



AHH / BHS Conference 2023
at Drayton Manor Park
"INNOVATION!"

Saturday March 18th
- Sunday March 19th 2023



Welcome to our Conference!

WELCOME TO OUR CONFERENCE!



The British Herpetological Society is one of the world's oldest and largest UK Herpetological Societies. Founded in 1947 by Britain's leading herpetologists, the Society still enjoys its national learned status and celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 2022.

As well as organising this Annual Conference in partnership with the Advancing Herpetological Husbandry group, we hold several Members' Meetings with scientific programmes each year at various locations within the UK. We publish a regular ebulletin, the Natterjack, and two major publications, the quarterly Herpetological Bulletin and Herpetological Journal.

The Bulletin includes natural history notes, book reviews, and other items with emphasis on natural history, conservation and captive care including breeding, husbandry, veterinary, and behavioural aspects.

The Society's Herpetological Journal is ranked as one of the leading peer reviewed scientific publications devoted to herpetology. The Society actively supports conservation, research, education and responsible captive breeding. Why not join the Society today? You'll find more details on our display table – or visit our website: www.thebhs.org.

Also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BritishHerpSociety>



Advancing Herpetological Husbandry is an internet-based group with over 33,000 members worldwide. Established in 2015 in the UK, the group is dedicated to promoting the very best standards of husbandry for reptiles and amphibians. Our goals:

1. To promote "best care" rather than "basic care."
2. Tackling the all-pervasive myths of reptile husbandry using research and science, not anecdote and assumption.
3. Promoting the use of new technologies where applicable, and the use of existing technologies where it has been proven to be beneficial to animals.

The Events Page and main Discussion Forum are on Facebook, at <https://www.facebook.com/AHHEvent> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AdvancingHerpHusbandry> with a series of affiliated groups including **Reptile Lighting** at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ReptileLighting> ; bearded dragon owners' group "**How Not to Slay the Dragon**" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/830707307371341> and the royal python owners' group "**Not just a Pet Rock**": <https://www.facebook.com/groups/142173286457639>

The first AHH/BHS Conference was held at Drayton Manor in 2017. They've been wonderful hosts ever since, and our Conference has got bigger and better every year! Enjoy...

Advancing Herpetological Husbandry and British Herpetological Society
CONFERENCE 2023: “INNOVATION!”

PROGRAMME: SATURDAY 18th MARCH 2023

8:00 – 9:00	Registration		
9:00 – 9:15	Chris Mitchell	Welcome to Drayton Manor	Head of Zoo Operations, Drayton Manor Park
9:15 – 10:00	Francis Cosquieri	'Left wing keeping' - the captive welfare of snakes	Founder Member of AHH
10:00 – 10:45	Dr. Sarina Wunderlich	LEDs for Reptiles	Physicist - Reptile lighting research
Break : Stalls open			
11:00 – 12:00	Dr. David Kirshner Keynote Speaker	The Reproductive Stages of Monitors	Animal Care Manager –Reptiles Sydney Zoo
12:00 – 12:30	Alexia Fish	Understanding the global supply chain of the UK trade in reptiles and amphibians	Liverpool John Moores University
12:30 – 12:45	An introduction to our 2023 Students’ Poster Exhibition		
Lunch : Poster Exhibition & Stalls open			
14:15 – 15:00	Prof. Mark O’Shea MBE	Forensic Historical Herpetology: Snake Hissstories or Red Herrings!	Professor of Herpetology, University of Wolverhampton
15:00– 15:45	Fraser Gilchrist	Optimum Neglect of the Egyptian Tortoise	Reptile breeder striving to make a positive difference
Break : Stalls open			
16:00 – 17:00	Zoo Visit – with an introduction by Chris Mitchell, Head of Zoo Operations		
19:00 for 19:30	Conference Dinner		
After Dinner	Carl J. Franklin Keynote Speaker	The joys of invading the private lives of alligator snapping turtles!	President, Texas Turtles.org



Advancing Herpetological Husbandry and British Herpetological Society
CONFERENCE 2023: “INNOVATION!”

PROGRAMME: SUNDAY 19th MARCH 2023

8:30 – 9:15	Registration		
9:15 – 10:00	Dr. Frances Baines	Light of my Life: Strategies for Lizard Reproduction	UV Guide UK - Independent research
10:00 – 10:45	Roman Muryn C.Eng.	Innovation: Seeing Things in a New Light	Independent lighting and heating research
Break : Stalls open			
11:00 – 12:00	Carl J. Franklin Keynote Speaker	Filling a Texas-sized hole in our knowledge of Texas turtles	President, Texas Turtles.org
12:00 – 12:45	Dr. Jonathon Howard	Sea snake rehabilitation - Just a snake that took to water	Reptile Veterinarian, the “Beardie Vet” from Australia
Lunch : Stalls open			
14:15 – 15:00	Matthew Shackleton	Innovations encouraging musculoskeletal Health	Veterinary Physiotherapist - Nottingham Vet School
15:00 – 15:45	Dr. Henry Brames	To Teach Reptile Feeling...	Reptile Veterinarian, Co-developer of DGHT training concept for reptile keepers
Break : Stalls open			
16:00 – 16:45	Dr. David Kirshner Keynote Speaker	“Come Build A Zoo” they said, “It’ll Be Fun” they said...	Animal Care Manager – Reptiles Sydney Zoo
16:45	Close of Conference		



Meet our Speakers!



Keynote Speaker: Carl J. Franklin

[“The joys of invading the private lives of alligator snapping turtles!”](#) and [“Filling a Texas-sized hole in our knowledge of Texas turtles.”](#)

Carl has held a lifelong fascination and passion for herpetology with a keen focus on turtles. Over the past 27 years, he has worked at the herpetology departments of the Fort Worth Zoo, Dallas Zoo and the Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center at the University of Texas at Arlington. He has assisted in and conducted numerous herpetological expeditions across North, Central and South America, Java and Sumatra, contributing to new breakthroughs in science as well as the discovery of hundreds of new species of amphibians and reptiles. Carl has also bred and maintained several species of reptiles and received the Joseph Laszlo award for outstanding contributions in herpetoculture. He is a member of the IUCN SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group and Founder of Texas Turtles, a non-profit organization devoted to the conservation and study of Texas turtles.



Keynote Speaker: Dr. David Kirshner

[“The Reproductive Stages of Monitors”](#) and [“ ‘Come Build A Zoo’ they said, ‘It’ll Be Fun’ they said...”](#)

David is Curator of Reptiles at Sydney Zoo. As with most herpetologists, David’s fascination with reptiles started in early childhood. However, having been born in icy central Canada he had to travel to pursue his interest, which is how he ended up in Australia researching estuarine crocodiles for his PhD. He has lived there ever since. Although his career has gone off on several animal-related tangents, from wildlife illustration to zoo keeping, interpretation and curatorship, David is probably best known for his work with varanids and crocodilians. Most recently he has been involved in the design and development of the reptile facility at the newly built Sydney Zoo.



Chris Mitchell

[”Welcome to Drayton Manor Zoo”](#)

Chris Mitchell is Head of Zoo Operations at Drayton Manor Theme Park. His lifelong passion for animals has led to a varied career that started in a public aquarium, after a spell in aquatic retail, he went on to found what is now known as Ape Action Africa. For a brief period after his work in Cameroon he worked in the United States as a Director of the Gorilla Foundation. On his return to the UK he lectured on zoo animal management and conservation which led to managing zoo licenced collections within two large land based colleges. In addition to his professional work with animals, Chris keeps a private collection of snakes, tortoises, frogs, spiders and from time to time birds.



Francis Cosquiere

[“Left wing keeping’ - the captive welfare of snakes”](#)

Francis Cosquiere has been keeping reptiles and amphibians for over 35 years and currently maintains a private collection of several hundred animals comprised of around 90 species. Graduating in Zoology from the University of Bristol, his field studies have included the ecology of Podarcis lizards in Iberia and Brown Tree snakes on Guam. He has travelled extensively throughout Africa including working at a game ranch and more recently has begun exploring south-east Asia regularly, in particular China. He has been actively involved in the online hobby for nearly two decades, with a particular focus on countering misinformation and all-pervasive hobby myths with common sense and scientific fact, as well as helping out newer keepers with various aspects of reptile keeping. This led to him co-founding the Advancing Herpetological Husbandry group in 2015, with the goal of promoting ‘best care rather than basic care.’



Dr. Sarina Wunderlich

“LEDs for Reptiles”

"Because light in all its facets (rainbows, atmospheric light phenomena, light refraction, lasers) has always fascinated me, I studied physics in Erlangen and York (England) with a specialization in optics and in Erlangen at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Light. Since 2013 I have been working as a systems engineer at Carl Zeiss SMT GmbH on the fastest computer chips with Extreme Ultraviolet Radiation (EUV light -13.5 nm). My first reptiles were Greek tortoises, which led me to various tortoise forums where I enjoyed getting involved in lamp discussions. Since 2008 I have been collecting knowledge from literature and discussions on lamp technologies and the biological effects of light, and I created my website on terrarium lighting, licht-im-terrarium.de, in 2009. My view of the terrarium lighting is shaped by the physical-scientific side. I'm not a hardcore reptile keeper; however, gold dust day geckos have been accompanying me for several years. I have been a member of the German Society for Herpetology and Terrarium Science since 2003 and have been an active member of the DGHT Advisory Board since 2009.



Alexia Fish

“Understanding the global supply chain of the UK trade in reptiles and amphibians.”

Alexia is a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, researching the wildlife trade in reptiles in amphibians. She is especially interested in the topics of disease risk and sustainability. Alexia's professional background includes working for NGOs such as Froglife, working as a zookeeper at Jersey Zoo and in the civil service at the Animal and Plant Health Agency. She is also a hobbyist keeper and has a particular soft spot for viper geckos, which she breeds in her spare time.



Professor Mark O'Shea MBE

“Forensic Historical Herpetology: Snake Hissstories or Red Herrings!”

Mark is perhaps one of our most well-known British herpetologists – as an author, lecturer, and television personality. He is known internationally as the presenter of the Animal Planet/Discovery Channel series O'Shea's Big Adventure. Mark has participated in over 60 herpetological expeditions to almost 40 countries, on six continents, since the early 1980s. He was first author on the descriptions of four new Papuan and Timorese snakes, and a co-author describing seven other snakes and a gecko, from New Guinea, Timor, Java and Borneo, with more new species to come. He has worked on a number of snakebite projects, in Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, capturing and milking medically important venomous snakes, working with clinicians from the UK and Australia. He has authored numerous herpetological books including his latest title, “Snakes of the World”. Meet Mark for a book signing, at our BHS display table today!



Fraser Gilchrist

“Optimum Neglect of the Egyptian Tortoise”

Fraser, from Scotland, has been a reptile keeper for over 35 years. He says, "Conservation is not always just black and white." An active participant within the European Studbook Foundation, currently he is focused on 3 species of python (Royal, Angolan, and Sumatran), Egyptian Tortoises, and Wide-mouthed Agamas. Fraser is Co-ordinator of the Studbooks for Armadillo and Sungazer lizards and is the founder of the Save Our Sungazer (S.O.S) initiative in South Africa. Fraser also assists the Scottish Government in creating reptile welfare and industry regulation. His presentation explains how, through what he describes as "Optimum Neglect", he is having considerable success with the critically endangered Egyptian Tortoise, *Testudo kleinmanni*.



Dr. Frances Baines

“Light of my Life: Strategies for Lizard Reproduction”

Dr. Frances Baines is someone probably best known for her work on UVB, as she has been researching the use of lighting in reptile husbandry for nearly 20 years. Until her retirement last year, she was an appointed Advisor to the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). As co-ordinator of a team within the BIAZA Reptile and Amphibian Working Group, Frances assisted with the production of a guide to the use of UVB in zoos, based on Professor Gary Ferguson's work, which introduced the "Ferguson Zones" now recognised worldwide.

Roman Muryn C.Eng.

“Innovation: Seeing Things in a New Light”

I caught my first Painted Turtle in 1974 at a little pond in Freedom New Hampshire, it was a little jewel; all reds and yellows and it caught my imagination. I now breed Spotted and Painted turtles and also keep Box turtles. My research into sunlight was triggered when all attempts to heal an eye infection in a turtle housed indoors failed - yet when outside, healing happened very quickly. I discovered that our hobby was misinformed as to what light and heat actually is. In the AHH/BHS Conference in 2017, I introduced the importance of energy delivered by the sun and in particular why short wavelength infrared light was so vital to the health of reptiles. Six years later, much has changed and new concepts have emerged. I will be sharing some of my testing work and new ideas, resulting from these experiments, into how we might measure and emulate the sun's radiation.



Dr. Jonathon Howard

“Sea snake rehabilitation: Just a snake that took to water”

Jonathon is an Australian exotics and wildlife veterinarian, currently working in animal nutrition research. His veterinary interests are studying the ecology and behaviour of wild reptiles and applying it to captive individuals to better understand them as well as improving their health and welfare. On Facebook he is better known as the “BeardieVet” where he documents his fieldwork on *Pogona vitticeps* as well as bearded dragon clinical cases.

Jonathon has been keeping and breeding Australian venomous and non-venomous snakes and lizards for over two decades. More recently, besides treating pet and wild terrestrial reptiles in the veterinary hospital, he has had great success and interest in treating and rehabilitating injured marine reptiles such as sea turtles and sea snakes (Hydrophiinae).



Matthew Shackleton

“Innovations encouraging musculoskeletal Health”

A former zookeeper and teacher of animal science and zoo management, Matthew qualified as a Veterinary Physiotherapist from the University of Nottingham's School of Veterinary Science, completing research into Komodo dragon gait and lameness. He is currently working as a teaching associate at the School. Matthew is one of the few musculoskeletal therapists in the UK insured to treat exotic species and has worked with a variety of animals at a number of UK zoos. He has a particular interest in how stress-free treatment, environmental parameters and enclosure design/enrichment can affect the musculoskeletal health and rehabilitation of reptiles, birds and mammals.



Dr. Henry Brames

“Teaching a Reptile Feeling”

Henry is a reptile vet who helped develop the German VDA/DGHT training courses for private owners, based on the German Animal Welfare Act and statutory provisions. Its "mission statement": Keeping animals means taking responsibility for an animal whose welfare is entirely in the hands of humans. Whether the needs of the animal are met, whether it is protected from suffering or harm, whether the illegal trade is actively counteracted - depends on the owner's expertise, his commitment to animal welfare and compliance with species protection regulations." Henry is bringing us something a bit different - an interactive approach he calls "learning a reptile feeling". "Good terrarium design", Henry writes, "gives dignity to the reptiles."



OUR SPONSORS



PLATINUM SPONSOR

Drayton Manor Resort

Our hosts, donating the entire Conference Suite and making this conference possible



PLATINUM SPONSOR

ZooMed Laboratories Inc.

Sponsoring travel for our Keynote Speaker, Carl J. Franklin, all the way from Texas

The decision to partner with the AHH/BHS conference and fund the presence of the keynote speaker Carl J. Franklin was an easy one. Gary Bagnall (Zoo Med founder and owner) has devoted the past 46+ years to improving the life of reptiles and other animals. Particularly turtles and tortoises, who have the most impressive settings at our California-based head office. This led to countless innovations - notably the first UVB bulb on the market as well as the first LED UVB. The key drive for the company is to improve husbandry and education around this beautiful trade/hobby.



PLATINUM SPONSOR

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare

Sponsoring our talented students who are presenting posters to attend free of charge

UFAW is an independent registered charity that works with the animal welfare science community worldwide to develop and promote improvements in the welfare of animals through scientific and educational activity. UFAW has long promoted education in animal care and welfare, and supported a scientific approach aimed at finding ways to gain insight into what matters to animals, assessing their welfare and improving the quality of their lives through practical developments in all aspects of their care. The aims of our two societies, AHH and BHS, mirror those of UFAW in many ways. Last year, we were privileged to welcome Dr Huw Gollidge, Chief Executive & Scientific Director, to give a presentation. This year we are most grateful for UFAW's continuing Sponsorship.



GOLD SPONSOR

Peregrine Livefoods

Our Conference Dinner Sponsor (Though we do understand livefood isn't on the menu..)

Peregrine Livefoods was founded in 1987 by Tim Green and David Perry. Then, it was an innovative insect farm at the forefront of an emerging hobby. Today, it is the largest wholesaler of reptile supplies in the UK and is responsible for the production and development of ProRep, White Python, PLT Rodents and FishScience whilst also importing a plethora of products to support the advancement of herpetological husbandry. As such, we are extremely proud to sponsor the AHH and BHS Annual Conference.



GOLD SPONSOR

Reptile Systems

Our Goodie Bag Sponsor (It's the small things that make a day special!)

Reptile Systems is at the forefront of emerging technologies and our ongoing development of energy efficient and recyclable products is unparalleled. Our advances in dimmable LEDs will lead to a new era in controllable, energy efficient reptile lighting. We promote and support all forms of advancing of animal husbandry and this event draws many different types of keepers into one arena where new and old ideals are blended to create better care for your animals. This is why we are proud to help sponsor this event and those like it.



SILVER SPONSOR

Greig Smith Travels

Sponsoring travel for our
Keynote Speaker, Dr. David
Kirshner, all the way from Sydney

I personally have been involved in herpetoculture ever since I was an 8 year old boy when I got my first angry, bitey milk snake that loved to chew my fingers (*Lampropeltis zonata*). My first “fumble in the jungle” was in my late teens going on another wildlife commercial expedition. That (not so great) experience inspired me to set up and run my own herp & eco tours. It all began when I ran a small advert in the IHS back in 2007 for my first specialised herp expedition to Southern India and the Andaman Islands with Romulus Whitaker and Gerry Martin - a runaway success! I knew then that despite my lack of a scientific background, that I was nonetheless able to create, promote and support ethical wildlife tourism and conservation through inspirational, educational tours.

Over the years our inclusive approach has seen us work with conservation organisations, herpetologists, eco lodges, local guides and more – becoming somewhat of a “go to” company for hobbyists, journalists and wildlife documentary makers. My team and I have poured our heart and soul into our wildlife tours and they have been a massive source of pride to us over the years. More importantly I personally have made so many lifelong friends, formed wonderful collaborative relationships, not to mention had the time of my life leading and running these tours and am proud that so many BHS and AHH members have supported us over the years (as well as led our trips).

It is for these personal reasons that I feel it's a privilege for my company to support the AHH/BHS Conference now.



SILVER SPONSOR

Arcadia - Monkfield Reptile

Monkfield Reptile are proud to sponsor this conference. Monkfield Reptile encompasses three market leading brands: Monkfield Nutrition, Arcadia Reptile and HabiStat - all focussed on improving the lives of reptiles kept as pets. Animal welfare is at the heart of everything we do. As reptile keepers ourselves it is critical that we provide the right resources to educate and enable new and existing keepers to make informed decisions about how to care for their animals properly.

Arcadia has been delighted to sponsor this conference since its inception. As a brand led by passionate reptile keepers, we have one aim that is set in stone, and that is to research into and create products that allow for ever increasing animal welfare through Wild Re-creation. Innovation is of course at the heart of our brand and we will bring forward in the next season exciting and innovative products that will further support our joint hopes, dreams and goals as professionals and naturalists.



SILVER SPONSOR

HabiStat - Monkfield Reptile

HabiStat are thrilled to be an official sponsor. Since its inception in 1988 the HabiStat brand has become synonymous with quality and dependability. Innovation plays a key part but only when this serves a real purpose. We started out developing thermostats for living environments and fast forward to today we have a range of substrates in recyclable and biodegradable packaging – high quality product designed with specific species in mind as well as helping in the war against plastic. Our continued passion and fascination for reptiles and our expertise in creating the living environments where animals can thrive, not just survive, has developed into more of a holistic sense of responsibility for reptile welfare.



SILVER SPONSOR

Pinmoore Animal Laboratory Services

At PALS we pride ourselves on our rapid and personalised veterinary diagnostic testing service and we are passionate in our aim to support vets in giving the best care to their patients. We are specialists in the analysis of samples from all exotic species from zoos, wildlife parks and exotic veterinary practices: Aardvarks to Zebras, we do them all. Using the latest technology available we provide a wide range of tests covering everything from haematology and biochemistry to parasitology and virology. We continue to invest in cutting-edge equipment such as precision analysers that allow us to run tests from samples as small as 0.4ml, ideal when screening smaller animals. We provide a fully comprehensive, bespoke service, tailored to our clients' needs. Our friendly team are always on hand to offer advice, whether it is about which test to choose, sampling requirements or clinical interpretation.

