

The

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NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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BHS Funds Belandana Chameleon Project



Furcifer belandanaensis

In early 2009 the BHS Captive Breeding Committee received a project proposal from Richard K. B. Jenkins and Richard A. Griffiths (Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology [UK] and Madagasikara Voakajy [Madagascar]); the proposal was approved for funding in September and fieldwork is now underway. We hope this study will lead to an effective conservation strategy for this endangered species.

(Continued on next page)

THE BRITISH HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY



63 Years in Herpetology
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Background

There are approximately 74 chameleon species that are endemic to Madagascar (Raselimanana & Rakotomalala 2003; Raxworthy & Nussbaum 2006) and many of these are restricted to relatively small areas of remaining native forest. The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, and a Malagasy organisation called Madagasikara Voakajy (www.madagasikara-voakajy.org) are engaged in a chameleon conservation project funded by the Darwin Initiative. Madagasikara Voakajy (MV) is also preparing species accounts for the IUCN to be included in Malagasy Reptile Assessment for the Red List of Threatened Species. Preliminary assessments of the *Furcifer* chameleons indicate that *Furcifer belalandaensis* is a conservation priority.

Furcifer belalandaensis

This species is known from a single locality, Belalanda, near Toliara in the south west (Brygoo 1978; CBSG 2002; Glaw & Vences 2007). The last published sighting of this species was in 1995 (Raxworthy & Nussbaum 2000) but there have been a number of recent reported observations and herpetologists from MV located a single individual in September 2008 and 4 more in March 2009. There are no published data on the population of *F. belalandaensis* but it is not thought to exceed 250 individuals (CBSG 2002). Given that recent surveys have failed to detect this species (Andriamandimbiarisoa 2007), its presumed tiny geographic range and dwindling available habitat (Raxworthy & Nussbaum 2000), it is unlikely to be common anywhere in its range. The

habitat around Belalanda village is degraded gallery forest (Brygoo 1978; Glaw & Vences 2007; Raxworthy & Nussbaum 2000).

Degradation and destruction of gallery forest habitat in the Belalanda area is the main threat to this species although it has also been subject to commercial collection (Raxworthy & Nussbaum 2000).

Project Objectives

1. Conduct thorough surveys in the vicinity of the Belalanda village to map the local distribution of this species;
2. Develop an understanding of its life history and habitat requirements;
3. Assess the potential of *in situ* and *ex situ* (in country and international) conservation action.

Methods

1. Nocturnal searches of all suitable habitats will be conducted to determine the presence and absence of *F. belalandaensis*, as well as any congeners present.
2. Information on morphology (snout-vent length, tail length, body mass), reproductive biology (sex, signs of breeding), population age structure, habitat use (nocturnal perch height, level of forest degradation) and diet (from faecal samples) will be collected.
3. Stakeholder discussions (primarily with the Regional Director of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, WWF and local community leaders) to determine:
 - the distribution of *F. belalandaensis* in relation to a recently proposed protected area;
 - possibilities of providing

increased protection to forests with *F. belalandaensis*;

- discuss options for ecotourism;
- discuss whether *ex situ* conservation actions are needed;
- the need/feasibility for establishing a 'reserve' captive breeding population (in country and/or international).

Deliverables

1. Enhanced awareness amongst stakeholders about the perilous conservation status of *F. belalandaensis*;
2. Article in British Herpetological Society Bulletin or Journal;
3. Preliminary documented species conservation strategy for *F. belalandaensis* for submission to Malagasy authorities and other stakeholders;
4. Assessment of whether *F. belalandaensis* is (i) appropriate for captive breeding and whether (ii) it is feasible in the medium term.

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Dr Simon Townson

Chairman

BHS Captive Breeding Committee.

Acknowledgement:

The funding of this project was made possible thanks to a generous donation from the Harriet Rathborne Consultancy.



Everglades may not be the Evergreen Garden of Eden for Non-Natives

The Florida Everglades has become the dumping ground for many an unwanted pet, especially large reptilians that have out-grown their families, such as non-native iguanas, monitors, pythons and anacondas.

But it seems the growing population, feared to be devastating local wildlife, may not be having it all their own way.

Here are some of the reports coming out of the 'States which may not be to the alien invaders' liking:

Cold Snap Kills Many Pythons In Everglades

Vultures circled over Everglades National Park's Anhinga Trail, where thousands of dead non-native fish floated in the marshes.

About half the Burmese pythons found in the park recently were dead. Dead iguanas have dropped from trees onto patios across South Florida. And in western Miami-Dade County, three African rock pythons - powerful constrictors that can kill people - have turned up dead.

Although South Florida's warm, moist climate has nurtured a vast range of non-native plants and animals, a cold snap last month reminded these unwanted guests they're not in Burma or Ecuador any more.

Temperatures that dropped into the 30s (°F) killed Burmese pythons, iguanas and other marquee names in the state's invasive species zoo. Although reports so far say the cold has not eliminated any of them, it has sharply reduced their numbers, which some say may indicate South Florida is not as welcoming to invaders as originally thought.

"Anecdotally, we might have lost maybe half of the pythons out there to the cold," said Scott Hardin, the Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission's exotic species coordinator. "Iguanas definitely. From a collection of observations from people, more than 50 percent fatality on green iguanas. Green iguanas really got hit hard. Lots of freshwater fish died; no way to estimate that."

The cold snap has played into a highly politicised debate over how to prevent non-native species from colonizing the United States. Reptile dealers and hobbyists strongly oppose a proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ban the import of and interstate trade in Burmese pythons and several other large snakes. They say South Florida's cold snap shows these species don't threaten to spread north, as some claim, and a federal crackdown is unnecessary.

"Pythons are tropical animals," said Andrew Wyatt, president of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers. "When temperatures fall below a certain level, they are unable to survive. It reinforces the idea that the pythons can't exist more than a short period of time north of Lake Okeechobee. Even the pythons in the Everglades are dying during the cold snap."

Wyatt said scientists are downplaying the effect of cold weather on the pythons because that would undermine their ability to win grants to study a problem that has received international publicity.

"It's all about money," he said. "It's very little to do with the truth of fundamental problems on the ground."

But federal and state wildlife officials say the cold weather has not solved the problem. Not only did pythons survive, but so did other invasive species, even if the cold set them back a bit. Along the park's Gulf Coast, where old-world climbing ferns lay dense mats



over native trees, the cold snap inflicted frost damage on these invaders from Asia and Australia, said David Hallac, chief biologist at Everglades National Park. But it didn't kill them, he said, and they continue to spread.

And although they receive less publicity than pythons, non-native fish have infested the Everglades. The cold weather apparently killed them in the thousands, including the Mayan cichlid, walking catfish and spotfin spiny eel, Hallac said. But at the bottom of canals and other water bodies, pockets of warm water allowed some of these fish to survive, he said, giving them a chance to repopulate the park once the weather warms up.

No one knows how many Burmese pythons live in the Everglades, where they were released as unwanted pets or where they found refuge after hurricanes destroyed their breeding facilities. But what's certain is there are a lot fewer today than there were before the cold spell.

Greg Graziani, a police officer who owns a reptile breeding facility, is one of several licensed python hunters who stalk the snakes in the Everglades. In four days of snake hunting, he found two dead snakes, two live ones, and one snake on the verge of death.

"Vultures had pecked through 12 inches by 4 inches down the back of this animal's body," he said. "I thought it was dead and we reached down to pick it up and it was very much alive."

In cold weather, Graziani said, pythons go into a catatonic state, and if they don't make it to a safe place to ride out the weather, freeze to death. "We're finding the smaller pythons are handling it better than the large ones - the smaller ones can get into different cracks and crevices to maintain the temperatures they need."

Joe Wasilewski, a wildlife biologist who

hunts pythons in the Everglades, said on a single day in late January he found seven live snakes and seven dead ones.

"You don't see dead ones like that for no reason," he said. "And they were laid out like they were caught by the onslaught of the cold, the way the carcasses were lined up."

BHS Source : *Herp Digest*.

Original Source : Sun Sentinel. ❖

(By David Fleshler and Lisa J. Huriash)

Florida Officials Create Season To Hunt Pythons & Other Reptiles

State wildlife officials are offering hunters a special opportunity to capture and remove several types of pythons and other reptiles of concern from state-managed lands near the Everglades.

Folks with hunting licenses and \$26 management area permits will be allowed to take the reptiles from March 8 to April 17, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Reptiles on the list include the Indian python, the reticulated python, the northern and southern African rock pythons, the amethystine or scrub python, the green anaconda and the Nile monitor lizard. They can be taken on Everglades and Francis S. Taylor, Holey Land and Rotenberger wildlife management areas.

The special season was established by executive order and it follows the end of small game season in the three wildlife management areas. The hunting will be allowed during a period when the snakes, which are non-native species, are likely to be found in those areas, officials say.

During cooler weather, the reptiles, which are cold-blooded, sun themselves on levees, canal banks and roadways in those areas.

"We are once again engaging our stakeholders, in this case, the hunting



community, to help us reduce the number of reptiles of concern in the Everglades,” FWC Chairman Rodney Barreto said. “Our hunters are on the front lines, and we hope, by tapping into their knowledge of the Everglades, we can make significant progress in this effort.”

Hunters are getting training on how to identify, stalk, capture and remove reptiles of concern. FWC officials and reptile industry experts will provide the training.

Reptiles of concern can be taken by all legal methods used to take game animals. That means hunters can use shotguns, rimfire rifles and pistols. The most commonly used rimfire rifle is a .22. Reptiles may not be taken out of the wildlife management areas alive. Their deaths must be reported to FWC within 36 hours of being killed.

The python population in Florida became a particular concern last summer after reports that tens of thousands of the non-native reptiles may be thriving in and around the Everglades.

The death of a young Sumter County girl, who was attacked by a pet Burmese python, last summer further focused attention on the snakes. ❖

BHS Source : *Herp Digest.*

Original Source : Orlando Sentinel.

(By Anthony Colarossi)

Constrictor Snakes Bill In Senate

Florida’s recent snake problem is making its way to the state Senate.

Florida Legislators are trying to pass a bill that would prohibit importation, breeding, sale and possession of Burmese pythons and other dangerous large constrictor snakes as pets.

However, anyone who already owns one won’t be affected.

Activists say they are asking for the

community’s support in order to help make Florida’s residents and wildlife safer. “Get behind that effort and say, we understand that people can have them, the ones that are here now, but we really need to close the barn door, stop what’s going on, and ban some of these snakes as personal pets,” says Laura Bevan of the Humane Society of the United States.

Bevan says that these snakes aren’t a problem until they get too big for people to take care of, and they release them into the wild. These snakes don’t have a natural predator in Florida, which is keeping their population alive, and hurting other animals native to Florida. ❖

BHS Source : *Herp Digest.*

Original Source : WCTV.

(By Alyssa Orange)

Hunters Learn How To Catch Critters In Everglades

A small army of hunters is ready to hit the everglades to kill or capture dangerous and non-native snakes.

Joe Mennine and Ismael Vasquez, co-workers from Jupiter, were tooling down an Everglades canal in an airboat when Vasquez saw a distinctive black-blotched snake, about five feet long, on the levee.

Having completed a “Pythons 101” crash course given by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission less than an hour earlier, Vasquez recognised it as a Burmese python. He pointed it out to Mennine, who jumped out and grabbed it.

“It tried to bite me, but it bit itself,” Mennine said. “I grabbed it by its head and threw it in a bag.” The two returned to the boat ramp and turned the snake over to their FWC instructors.

“I can’t wait to do it again,” a breathless Vasquez said. “I’m a newbie — my very first



time. The training definitely helped me know what to look out for.”

The two hunters were among about 50 who gathered at the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area off the Tamiami Trail for the FWC announcement of a special hunting season for reptiles of concern on state lands.

From March 8 through April 17, anyone with a hunting license and a \$26 management area permit may kill exotic, invasive snakes and lizards.

Exotic snakes — especially the Burmese python — have become a big problem in the Everglades. Growing up to 26 feet long, the Burmese is a constrictor that preys on native Florida mammals, birds and reptiles, including the endangered Key Largo wood rat. No one knows how many live in the Glades, but more than 300 were removed from Everglades National Park in 2008 alone. From the park, the snakes have spread north to the Big Cypress National Preserve and south to Key Largo.

Hunters said they would be happy to help stop the spread. “We feel we have the knowledge, responsibility and technical ability to take care of this problem,” said Bishop Wright Jr., president of the Florida Airboat Association. “We are the best tool in the toolbox in this situation.”

To give hunters their best shot, the FWC brought in some of its own officers, plus local breeders and trappers, for the conference and training session. Biologist Shawn Heflick and reptile breeder Michael Cole provided a rundown on the reptiles’ biology, behavior, diet and habitat.

They even brought along two “demo” snakes — a large, pet male named Fluffy and a smaller, rambunctious wild python caught recently in the Everglades — for lessons in safe handling and capture.

Heflick said the best time to hunt snakes is during the cooler months, when the cold-blooded reptiles sun themselves and ambush prey — such as rabbits and rats — along canal levees, in tree islands and in brush and debris piles.

He said they are not aggressive, but will defend themselves if threatened. “You don’t want to end up with a Burmese necktie,” he said, only half-jokingly.

Cole was adamant that snakes be dispatched humanely. “The quickest and easiest way to euthanise them is with a sharp instrument like a machete,” Cole said. “The veterinary association recommends swift decapitation or a bullet. Don’t try to club these snakes to death.”

Hunters learned there are some financial incentives to harvesting pythons. Brian Wood, operator of All American Gators in Hallandale Beach - a reptile processor - said he would pay \$5 per foot for a whole snake. He showed off a pair of jumbo snakeskin trousers valued at \$900 and touted the flavour of snake meat, although tests on samples from the Everglades show it’s high in mercury.

“The meat is very excellent,” Wood said. “It’s like chicken, but it does taste like snake.”

Several of the hunters couldn’t wait to get started. Said Rich Andrews of Pompano Beach: “We’ll take care of the problem here for sure. We truly care about the environment. It’s our playground. If the snake problem is as bad as they make it out to be, who better to be out there than us?” ❖

BHS Source : *Herp Digest*.

Original Source : Miami Herald.

(By Susan Cocking)

— — — — —
*. . . and so it seems any wild-roaming
 reptile not native to the south-eastern state of
 America had better be on its gaurd - and wrap
 up warm for the “winter” - Ed.*



What Chance the Turtles?



These disturbing pictures were just two of a dozen similar images received by the editor by email recently. Callous locals are collecting turtles eggs even as they are being laid. An entire generation of Olive Ridleys are wiped out as the eggs are collected by the sack full and removed from this nesting beach in Costa Rica, destined for markets and sale as food.

How often do we blame global warming for declines in endangered species? Are we getting too complacent, thinking we've rid the world of all the obvious problems faced by these and other animals? It seems we still have to address the fundamentals if we are serious about saving such creatures from extinction.





Lounging Lizard gets the Chop

After clipping many thousands of sheep from the North Tyne fells over the years, Tarsset sherpherdess Helen Brown is used to finding the odd creepy-crawlie amongst the wool.

But this season's shearing session was unique in even her long experience.

For nestling in the fleece of one sheep was - a six-inch common lizard!

Unfortunately for the sorry saurian, Helen did not discover its presence until she had sliced it into four pieces with her clippers.

Helen said: "Finding the lizard was totally alien to me. "I hadn't seen hide nor hair if it until its dismembered body rose to the surface, so it must have been right up against the sheep's skin."

She went on: "My take on it is that it had been a cool night the previous night



Photograph © CN Group

The not-so-common lizard among the fleece

and the little critter crept into the wool to keep warm. What amazed me the most was the fact that these sheep had been gathered that morning off the hill - a two hour gather - followed by going through the sheep pens to have their lambs run off. The ewe had been in the clipping shed for a good hour before it was her turn to be shorn, and this creature had somehow managed to remain hidden until it was accidentally chopped up." ❖

BHS Source: *Hexham Courant*, 10 Sep 2010.
Contributed by David Brownlee

When is a Sanctuary not a Sanctuary? When it's a Zoo say the Authorities

The Tortoise Garden at Sticker in Cornwall may have to close its doors if local authorities get their way and enforce legislation under the Zoo Licensing Act.

The Tortoise Garden offers sanctuary to animals in need, often through unfortunate circumstances such as death or ill-health of owners. Problems for the establishment have now arisen because

the public are permitted access to the sanctuary, which Cornwall Council have deemed falls within the scope of the Zoo Licensing Act.

In order to comply with the Act, The Tortoise Garden would need to apply for the necessary license and upgrade the premises accordingly, which could run into thousands of pounds. If the owners are unable to meet these requirements or



are unable to afford the additional costs associated with the license, closing the sanctuary may be the only option.

Mr. Lance Kennedy, Cabinet Member of Cornwall Council said “I have ensured that Cornwall Council staff explored every option to keep The Tortoise Garden open, it has however proven impossible under current legislation to avoid registration as a zoo.”

“Following an extended process that some might argue has gone beyond what might be reasonably expected from a Local Authority there remain no further options. Officers have worked tirelessly to try and find a solution to the issue of licensing The Tortoise Garden in Sticker. The bottom line is that, while we all recognise the good work carried out at The Tortoise Garden and are not asking it to close, The Tortoise Garden clearly falls within the definition of a zoo, as published by DEFRA, and requires a licence,” said Mr. Kennedy.

Under the Zoo Licensing Act, a zoo is defined as an establishment where wild animals (animals not normally domesticated in Great Britain) are kept for exhibition to the public with or without charge for seven or more days a year.

Mr. Kennedy said, “The Council is not in the position to be able to pick and choose which establishments we apply the Zoo Licensing Act to - we must be open, transparent and fair to all.”

“There are other issues outside of the control of the Council that affect the viability of The Tortoise Garden. Compliance with CITES (Convention of

International Trade in Endangered Species) requires that certain species (including tortoises) need permits if they are to be displayed to the public. This would be enforced by DEFRA but failure to comply can result in the seizure of animals. The Council has made every effort to help The Tortoise Garden and will continue to do so,” said Mr. Kennedy.

Chris Newman, Chairman of the Federation of British Herpetologists, said “The difficulties faced at The Tortoise Garden are not unique, indeed other such sanctuaries dealing with other species have been snared by Draconian interpretation of both the Zoo Licensing Act [ZLA] and the Control of Trade in Endangers Species legislation [COTES]. It appears today the ‘common sense’ approach to interpreting legislation has been abandoned by both national and local government, in favour of an approach that is supportive of animal rights, but detrimental to animal welfare, which is deeply regrettable.”

He continued “Here perhaps one has to look at the function of a ‘zoo’ as opposed to a ‘sanctuary’. A zoo is a business whose principle activity is displaying animals to the public, whilst the principle activity of a sanctuary is affording a permanent home for animals in need. The principle activity of The Tortoise Garden is clearly not displaying animals to the public, but offering a place of sanctuary for animals in need, often through unfortunate circumstances such as death or ill-health of owners. I would suggest that again the licensing body is entitled to interpret the definition of the Act and its application to The Tortoise Garden as it sees fit as scant guidance is



provided by central government”.

Mr. Newman summarised: “The situation regarding The Tortoise Garden is confusing and complex and clarification of existing legislation is urgently needed to alleviate serious animal welfare issues that have arisen in recent times by Draconian enforcement of legislation such as ZLA and COTES regulations. The statement by Mr Kennedy on behalf of Cornwall Council that they have done all they can to assist The Tortoise Garden is somewhat disingenuous as the Council have chosen to interpret the regulations in such a way as to leave closure the only option. The power to exempt The Tortoise Garden

from the ZLA is clearly within the remit of Cornwall Council, either through accepting that tortoises are domestic animals (some of these individuals have been pets for close on 100 years!) or by acknowledging that the principle function of The Tortoise Garden is not displaying animals. In both cases they have simply chosen not to adopt the common-sense option but to use the unclear definitions of the regulations to obstruct moves to keep this important facility open”.

The future of The Tortoise Garden hangs in the balance. We hope to follow this story and report the outcome as it unfolds.

Classifieds

BOOKS FOR SALE

BIOLOGY OF THE VIPERS

edited by Schuett, Hoggren, Douglas and Greene. 580 pages, 16 colour plates, black & white photos and numerous charts and diagrams. In superb, 'as new' condition - **£45.00**.

SNAKES OF THE AGKISTRODON COMPLEX

by Gloyd & Conant. 616 pages, 52 colour and black & white plates, and numerous maps and diagrams. In excellent condition - **£45.00**.

A REVISION OF THE WORM SNAKES OF SOUTH-EASTERN AFRICA

(Serpentes: Leptotyphlopidae) by Broadley & Watson, 48 pages, line drawings and charts - **£7.00**.

All prices include packing and postage to UK destinations. Email Dave at hawkmoth@supanet.com

Salmonella Leaflet

Salmonella has been in the news again recently due to a contaminated batch of frozen rodents in circulation.

We are distributing the Health Protection Agency's latest information leaflet on salmonella and reducing the risk of infection. Heed the advice and pass it on to friends and family.

The leaflet can also be downloaded from www.hpa.org.uk

Please send your herpetological items, cuttings, reports, stories, photos, letters, comments and classified items for *The Natterjack* to Trevor Rose at the following address:

11 Strathmore Place, Montrose,
Angus, DD10 8LQ
or e-mail: secretary@thebhs.org

Registered headquarters:

The British Herpetological Society,
c/o The Zoological Society of London,
Regents Park, London, NW1 4RY.



Council Matters

The NatterJack Status

It won't have escaped your notice that it has been some time since the last *NatterJack* was published. We had hoped to bring your newsletter back on track over the summer, but unfortunately things haven't gone to plan. However, here we are back again, and the next issue (to be headed 187-188-189) will be out soon. After that, we hope to have plans in place to bring you *The NatterJack* on a more regular basis.

We would be very pleased to hear from anyone who can help with the production of the newsletter, either in a publishing and/or editorial role. See Council Vacancies below for more details.

Council Vacancies

There are several vacant posts on BHS Council which we would like to fill as soon as possible. The posts of *The NatterJack* Editor and Trade Officer remain open; a brief description of duties can be found below.

BHS Council are also considering the proposal of a new post, Meetings Organiser. Again, details can be found below, but please note at present this is an idea in progress, not an official post and will only become one if and when an incumbent comes forward to take on the role.

At the 2011 AGM, one post of Ordinary Member will be vacant, so we are looking for nominations now in order to ensure the position is filled in March next year.

Finally, we would like to recruit an Auditor to confirm the BHS accounts at the end of each fiscal year. Although this is not a Council (Trustee) post, the area of expertise and the remit is very specific, and we would like to recruit a BHS member with the relevant qualifications to undertake this task and join our band of volunteers.

All Council posts are voluntary, require the incumbent to report to Council, and attend quarterly meetings usually held in London (excluding the Auditor).

The NatterJack Newsletter Editor

3 year term. Responsible for the regular production of the monthly newsletter. Collation and procurement of material from various sources, researching articles, editing, layout and production of print-ready artwork. Previous experience of page-making software would be preferred, as would access to suitable hardware (Adobe PM or Indesign software can be provided). This is a demanding role requiring a high level of attention to detail, as well as contact on a regular basis with the membership.

Trade Officer

3 year term. Would suit a person with an interest in government legislation, and/or with contacts in the trade of reptiles and amphibians. Could involve attendance at SUN meetings and liaison with government departments to represent the views of the BHS, although this role is open to further development by the successful candidate.

Meetings Organiser

3 year term. This is a new post which is currently being given consideration by Council. The successful applicant will be responsible for the planning, organisation and coordination of an annual programme of meetings in addition to those regularly presented by BHS (CBC at Amersham, Joint Scientific meeting at Bournemouth, AGM). The lack of regular meetings is high on the agenda of many members and is a cause of concern. However, such meetings require a considerable amount of effort to organise so following discussions at the previous two Council meetings, we seek to recruit an enthusiastic member to take on this interesting and demanding role. The full remit is open for development under the direction of Council.

Ordinary Member

3 Year Term. Required to attend Council meetings to represent the views of the general membership. Occasional other duties as assigned and specified as a result of meeting actions.

Auditor (Term does not apply)

The Auditor acts as an independent examiner and holds the Society’s Trustees to account, ensuring honest and responsible stewardship of the Society’s finances by performing an examination of the Society’s annual accounts. Please note, this is a non-Council, non-Trustee post and is exempt from the usual responsibilities of Council.

To be eligible for this position, you must:

1. be independent of the Trustees - this excludes the Trustees and relatives of Trustees, but members of the Society are not excluded
2. have a practical understanding of accounting methods

The Society prepares simple “receipts and payments” accounts, so the independent examiner does not need the same in-depth knowledge of accountancy as, for instance, the auditor of a commercial company. Examples of people who might be suitable for the role include bank managers, local authority treasurers and tax inspectors; financial awareness and numeracy skills are the key requirements for an Independent Examiner.

The Treasurer and other members of the Council will provide support and assistance to the new Auditor as they get to grips with the role. The Society will also pay an Honourarium of up to £350 for each annual audit.

Members interested in any of the above posts should write to the Secretary at 11 Strathmore Place, Montrose, Angus, DD10 8LQ or email secretary@thebhs.org for more information or telephone 07778 830192.

Interested parties must be current BHS members, and require two nominations, also from current BHS members. To make this procedure easier, the Secretary can provide a pre-printed letter to be signed by the relevant parties. All nominations received will be advertised ahead of the AGM in March 2011, and if more than one nomination is received for any post, the successful applicant will be decided by ballot.

If you enjoy a challenge, and want to be more involved in herpetology and influence the running of the BHS, come and join the BHS Council!

Subscription Increase

As previously advised, it will be necessary to raise the cost of Print subscriptions for 2011. It is now time to prepare for the change, and for those who pay by Standing Order, submit a new instruction to either your Bank or the BHS Secretary.

With this newsletter you have received a letter advising your current membership type and previous payment method. For those whose membership expires at the end of 2010, you should act now and submit either your new Bank Order mandate or subscription fee in time for the New Year.

Bank/Standing Order payers: Please be aware it is your responsibility to update your mandate; BHS are unable to update the amount for you as this is not a Direct Debit service. If you fail to submit a new mandate, BHS will receive the old fee and your membership will not be automatically renewed. We will require the balance to be paid before publication mailings can be re-started. Your attention to this matter is required, please act now!

The new rates for 2011 Print subscriptions are as follows:

Full membership	£40
Ordinary	£28
Family	£50
Overseas	£45
Associate	£70

Please note, these changes do affect either “Online” or YHC subscriptions, which remain unchanged.

Gift Aid

BHS are taking this opportunity to remind members that the Society can claim Gift Aid on subscriptions received from UK Tax payers. Please remember to sign the appropriate part of the form and return to the Secretary when submitting your new Bank Order and/or renewal form. It would be helpful to us if you could do this even if you have sent a gift Aid form previously.



Upcoming BHS Meetings

BRITISH HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THAMES & CHILTERN HERPETOLOGICAL GROUP

Joint meeting **Sunday 28th November, 3.00 – 7.00 pm**
*Drake Hall, Amersham Community Centre,
Chiltern Ave, Amersham, Bucks, HP6 5AH*

Speakers include:

Dr Ian Stephen (Curator of Herpetology, Zoological Society of London, London Zoo): *‘Amphibian Conservation at ZSL’*

Matthew Rendle (Veterinary Nurse, Zoological Society of London, London Zoo):
‘Problems of Komodo Dragons in Captivity’

John Berry: *‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly – Morphs, Mutations and Hybrids of Captive Bred Snakes’*

6.00pm -7.00pm : Refreshments and an Open and Informal Session for members –
Exhibition of captive bred animals and items/posters of herpetological interest (including science, books, art, photography). See enclosed flier for further information.

Amersham is easy to get to via J18 of the M25 or by tube/rail to Amersham station.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation & British Herpetological Society

JOINT SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2010

AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

Sunday 5th December 2010, 9.30am-5.00pm

*Lecture Hall, Bournemouth Natural Science Society,
39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 3NS*

Provisional Speaker Programme:

Liam Russell – *Sand lizards*

Katy Upton – *Frog diversity in Amazonian Peru*

Darryn Nash – *Stripy grass snakes!?*

Peter Minting – *Natterjacks and chytrid*

Vicky Ogilvy – *Five-a-day for frogs!*

John Baker – *Pool frog re-introduction: update*

James Stroud – *Spatial ecology of adders (TBC)*

Freya Smith – *Chytrid surveying*

Axel Barlow – *Bitis!*

Registration by 19th November is essential - please refer to enclosed flier for registration details



BHS Sunday Conservation Tasks

- 7th November 2010** Luscombe (B of P) - Main gate Shore Road SZ 044 890 - Gorse/Bramble
- 21st November 2010** Gore Heath boundary with ARC reserve (F.C.) - Lawson clump car park SY 922 909 - Pine/Birch
- 5th December 2010** Rempstone tramway (F.C.) - F.C. Gate SY 994 840 - Gorse/Pine
- 9th January 2011** Luscombe (B of P) - Main gate Shore Road SZ 044 890 - Gorse/Bramble
- 23rd January 2011** Blackheath (F.C.) - Stroud bridge car park SY 889 916 - Pine
- 6th February 2011** Canford Cliffs (ARC/B of Poole) - Branksome chine car park SZ 065 896 - Pine, Gorse, Hottentot Fig
- 20th February 2011** Trigon (ARC) - F.C. Car park Stroud Bridge SY 889 916 then Gate SY 882 911 - Rhododendron/Pine
- 6th March 2011** Pallington Clump (F.C.) - Affpuddle Car park SY 804 923 - Pine/Birch
- 20th March 2011** Northport Pit to Northport heath (F.C.) - F.C.Office SY 905 894 - Pine/Gorse
- 3rd April 2011** To be confirmed
- 17th April 2011** To be confirmed

All tasks meet at 10.00am. Please contact Dave Bird on 01258 857869 or 0776 551 2056 if you plan to join a task.

Other Herpetological Dates

8th-9th April 2011 **British Herpetological Symposium - Bangor 2011**

Hosted by Bangor University Herpetological Society. Researchers from around the UK will present their work. Free to attend.
More details from: herp.symposium@gmail.com

23rd-27th May 2011 **Second Mediterranean Congress of Herpetology**

To be held in Marrakech, Morocco.
For details go to www.ucam.ac.ma/cmh2

8th-14th August 2012 **7th World Congress of Herpetology**

Vancouver, Canada. Call for symposium papers.
For further details go to <http://wch2012vancouver.com/>

Reptile Habitat Management Handbook

Paul Edgar, Jim Foster and John Baker (2010).
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.
ISBN 978-0-9566717-0-7.

This handbook is the first attempt to bring together habitat management advice for all native UK reptiles. The half dozen species here have experienced population declines, and are now all Biodiversity Action Plan priorities. The handbook is aimed at site managers, and those who advise on management. It gives advice for a range of settings, from dedicated nature reserves to farmland and includes a useful appendix of Environmental Stewardship options.

Our native reptiles include two rarities, the sand lizard and smooth snake, both of which have very specific habitat requirements – lowland heath and, in the case of the sand lizard, coastal dune. The handbook advises on the specific management measures needed for the precious few sites supporting these species. The other four reptiles, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake and adder, are widespread, occurring in a range of habitats that provide a combination of open areas and cover. These species have a patchy distribution within their ranges, but nevertheless are likely to occur in many habitats managed for nature conservation.

The authors stress the importance of considering reptiles in site management plans. Experience has shown that simply ‘taking care of the habitat’ does not always favour reptiles, and some management approaches can actually

be harmful to them. The handbook reviews habitat management practices and makes recommendations as to how they can be applied, or modified, to benefit reptiles.

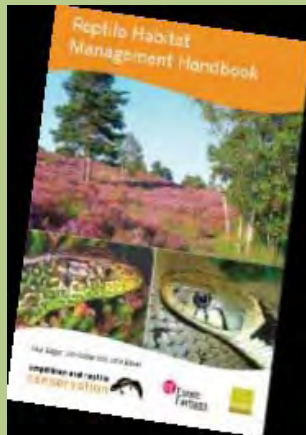
This publication benefits from over twenty years of Amphibian and Reptile Conservation’s experience of managing habitat for rare reptiles. It also draws on the collective experience of the UK herpetofauna conservation community, including Amphibian and Reptile Groups, site managers and dedicated individuals.

The Reptile Habitat Management Handbook was part-funded by Natural England and produced in conjunction with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation’s Widespread Species Project, funded by The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Copies of the handbook are available from Amphibian and Reptile Conservation,

655A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4AP, 01202 391919 (£3.00 to cover postage and handling, bulk orders to be negotiated enquiries@arc-trust.org).

The handbook is also available to download in PDF format at: www.arc-trust.org. ARC and Natural England will be sending copies to the main habitat management organisations in October, and a series of training courses is being organised for winter to promote the handbook’s main messages.



The Editor wishes to stress that the views expressed in this publication are those of the recognised source and not those of the British Herpetological Society. **Copyright:** Bodies are encouraged to reprint and advertise the contents of this publication, acknowledging the source, *The Natterjack*, Newsletter of the British Herpetological Society.

