timber rattlers, a threatened species in New York and New Jersey. He asked a relatively low price for the reptiles - \$20 to \$30 each - but enhanced his profitability by trading in huge quantities.

Populations of the Eastern timber rattlesnake have diminished sharply in recent years due to loss of habitat and increased poaching. The snakes are sought by collectors eager to own a rare, poisonous reptile or by people who use the snake's venom to produce a snakebite antidote serum, LiBrandi explained.

"The arrest and conviction of major poacher ranks as a victory in safeguarding threatened or endangered species", said the Service's Northeast Regional Director Ronald E. Lambertson. "This case testifies the importance of law enforcement to our mission of protecting wildlife".

Box Turtles *Continued from Page 4*

inaccurate information on basic care and management in captivity.

Tortoises in general did not do well in captivity and neither do box turtles. Consequently, for conservation and welfare reasons alone, the trade in them should not be encouraged.

Herps in Hand *Continued from Page 8*

With the new state law that enables Virginia herpetoculturists to captively propagate this species, one should be able to find a nice specimen in a local pet shop or through a breeder. The corn snake is a great first snake and makes an easy-to-keep and handle specimen.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michael Weeks
 Christopher Harr
 Mike Jennings
 Jim Scranton
 Mark Ferguson
 Gerald Miller
 Kay M. Briggs
 Doug Harpole
 Chad Hooper
 Sam Spies
 Erik Svendsen
 Pat Lookabaugh
 G. Carleton Ray
 Mary J. Rybitski
 Jill Wicknick
 Carl Anthony