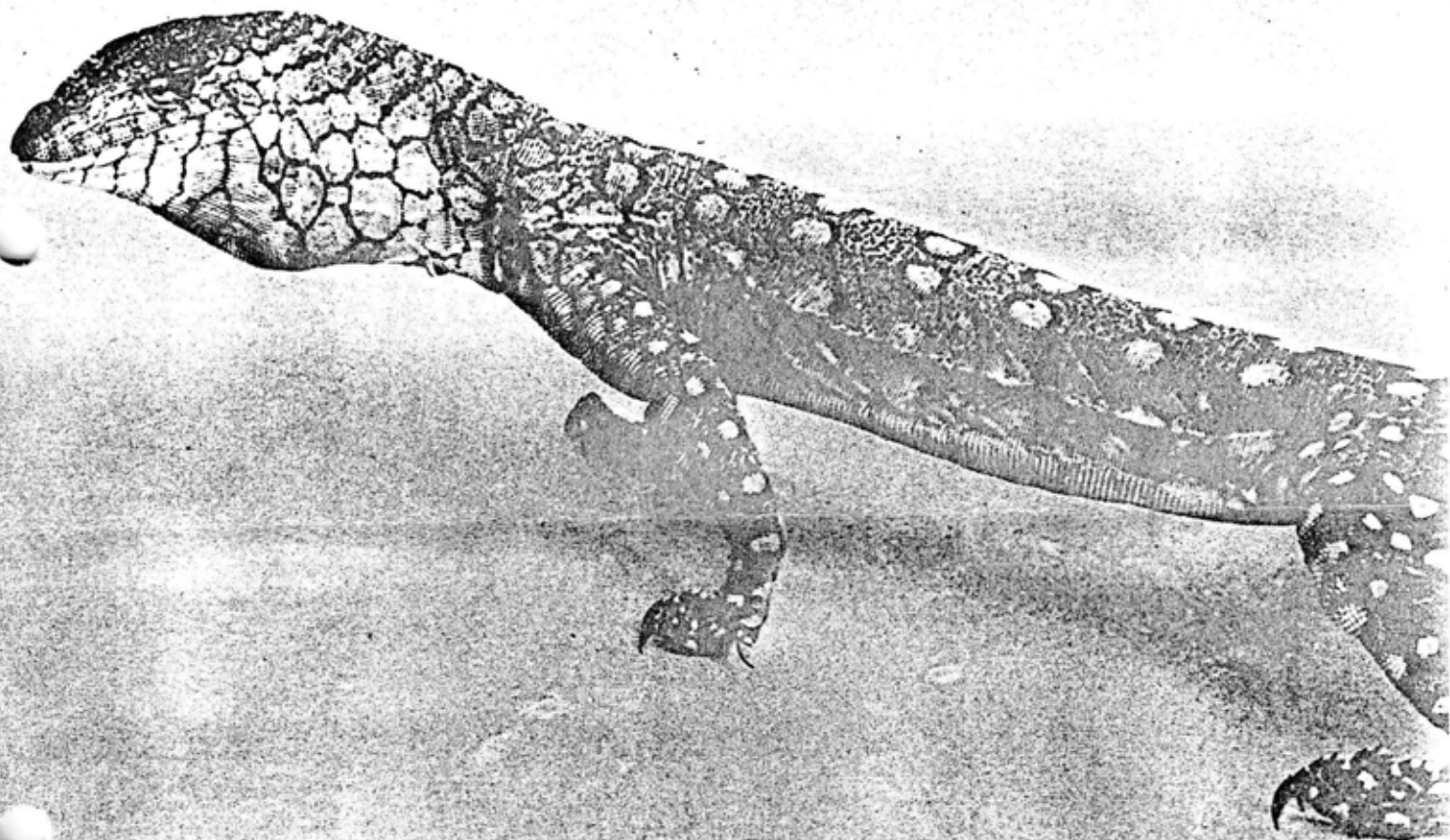
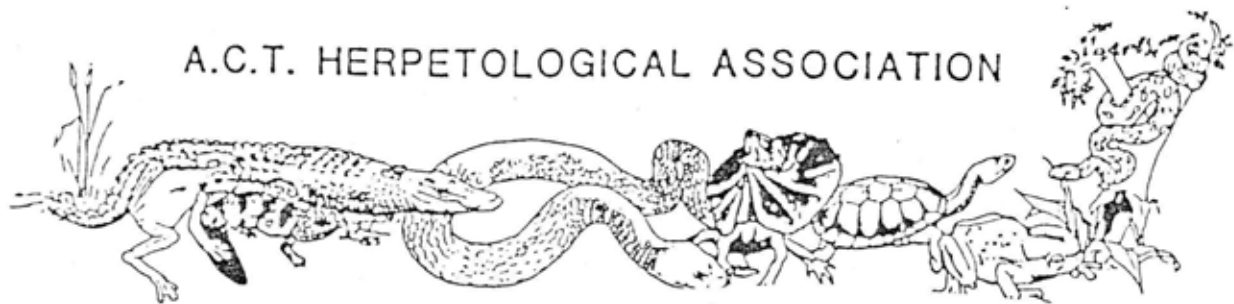


A.C.T. HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



FEBRUARY 1989

NEXT MEETING:

MONDAY FEBRUARY 20

7.30 pm

Downstairs in the Zoology Building ANU

SPEAKER:

JOHN WOMBEY

"REPTILES OF CENTRAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA"

John is well known to most members both as Curator of the Australian National Wildlife Collection and a foundation member of the ACT Herpetological group, not to mention his position as Secretary/Treasurer of the Australian Society of Herpetologists.

One of John's earlier assignments was a fauna survey of the Wiluna area, east of Meekatharra, as a part of which he collected some excellent slides of the reptiles of the area. The opportunity to see some of these slides and hear about the fabulous reptiles of this area should be a great way to start the year. One of those fabulous reptiles is the Perentie, Australia's largest lizard, which features on this months cover.

HOLIDAY HERPIN'

Of cause it is two and a half months since our last meeting in December, so an important and interesting part of the meeting will be sharing holiday herping news, so please bring along your records of sightings, slides, pictures and holiday experiences.

LAST MEETING:

Special thanks to Ric Longmore and John Wombey for organising our first workshop, "Getting to know your ACT Herpetofauna". It was fantastic to have specimens of every species of reptile found in the ACT. The effort put into the workshop was rewarded with an attendance of over sixty people, some of whom were still making notes and observations well into the evening and had to be almost prised away from the specimens for the latters return to formalin.

It was also encouraging to have a number of students both attend and join up with the group. Thanks again Ric and John.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

As mentioned in the last newsletter, it has been decided to try the THIRD MONDAY in the month as our regular meeting night in 1989, although this may be varied from time to time to take advantage of herpetologists attending conferences or passing through Canberra at other times. It has also been suggested that we try to have regular monthly field trips as well, possibly the SUNDAY following the meeting?

The suggested programme so far for this year is:

- MARCH 20: ARTHUR GEORGES - Workshop on Turtles & Tortoises.  
APRIL 17: DAVE CARTER - Goannas - an update on Dave's research.  
MAY 15: STEVE SARRE - Genetic variation in island populations of sleepy lizards.  
JUNE 19: SYLVIA SPRING - Marine Turtles of Papua New Guinea.  
JULY 17: DAVE CARTER - Freshwater Crocodiles.

Copies of "Frogs of South Australia" and "There's a Frog in my Stomach" at heavily discounted prices were snapped up at the December meeting. At the February meeting we hope to have copies of Mike Tyler's new "FROGS OF AUSTRALIA" (launched February 13) available at a discount price yet to be notified.

The ACT Herpetological Association needs help.

Why?

Many of the professional herpetologists who founded the group and have worked so hard to keep it functioning are limited in the time they are able to contribute, due to

- . heavy professional commitments
- . frequent absences on field trips
- . the demands of thesis writing, sometimes at the same time as holding down a job (and family!)

So,  
if you feel you can help in any way, would you please mention it to Jo Vandermark, either at the meeting, of on 47 7963.

For example,  
could you help with the newsletter? (access to a word-processor and/or photo-copies?)

Could you look after supper?  
Could you make some posters for schools, libraries etc?  
Could you help organise field trips?  
Any ideas for cheap, durable name tags?

Also,  
We are trying to work out a simple, flexible but adequate constitution for the group, and are investigating the feasibility/desirability of becoming incorporated. If you think you could help on this sub-committee (first meeting soon) please volunteer yourself.

#### HERPETOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES SHORT COURSE

This course is a practically oriented course for technicians, park rangers, teachers, graduates and amateur herpetologists with a sound knowledge of reptiles and amphibians.

The subject Applied Herpetology allows students to become familiar with and also master some important current Australian herpetological research techniques. Skills that are demonstrated and practiced include identification, diet analysis, remote sensing (telemetry), preservation methods, frog call analysis and illustration techniques.

Negotiations to have this course offered at Queanbeyan TAFE College as a spring intensive course over two or three consecutive weekends are in progress. I have the names of nine people who would be interested in participating in this course let by Harry Ehmann, currently available only at Sydney Technical College. If anyone else is interested, please contact Jo Vandermark.

## EXCURSION REPORTS

Two field trips were held during the summer period.

### 1. BATHURST DISTRICT

The first trip, on the 11th of December, was to the Bathurst region to search for the rare earless dragon *Tympanocryptis lineata*. Seven members of the Herpetology Association along with Gavin Waters (from Bathurst), spent many rather fruitless hours searching through very weedy looking paspalum thickets, along the edges of railway tracks and through vacant paddocks full of tall pasture grasses. These were the sites where *Tympanocryptis lineata* have been previously found near Bathurst!!! However one environmental feature that was relatively consistent, was that all sites were probably formerly treeless, and occurred in, or near, the deep alluvial plain that Bathurst is situated on. Unfortunately no earless dragons were found, but we gained some idea of what may constitute *Tympanocryptis* habitat.

Late in the day we visited a rocky creek (Mt Rankin Creek) north-west of Bathurst and at last found some interesting reptiles. The following species were observed:

Shingleback Lizard	<i>Trachydosaurus rugosus</i>
Cunningham's Rock Skink	<i>Egernia cunninghami</i>
Striped Skink	<i>Ctenotus robustus</i>
Copper-tailed Skink	<i>C. taeniolatus</i>
Boulenger's Skink	<i>Morethio boulengeri</i>
Delicate Skink	<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>
Eastern Water Skink	<i>Sphenomorphus quoyi</i>
Stone Gecko	<i>Diplodactylus vittatus</i>
Blind Snake	<i>Rhamphotyphlops nigrescens</i>

On the way back to Canberra in the evening, the following frogs were recorded between Bathurst and Goulburn:

Spotted Grass Frog	<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>
Orange-groined Toadlet	<i>Uperoleia laevis</i>
a Froglet	<i>Crinia parinsignifera</i>
Common Eastern Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i>
Broad-palmed Frog	<i>Litoria latopalmata</i>
Peron's Tree Frog	<i>Litoria peroni</i>

### 2. GININI FLATS

A combined Herpetology Association, Field Naturalist Club excursion was held to Ginini Flats, in the Brindabella Range. Corroboree Frogs *Pseudophryne corroboree* were calling strongly at the flats and by great luck we arrived on an overcast damp day when several very gravid female frogs were observed walking over the moss towards calling males of their choice. We also saw a male corroboree frog in its burrow in the *Sphagnum* moss. Other reptile and frog species seen at the flats were:

Alpine Water Skink	<i>Sphenomorphus kosciuskoi</i>
Mountain Water Skink	<i>S. tympanum</i>
Bog Skink	<i>Leiopisma rawlinsoni</i>
Brown Woodland skink	<i>L. entrecasteauxii</i> (Form B)
Common Eastern Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i> (striped morph)

The Bog Skink is a newly described species found only in sphagnum bogs and wet heaths.

Will Osborne

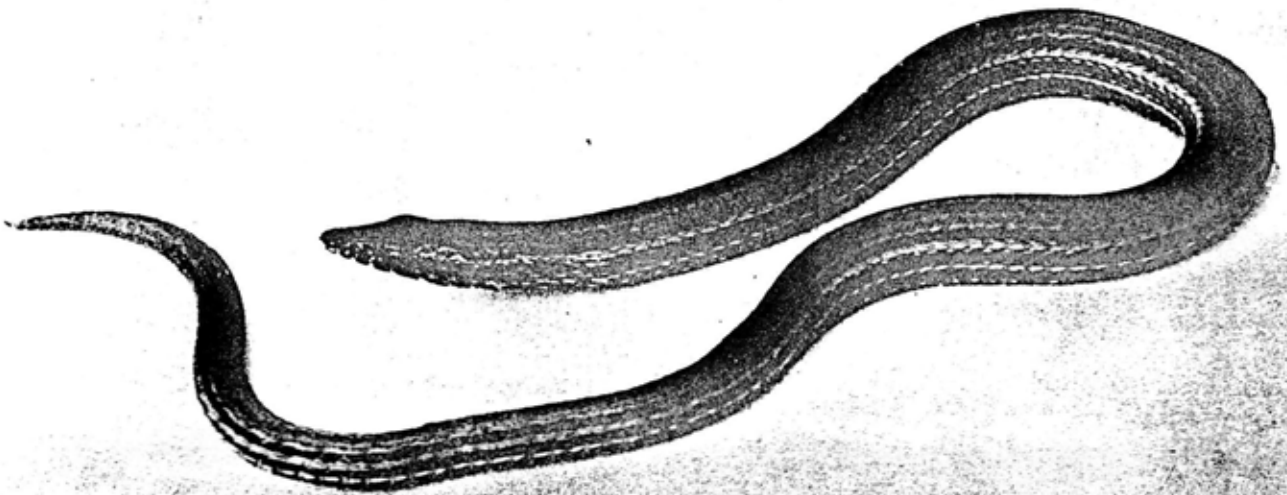
## 'ROUND TOWN

This summer has produced a goodly number of serpents making temporary excursions into the suburbs. As usual, the majority are Common Brown Snakes but there has been a wide variety of colours and patterns. From Chapman came a 500 mm specimen almost completely covered with black reticulations while at the other end of town at Watson a similar sized animal was very heavily banded. Mean while, back in Chapman a 1.6 m dark brown beast took up temporary residence beside a swimming pool. If there is such a thing as a normal Common Brown in the northern ACT it is a pale brown animal, though many people seem to interpret this colour as grey or silver.

Sometimes herps, particularly snakes, inadvertently hitch rides in or under vehicles. A couple of probable recent examples include a Mainland Tiger Snake in Curtain and a Lowland form Copperhead in Holder.

A Burton's legless lizard recovered during a fire at Pine Island becomes the fifth ACT record known to me. This widespread species with its many colour and pattern variations has previously been found at Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie, Cotter and Mount Tennant.

R.B.



This legless lizard is the second largest Australian species and grows to nearly 30 inches. It lives in most parts of Australia. The tail when complete may be twice as long as the rest of the body. The scales are smooth, the snout is prominently pointed, the rudimentary hindlimbs are not well developed. Greyish is the predominant colouring although this may vary from olive to dark brown, with or without longitudinal stripes. May get easily excited if picked up, and usually breaks off part of the long tail. Lays about two or three eggs. Food consists of insects and skinks.

### **burton's legless lizard**

*Lialis burtonis*



## FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS

DEAN WARD will be leading our FEBRUARY herping excursion, probably on Sunday February 27.  
Full details and arrangements at the February meeting

DAVE CARTER will follow up his March talk on goannas with an opportunity to take a look at the beasts in the field i.e. goannas being tracked with radio transmitters, temperature probes in termite mounds AND a chance to spend a great weekend camping in the beautiful Deua valley. Probable date - first weekend in April.

STOP PRESS: Just as our newsletter goes to print Dave and Margaret Carter have added another young budding herpetologist to the team. Congratulations on the arrival of Stephen. All three are thriving!

### **COLLECTOR WORLD**

Cnr. Wattle & Brigidlow Sts.,  
LYNEHAM A.C.T. 2602  
Phone 47 6450

For lots of herp books including many hard to get and out of print volumes this is the place.