

1967 END OF SEASON, HIBERNATION:  
 VHS BUILDS ITS STRENGTH FOR 1968

About forty VHS members and an estimated 22 family and scout visitors attended the statewide meeting of VHS at Camp Chickahominy in the Williamsburg, Va., area on the weekend of October 14-15, 1967.

While a number of VHS members who are currently in the Armed Forces came from southeastern camps and military installations, we believe the low attendance was due to the fact that many of our regular VHS attendees were in service, or had already returned to college and university campuses across the US.

Some junior members (under 18), it is believed, were kept from being present by the inclusion of the "Waiver of Claims" form in VHS-B. No.53. If that was the reason, we regret that it had that effect.

Dr. Harry Jopson, VHS President, and the VHS Secretary, Mr. Tobey, are giving consideration to holding the 1968 statewide meeting in the Blue Ridge during late August or early in September 1968, before under-grad or graduate student VHS members scatter over college campuses out of easy travel reach.

For those who did attend, it was another historic event in the VHS tradition. Those who were unable to make it -- we missed you!

Among the specimens collected at the campsite were: Brown Skink, Northern Black Racer (juvenile), Eastern Hog-nosed Snake, Northern Two-lined Salamanders, and a Slimy Salamander.

All VHS members wish to express their sincere thanks to the leaders of the Peninsula Council, BSA, for the use of Camp Chickahominy and its excellent new facilities.

To the Peninsula Council: Scout Executives, Mr. Davis and Mr. Nolan, the Camping Committee, Captain P. Haines, USN, and the Camp Ranger, Mr. John Pyle, thanks for the excellent co-operation and cheerful hospitality shown VHS members during their weekend at the Camp.

We were gratified that our number was augmented by interested scout and scouter visitors who came by to view the reptile study exhibit. We enjoyed our mid-October weekend at Chickahominy.

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Southeastern U.S. exhibits:	
<u>specimen</u>	<u>owned by</u>
Rainbow Snake	Hollowell
Northern Water Snake	"
Black Rat Snake	"
Eastern King Snake	Goetz
E. Hog-nosed Snake	"
"Greenish Rat Snake"	"
Everglades Rat Snake	"
Northern Fence Lizard	"
Eastern Milk Snake	Tobey
Timber Rattlesnakes	Craig
Black Rat Snakes (adult and juveniles)	"
Rough Green Snake	"
Corn Snakes	"
Eastern Hog-nosed Snake	"
Northern Copperheads	"
Corn Snake	Gagnon
Texas Rat Snake	Walsh

Southeastern U.S. exhibits at the VHS Statewide Meeting, continued:

<u>specimen</u>	<u>owned by</u>
Florida Pine Snake,	Baxter
Yellow Rat Snakes	"
Black Rat Snakes	Flynn
Eastern Garter Snakes,	Walsh and Baxter
Florida King Snake,	Flynn
Speckled King Snake,	Walsh
Red-bellied Water S.	"
Spotted Salamander	"
Bull Frogs	"
Snapping Turtle	"
Rough Green S.	Flynn

Foreign (Exotic) Exhibits:

<u>specimen</u>	<u>owned by</u>
Boa constrictor	Goetz
So.Amer. Caiman	"
Indian Sand Boa	"
Emperor Boa	Flynn
Red-tailed Boa	"
Speckled Racer	"
Anaconda	Walsh
Columbian Rain Boa	" Baxter
Mexican Indigo Snake	Baxter
Tegu Lizard	Walsh
Bengal Monitor	"
Indian Rat Snake	"

We express our sincere thanks to Mr. R. Eddie Goetz, Chairman of the 1967 meeting who arranged the facilities and supervised the major proceedings of the weekend.

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Feeding studies: continued:

attention to swabs dipped in worm, slug, fish, frog, and larval salamander extracts, but had no interest in cricket extract swabs. And the Fox Snake, which in nature is a small-mammal preferring species, responded only to extract of baby mouse, Dr. Burghardt reported. He found that snakes will flick the tongue at moving objects, but will not attempt to eat them unless they are one of the preferred foods. (Jane E. Brody, N.Y. Times)

STUDIES OF SNAKES SHOW FOOD TASTES

Reptiles are Reported Born with Definite Preferences  
New York Times: August 20, 1967.

Snakes--like children, many mothers would say --are born with very definite ideas of what they like and don't like, a Chicago scientist reports. Dr. Gordon M. Burghardt's research showed that food preferences among newborn snakes vary from species to species.

No amount of "force-feeding" could coax a snake into changing tastes, Dr. Burghardt found. For example, a snake born with a preference for earthworms but force-fed liver for the first six months of its life would still grab at an earthworm at the first chance.

It has been shown that human infants --left to their own devices-- will select a balanced diet from an array of offered foods. ....

Snakes are equipped with a sense organ --called Jacobson's organ -- that tells them what is good among available foodstuffs. With this organ, even a blind-folded snake with a stuffed nose knows what is best to whet his appetite.

Dr. Burghardt worked with a variety of previously unfed garter (and western smooth green snakes)snakes, preparing for them extracts of a variety of snake foods: worms, slugs, crickets, fish, mice, and frogs.

The newborn snakes were presented with cotton swabs that had been dipped in one of several extracts. When a newborn of a cricket-eating species ... was presented with a swab dipped in cricket extract, the snake began flicking its tongue... and soon opened its mouth and attempted to engulf the swab. When the same snake was offered a swab dipped in worm extract, it merely flicked a few times and then went away. On the other hand, plains garter snakes paid considerable

LETTERS TO  
VHS.

I am currently in the process of completing a Ph.D. dissertation on the comparative ecology of Pseudotriton ruber and P. montanus (the Northern Red and Eastern Mud Salamanders) in North and South Carolina. About a year ago, James A. Fowler sent me a copy of a note dealing with the eggs of P. ruber. This note appeared in VHS-B No.31. In it, Fowler refers to an earlier note on the same topic which was published in VHS-B No.30. I do not have a copy of the latter; neither does my faculty advisor, Dr. J.R. Bailey, a regular subscriber to the VHS Bulletin. I wonder if it would be possible for me to obtain a copy of Bulletin No.30, or at least the part of it concerning the eggs of P. ruber? As you may know, the literature on Pseudotriton is very scanty, especially that dealing with the breeding habits. . . .

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard C. Bruce  
Department of Zoology  
Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina  
27706

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VHS will enter its eleventh year in March, 1968.

Keep VHS going ----  
---- Its mission is far from completed. In going on, VHS will need your support - this year and any year you wish to be counted as a participant.

Minimum participation -- dues at \$1 a year. Also, you can collect specimens and write up your records for use in the VHS Bulletin.

Thank you for publishing my remarks about the Northern Red Salamander in Fairfax County, Virginia.

I am wondering if you can assist me with a project which I have been working on for some time. I refer to the occurrence and distribution of the Long-tailed Salamanders - (Eurycea longicauda) in Virginia. The assistance I would like to receive involves obtaining precise locality records for both Eurycea l. longicauda and E. l. guttolineata from Virginia. The distribution of these two presumed subspecies has interested me for some time, especially since the northern-most occurrence in the range of guttolineata (the Three-lined Salamander) is in Fairfax County, Va. Moreover, the significance of the Blue Ridge, as a barrier between these two subspecies, is equally interesting.

I know there have been a number of new locality records, especially for guttolineata, and I am very anxious to add these to the record I already have from various sources, including my own collection and that of the U.S. National Museum. Any assistance you can provide me in this will be greatly appreciated. Sincerely,

James A. Fowler  
Director of Education  
Henry Ford Museum  
and Greenfield Village,  
Dearborn, Michigan  
48120

NOTE: Those who have locality records for these two salamanders please send a copy of the records to James A. Fowler at Dearborn. (If possible, a copy to the VHS will provide data for VHS maps.)

VHS COMMUNICATIONS continued:

Last issue (VHS-B No. 53) asked for information on location of any preserved specimens of Virginian milk snakes from the Coastal Plain or the southeastern counties of Va.

Anyone having specimens of these:  
Coastal Plain Milk Snake  
Coastal Plain - Scarlet King S.  
intergrades (?) or similar "odd"  
red milk snakes from the Virginia  
Piedmont through the central part  
of the state, please write:

VHS Bulletin  
4706 Tallahassee Avenue  
Rockville, Md. 20853

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As a convenience for a friend or an acquaintance who is "more-than-casually interested in the amphibians and reptiles of Virginia," a detachable note appears at the bottom of the page. It includes the address of the VHS Secretary. A sample copy of the VHS Bulletin may be requested in this way and an application for membership received without tearing up your copy of the Bulletin for that purpose. If you are a regular member use the renewal blank on the last page at the bottom to send in your dues for 1968! Renew now. Those VHS members who attended the state wide meeting at Camp Chickahominy, and paid the \$1.50 registration, are already renewed for 1968. FJT.

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Send your communications, notes

to the editor of VHS-B.

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Does anyone have a current address for Mr. Gary Williamson? Several friends have been trying to reach him. Write VHS.

"ANIMALS IN ATOMIC RESEARCH" a new booklet by Edward R. Ricciuti has been published by the Atomic Energy Commission as one of the series on "Understanding the Atom."

The use of animals in research is not new, but in this Atomic Age scientists have reached into the animal kingdom for millions of animals to aid scientific research. Some of the research includes long studies of the effects of ionizing radiation on life. Mice, rats, and of course, hamsters and rabbits, are used extensively. "Unusual" animals, ranging from alligators to salamanders, also have contributed to the saving of human life through research.

Mr. Ricciuti, an associate curator and head of the department of publications, New York Zoological Soc. (Bronx Zoo), describes in 52 pages the types of radiation and effects on life: genetic effects; radiation in the environment; radiation safety; beneficial applications; germ-free animals; veterinary medicine in the nuclear age, and the care of laboratory animals. A single copy of the booklet is available at no cost to you, from the U.S. AEC P.O. Box 62, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830

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Careers in the biological sciences is the subject of a comprehensive brochure published by the American Institute of Biological Sciences - 3900 Wisconsin Avenue NW, (AIBS) Washington, D.C. 20016

The brochure is directed at the high school level and answers basic questions: what is biology? and the education required; opportunities in government, education, industry, and the Armed Forces; salary levels and working conditions. It is well worth writing for.

BEDFORD COUNTY COLLECTING NOTES:

Specimens of record found in the County of Bedford, Virginia, were identified by W. Leslie Burger, R. Rageot, or Dr. James L. Chamberlain and are in scientific collections in Virginia.

Costello Craig  
Bedford, Va.

Salamanders

- Northern Dusky Salamander
- Appalachian Seal Salamander
- \*Red-spotted Newt
- Blue Ridge Two-lined Salamander
- Northern Spring Salamander
- \*Slimy Salamander
- Northern Ravine Salamander
- Northern Red Salamander
- Peaks of Otter Salamander
- Red-backed Salamander

FROGS AND TOADS

- Northern Cricket Frog
- American Toad
- Northern Spring Peeper
- Eastern Gray Treefrog
- Upland Chorus Frog
- \*Bullfrog
- \*Pickerel Frog
- Eastern Wood Frog
- Northern Green Frog

Editor's Note:

Mr. Costello M. Craig served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific. All this was not too many years ago. After that period he collected and sent back to the National Zoological Park (NZP) and the Philadelphia Zoo some reptile specimens from Central America or the Caribbean area.

On a return visit to the National Zoo, not long ago, Cos met the Reptile Division Director, Mr. Jack dePrato, who said: "Say, your name

\* VPI Collection

LIZARDS

- Eastern Six-lined Racerunner
- Five-lined Skink (E. fasciatus)
- Broad-headed Skink
- Northern Fence Lizard

SNAKES

- Northern Copperhead †
- Eastern Worm Snake
- Northern Black Racer
- \* Timber Rattlesnake †
- Northern Ring-necked Snake
- Corn Snake
- \* Black Rat Snake
- Rough Ground Snake
- \* Eastern Hog-nosed Snake
- Mole Snake
- \* Eastern Kingsnake
- Queen Snake
- \* Northern Water Snake
- Rough Green Snake
- \* Eastern Garter Snake

TURTLES

- Eastern Painted Turtle
- \* Eastern Mud Turtle
- Eastern Box Turtle
- \* Snapping Turtle († venomous)

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is familiar; excuse me a minute!" Dashing back, after flipping papers on his desk, Mr. dePrato proudly produced a cardboard label recently removed from the alligator and crocodile exhibits. It gave credit to Costello M. Craig for obtaining one of the giant reptiles seen by a few hundred thousand visitors to the zoo since the time of its acquisition. "She wasn't that big when I captured her," Cos commented. (And, it's a good thing she wasn't!)

Costello M. Craig, Bedford, Va.

Cos Craig's interest in animal life goes beyond hunting--a sport which he and his family enjoy. Keeping a few specimens in a cage, watching them and caring for them, is an early stage in the development of this interest; one which precedes more serious study. The Craig sons: Mark (now in the U.S. Navy), Brian, and Gerald, have applied themselves to the study. Refining their father's accumulated knowledge, they have put up some successful science exhibits.

Together, they helped to build up collections of amphibians and reptiles for several scientific institutions: Norfolk Museum, the College of William and Mary, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, and a study collection in Bedford at Liberty High School. This latter effort is under the supervision of Mrs. J.J. Thaxton, Chairman of the Liberty High School Science Department, and Chairman of the Science Teachers' session of the Bedford County Educational Association.-- Indirectly, this work assists the science and biology teachers make the subjects more lively for their students.

As a scouter (adult scout leader) in the Piedmont Area Council, BSA, Cos Craig counsels boys in reptile study merit badge. He has been associated with scouting most of his adult life. There is no question that he believes in the need

to be prepared and resourceful in meeting unusual situations. He believes, for the same reasons, that it is important to know the animal life in his area, and to understand the nature and habits of useful animals, or of potentially dangerous animals. It was in 1958 that the Craig family discovered VHS-- a group of people cutting across occupational lines and age, too-- who are interested in the reptile and amphibian life of Virginia. As a family, the Craigs have attended most of the statewide VHS meetings since the first one, in 1958, held near Richmond, Va. It was natural that the Craigs found VHS and that VHS found the Craigs of Bedford.

Costello is a regional representative of VHS in his area. As such he has arranged at least two VHS meetings -- statewide gatherings-- at the Piedmont Area Council Camp, Camp Monocan, BSA, at Nellysford, Va., in Nelson County.

FJT

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TWO-VOLUME SET, VAN DENBURGH

Volumes I and II of "Reptiles of Western North America" by John Van Denburgh, (128 plates) --for sale. The two-volume set was published by the California Academy of Sciences in November, 1922. Cloth bound, in good condition. If you will make me an offer in writing, I will confirm by mail. The second-hand bookstore price is \$16.

WRITE: Mr. Stanley T. Robinson, Jr.  
8401 Brook Road  
McLean, Va. 22101

(continued in next column:)

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