



# A Note from the Editor....



Hello! As many of you have already seen, a rare two-headed Eastern Copperhead neonate was found in Woodbridge in mid-September - just a mile from my house! The finding made international news (our President, Matt Neff, reports seeing it while in Dubai), and I can't count how many people forwarded a picture to me, "just in case you hadn't seen it". How neat!

Actually, the photo at the left was the very FIRST picture that any of us saw of it, as it was sent to the VHS identification email, which I help with. The finding was exciting and many of us immediately wanted to see it ourselves.

An article below tells you more, but I wanted to share this first glimpse at the now-famous 4-fanged critter. And, if you want a live update, come to our Fall meeting, where JD Kleopfer will tell us how the little one is doing at that time.

In the meantime, if you have photos from any of our surveys, or just photos of wild natives, feel free to send them to me! [newsletter@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:newsletter@vaherpsociety.com)

Sincerely,

*Bonnie Keller*  
Newsletter Editor

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## 2018 Fall Meeting of the Virginia Herpetological Society

The 2018 Fall Meeting of the Virginia Herpetological Society will take place on Saturday, October 27th at the VDGIF Headquarters located at [7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400 \(Villa Park 3\), Henrico, VA, 23228](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/locations/7870-Villa-Park-Drive-Suite-400-Villa-Park-3-Henrico-VA-23228). If you aren't aware, the DGIF headquarters moved from their former location on Broad Street in 2015, so make sure you come to the right location!

There will be many presentations throughout the day focused on Virginia's herpetofauna and **lunch will be provided**. We will also have silent auction items and a photo contest.

**Please register so we can have an accurate count for lunch.**

To register for the Fall Conference: <https://goo.gl/q2JHJ9>

### Photo Contest

First place will be awarded \$50 and second place will receive \$25. Voting will occur throughout the conference and results will be announced at 2pm. Make sure to bring your own photo to the conference with you, an 8x10" or 5x7" print will suffice.

Any questions email Matt Neff: [president@vaherpsociety.com](mailto:president@vaherpsociety.com)

Last year's photo contest winner:



# 2018 Survey Summaries

## *Ware Creek (2 day event)*

Over a 2 day period at the end of April, 25 volunteer herpers, Liz Allan, Travis Anthony, Audrey Boraski, Jill Card, Luca Catanzaro, Dane Conley, Samantha Dillon, Jeff Dragon, Bill Feeney, Robert Frezza, Rosemary Frezza, Todd Georgel, David Hart, Jason Kaufman, Sam Kaufman, Anna Kim, Brian Kim, Jonah Kim, Karl Kratzer, Catey Lavagnino, Dave Perry, Vinny Passaro, Michael Pauli, and David Van Gelder and Patrick Wamsley surveyed different habitats within Ware Creek Wildlife Management Area (WCWMA). The purpose of the survey was to provide VDGIF with an inventory of amphibian and reptile species located there with special emphasis on species with conservation status of Tier I-IV.

During the survey the sky was clear and sunny with some strong winds during the morning hours. Temperatures were cool, ranging from 10 to 18° C (50 to 65°F).

Despite the cool weather conditions, the combined two day survey documented 26 species; 12 amphibian species (8 anurans and 4 salamanders) and 14 reptile species (5 snakes, 4 lizards and 5 turtles). Noteworthy species included four with VDGIF tiered conservation status (Tier-III Woodland Box Turtle and Tier-IV Common Ribbon Snake, Eastern Mud Salamander larvae and Spotted Turtle).



*More pictures from this survey are on the VHS website.*

## Lake Anna State Park

Despite the cool, wet weather we had a great survey May 18-20 at Lake Anna State Park. We had more than 60 people help out with our surveys on Saturday and Sunday and between the pre-survey and this weekend documented 38 species – at least 8 of which were new county records for Spotsylvania Co. Great work guys!



## Reston Bioblitz

Jun 2 & 3 proved to be a near wash-out for the Reston Bioblitz. The cool weather was preceded by days of cold rain, but a number herps were found. According to the [iNaturalist website for this event](#), 15 herp species included Painted Turtle, Northern Water snake, Eastern Worm Snake, Northern Ring-necked Snake, Spotted Salamander, Woodland Box Turtle, Pickerel Frog, Green Frog, Spring Peeper, Cope's Gray Treefrog, American Toad, American Bullfrog, Wood Frog tadpole, Family Plethodontidae and an adult female skink (Plestiodon sp) were seen. (Pics from the iNaturalist website.)



# *Cedars Natural Area Preserve*

13th Annual HerpBlitz Summary

June 9 & 10th

23 Volunteers came out for the 13th annual HerpBlitz on 9 and 10 June. The HerpBlitz was held at the Cedars Natural Area Preserve in Lee County, Virginia. This was the most western herp survey ever conducted by the VHS. We were able to find 3 new county records (*Ambystoma maculatum*, *Scincella lateralis*, and *Virginia valeriae*). There were 11 Reptile species found, and 16 Amphibians - the complete list is on the VHS website.



The highlight of the trip was Dave Van Gelder finding the Eastern Black Kingsnake, shown here.

# Rappahannock River Valley NWR BioBlitz

September 29

The first-ever Bioblitz at the Rappahannock River Valley NWR was brief, but productive. In the 3-4 hours of the event, species documented included the Eastern Ratsnake, Black Racer, Woodland Box Turtle, Spotted Salamander, Eastern Newt, Eastern Cricket Frog, and Green Treefrog. Bonnie and Kamren Keller found 17 Green Treefrogs by themselves, and found that they seem to like using orange traffic cones as a daytime resting place. One cone had at least 6 inside, another cone had 5. While those in VHS did not get a group photo, there were at least 5 members and family: Dave Van Gelder, Bonnie & Kamren Keller, Liz Allen and her son Luca, and at least 2 others (I can't recall their names! So sorry!)

(Pics from iNaturalist)



## *Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest & Holliday Lake State Park*

21 volunteer herpers surveyed different habitats within Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest and Holliday Lake State Park. The purpose of the survey was to provide VDGIF with an updated inventory of amphibian and reptile species located in both Appomattox and Buckingham counties as well as for the staff at Holliday Lake State Park.

Survey Species List for Buckingham County: *Eastern Cricket Frog, Northern Dusky Salamander, Red-backed Salamander, White-spotted Slimy Salamander, Woodland Box Turtle, Little Brown Skink, Smooth Earth Snake*

Survey Species List for Appomattox County (including Holliday Lake State Park): *Eastern Cricket Frog, Painted Turtle, Black Racer, Northern Dusky Salamander, Northern Ring-necked Snake, Southern Two-lined Salamander, Three-lined Salamander, Eastern Mud Turtle, American Bullfrog, Green Frog, Pickerel Frog, Red-spotted Newt, Rough Green Snake, Five-lined Skink, Red-backed Salamander, White-spotted Slimy Salamander, Spring Peeper, River Cooter, Red Salamander (shown in image), Eastern Fence Lizard, Little Brown Skink, Woodland Box Turtle*



More pictures on the VHS website!

# Two headed snake sensation!

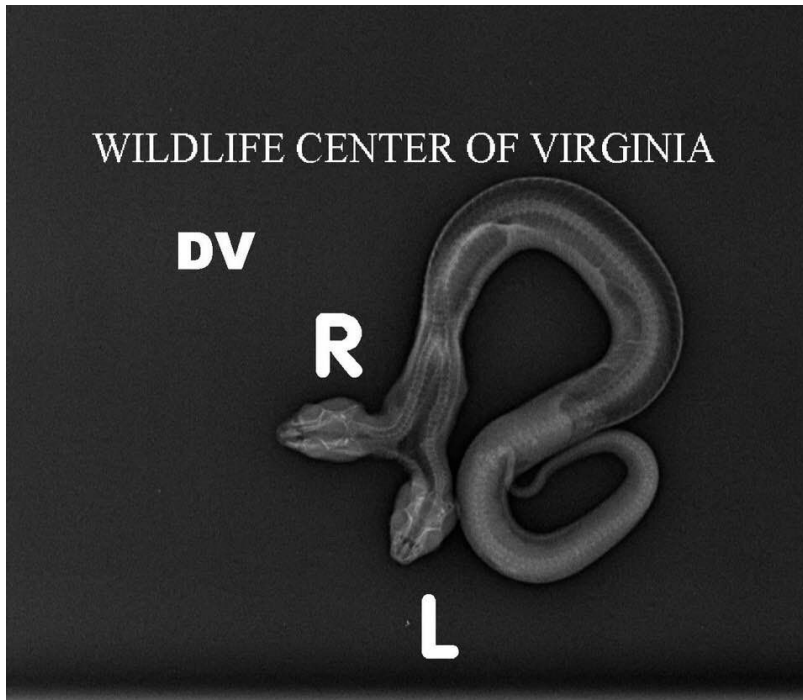


A two-headed neonate Eastern Copperhead was found in Woodbridge, VA on Sep 16. After contacting various neighbors and a wildlife control company, the story went viral online. The snake(s) became an instant sensation and were the focus of TV, newspaper, and internet site reports.

JD Kloepfer, a well-known face to us in the VHS, even got the Wildlife Center of VA to examine the little creature to help determine the best route towards keeping it alive. (Evidently, the left head is more dominant.)

Right now the little one is being cared for by an undisclosed experienced keeper. What a cutie pie! We wish the best for this unusual little fanged fellow.

As of the writing of this newsletter, it has eaten and defecated, so all seems good for now.



*Links about this story:*

- [Washington Post article](#)
- [CNN article](#)
- [Wildlife Center of VA](#)
- [NPR Interviews JD Kloepfer](#)



## Native Herp Highlight: Spadefoot Toad

This is the only spadefoot east of the Mississippi River. Spadefoots have a sharp, black “spade” made of keratinized tissue on each hind foot for burrowing into sand or loose soil. They also have inconspicuous paratoid glands (the bumps on the top of a toad’s head), few warts, and vertically elliptical pupils. The eastern spadefoot measures 1 3/4 – 2 1/4 in. (4.4 – 5.7 cm.). It can vary from brown to yellowish or quite dark, often mottled, with two light, yellowish, dorsal stripes extending from the eye down the back. The throat and chest are white and the belly is tinged with gray. The eyes are large and protruberant. This species emerges from its burrow only after heavy rain or during wet periods in warmer months. The eggs are laid on the bottom of a pond in irregular bands 25-55 mm long. The eggs are 1-2 mm in diameter and hatching occurs in 1 1/2-2 days. Transformation occurs from 2-8 weeks depending on the temperature and water level.



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Very little is known about the distribution of this toad in Virginia. If you have seen one, please email [jdgibson@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:jdgibson@patrickhenry.edu) and/or [tanthony@reynolds.edu](mailto:tanthony@reynolds.edu)

[http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/amphibians/frogsandtoads/eastern-spadefoot/eastern\\_spadefoot.php](http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/amphibians/frogsandtoads/eastern-spadefoot/eastern_spadefoot.php)

[Spadefoot Toad Reporting poster](#)    [Link to a recording of their call](#)

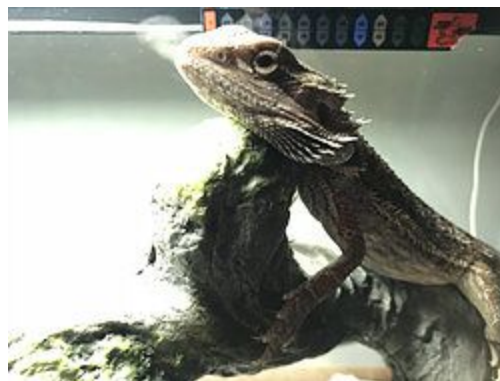
<b>Common Name:</b>	Eastern Spadefoot Toad
<b>Scientific Name:</b>	<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>
<b>Vernacular Names:</b>	<i>none known</i>
<b>Etymology</b>	
<b>Genus:</b>	<i>skaphis</i> is Greek for "shovel or spade", <i>pous</i> is Greek for "foot".
<b>Species:</b>	<i>holbrookii</i> is in honor of John Edwards Holbrook (1794-1871)
<b>Average Length:</b>	1.75 - 2.25 in. (4.4 - 5.7 cm)
<b>VA Record length:</b>	2.9 in. (7.3 cm)

## Save Our Scales!

Looking to adopt a pet reptile? Know of one that needs rehoming? Reptile rescues are often the best place to help with those issues. See the known, reputable rescues below:

**Blue Ridge Reptile Rescue** is located near Lexington. <https://www.blueridgereptilerescue.org/>

Some of the animals currently up for adoption on their website:



**VA Reptile Rescue** has closed their shelter, but are still available to help assist with finding new homes, removing unwanted snakes, etc. Contact [Bonnie Keller](#) for adoption information. VA Reptile Rescue will continue to be available to help with any other reptile issues that we can!

# Virginia Reptile Expos Fall 2018-Spring 2019

	Dates	Admission Fee	Time	Location
<a href="#"><u>Northern VA Reptile Expo</u></a>	12/8/18 2/16/19 4/13/19 6/22/19	\$8 / \$3 child	9 am to 3 pm	Prince William County Fairgrounds Dumfries Rd, Manassas, Virginia 20108
<a href="#"><u>Richmond Reptile Expo</u></a>	10/27/18 3/16/19	\$8 / \$3 child	9 am to 3 pm	Richmond International Raceway, Colonial Bldg, 602 E Laburnum Ave Richmond, VA 23322
<a href="#"><u>Repticon Norfolk</u></a>	1/26-27/2019	\$12 (Adult) \$5 (Ages 5-12)	see website	<b>Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk</b> 425 Water Street Portsmouth, VA 23704
<a href="#"><u>Repticon Chantilly</u></a>	3/15 -3/17/19	\$12 (Adult) \$5 (Ages 5-12)	see website	<b>Dulles Expo Center</b> 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center Chantilly, VA 20153
<a href="#"><u>Repticon Roanoke</u></a>	3/30-31/19	\$12 (Adult) \$5 (Ages 5-12)	see website	<b>Quality Inn Roanoke Airport</b> 6626 Thirlane Rd. Roanoke, VA, 24019

PLEASE remember to research BEFORE your buy a new species. Just because you've kept other reptiles doesn't mean that you know how to keep ALL of them. There are numerous places online with caresheets and info about nearly every species. Learn what you have the time, space, and money for. Learn if the species is legal in your area. Learn if you have the experience to work with that species. If not, DON'T bring it home! The reptile rescues don't need more business.

Don't mind traveling to other locations for expos? There are many others - just search online!

# Reminders!

## HELP SUPPORT THE VHS!

Throughout the year, please consider ways to help support VHS, when shopping! Also, don't forget to take advantage of one of the great benefits of being a VHS member; you can save a bit of the money you need for shopping when going on outings with family and friends this time of year to nearby zoos and similar facilities where VHS members get great discounts.



**AmazonSmile** is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. [Please use this link](#) to set up Smile donations on your Amazon account, and remember to shop using smile.amazon.com or install a plugin like Smile Always to redirect your browser each time you shop Amazon. VHS thanks you for your support!

Click [here](#) to go to **VHS Cafe Press Store** to find an assortment of high quality merchandise intended to celebrate the diversity of amphibians and reptiles native to Virginia. This includes the new **2016 VHS Wall Calendar!** Check it out!



You search &/or shop! They give, give, give!

**GoodShop.com** is an online shopping mall featuring hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Best Buy, Target, Macy's, and many more. GoodShop will donate up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause

[The GoodSearch – Virginia --Herpetological Society](#) will earn VHS money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first!

## MEMBERS GET DISCOUNTS AT ZOOS!

Admission Discounts		Membership Discounts	
<a href="#">Leesburg Animal Park</a>	\$2 off	<a href="#">Virginia Aquarium</a>	25% off Crab, Otter, or Hedgehog membership
<a href="#">Luray Zoo</a>	50% off entry		
<a href="#">Mill Mountain Zoo</a>	\$1 off	Booking Discounts	
<a href="#">Virginia Living Museum</a>	\$1 off	<a href="#">Reptiles Alive! LLC</a> Northern Virginia	\$20 off any live animal show
<a href="#">Virginia Zoo</a>	\$2 off		

VHS is pleased to offer, as a membership benefit, **discounts to select zoos and aquariums in Virginia.** We hope that having an admission or membership discount will give you incentive to visit these facilities and give them your business. Although a dollar or two off of the price of admission does not sound like much, most zoos, aquariums, and museums are expensive to maintain, so it does represent a generous offer by the participating facilities. In order to facilitate these discounts, a VHS member must have proof of a current membership. We e-mail membership cards in PDF format. Please have these cards handy when visiting. Click [here](#) for more info.

## MEMBERSHIP!

Of course, the second reminder should remind us all to start or renew our VHS membership! If you need to start or renew your membership, please click [here](#).

# Zoo and Educational Programming Info

[Reptiles Alive LLC](#) has been presenting educational, fun, and safe live animal shows since 1996. They are one of the DC metro area's most experienced and trustworthy live animal outreach education organizations. The staff are experts in delighting audiences of all ages and handling live animals safely in public settings. They are the only live animal show company in the DC area employing professional wildlife educators covered by Workers Compensation insurance. No "independent contractors" perform their programs.

Always check for the many upcoming public events at the following link:  
<http://www.reptilesalive.com/publicevents/publicevents.htm>



World of Reptiles, opening Summer 2018 is the slithering, creeping, crawling and curious adventure you've been waiting for. Come face to face with reptile giants, watch hatching and newborn reptiles being nurtured and raised and immerse yourself in a floor to ceiling marsh habitat of the Siamese crocodile.

This state-of-the-art overhaul of the Virginia Zoo's reptile building is full of "Defining Moment" opportunities for children and adults alike.

We invite you to support, follow and share this project that is sure to delight visitors and inhabitants, and provide the next frontier of learning and stewardship for this spectacular collection of animals.

[The Virginia Zoo](#) is located in Norfolk, VA.

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## Last words for this issue....

*As VHS members, we all share one thing - a passion for herpetofauna. While we understand that these fascinating animals are part of our environment, many people don't understand that. Anytime you are communicating with one of these folks, please try to put on your best "professional ecologist" hat, and represent us well. Be calm, don't play pranks on people with your critters, and try to help them get over their fears. Remind people of the vital role these animals play, and how easy it is to get along with them in our yards and communities. Use your "Next Door" communities as a platform to educate your neighbors, and offer your expertise to help them. Being an animal ambassador is great. And whether or not you liked Steve Irwin, it's hard to ignore how his enthusiasm captured the world. I look forward to watching the new show with his kids and family that starts on October 28. Won't you join me? ---Bonnie*