



HERPUTOPIA

NEWSLETTER

Promotion, Care and Enjoyment of Reptiles and Amphibians through Education

DECEMBER 2011

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COMMITTEE

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Please phone 0429 600 962 for any further enquiries

Find us at - www.illawarrareptilesociety.com.au

POSTAL ADDRESS - PO BOX 183 ALBION PARK NSW 2527

MEETINGS: First Monday of the month at 7.00 pm
(excluding January, April & October)

Fairy Meadow Community Centre: Guest Park, opposite Woolworths corner Princes Hwy and Cambridge Ave, Fairy Meadow

AT EACH MEETING - Lucky Door Prize, Sausage Sizzle \$2.00, Drinks \$1.00, Free Tea and Coffee

Australia is home to some very unique reptiles, particularly the desert species and this is where the Alice Springs Reptile Centre shines. This is a not to be missed evening for IRS members with fabulous food and company for the whole family.

EVENT CALENDAR



5th December – Christmas Party Meeting - Our guest speaker, Rex Neindorf, creator of the Alice Springs Reptile Centre is a respected and experienced herpetologist, who will educate us on exactly what it takes to build a magnificent reptile park like his.



Rex Neindorf, creator of the Alice Springs Reptile Centre

2nd January 2012 – NO MEETING

6th February 2012 – next meeting



REPTILE RAMBLINGS

Arthur and Debbie Weeding from TurtlesRus were our very welcome guests at the November 7th meeting.

With a large number of members attending (approx 60) Arthur, with the help of a power point display took us on a journey into one of the most fascinating backyards in Sydney, with every square inch devoted to breeding and keeping turtles.

Debbie and Arthur breed five species of turtle, concentrating on the two most popular species, the Eastern Long Neck turtle *chelodina longicollis* and the Murray Short Neck turtle *emydura macquarii*.

Thanks to a deal they made with Woolworths to take all their out of date seafood, Debbie and Arthur can provide 75kilos of seafood weekly adding kidney, liver, heart and cat kibble for a perfectly balanced diet.

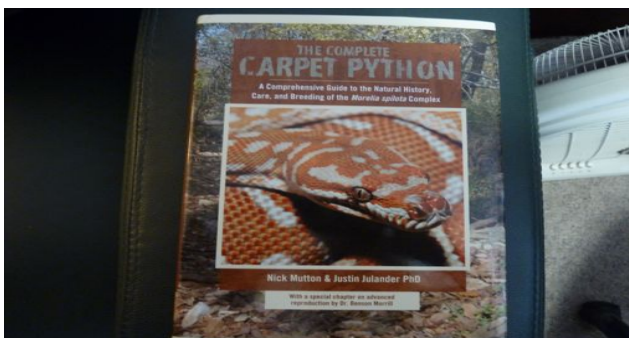
With such an extensive pond setup, Arthur has designed his own filtration system and has even designed and installed his own solar power system which keeps his pond water temperature at 28c°.

Thank you very much Arthur and Debbie for providing such an inspirational talk. It showed that we can all aspire to any goal. If you would like to contact Arthur and Debbie, go to turtlesrus@optusnet.com.au

During general business, a new book THE COMPLETE CARPET PYTHON was introduced to members. This magnificent hard cover volume is a comprehensive guide to the natural history, care and breeding on the 9 species of the Morelia spilota complex. A must have book for the hobbyist.

The club has purchased two volumes of this book which sells for \$80.00 each, for the sole purpose of raffling, the tickets selling for \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00. The first of the 2 volumes will be raffled at our Christmas party on the 5th December 2011.

As an added bonus for the raffle winners, both books are signed by the authors, Nick Mutton and Dr Justin Julander, who flew over for the Australian launch in early October.



We were delighted to have Bill Tritton and Chris Comb at our meeting. Chris is the owner of Wild Crystal calcium reptile substrate who is a major sponsor of the IRS. Chris displayed this fantastic product and sold it at a discounted price on the night. Check Chris's add in our newsletter or please contact www.wildcrystal.com.au

Bill Tritton accompanied Chris from the Central Coast and turned up with a real treat for those attending. He brought along three of the most beautiful young Pygmy Spiny-Tailed skinks *egernia depressa*. We enticed Bill to give a short talk on these extremely rare and highly prized lizards and he answered many questions from the audience, but as time was limited before our main speaker, Bill promised to write an article for the newsletter explaining more of his involvement with this endangered species.



Many thanks to Bill Tritton and Chris Comb for coming along.

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THE IRS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Christmas party this year will be held on Monday 5th December, 2011, and what a fantastic event it will be. Our guest speaker, Rex Neindorf, creator of the Alice Springs Reptile Centre is a respected and experienced herpetologist, who will educate us on exactly what it takes to build a magnificent reptile park like his.

Australia is home to some very unique reptiles, particularly the desert species and this is where the Alice Springs Reptile Centre shines. This is a not to be missed evening for IRS members with fabulous food and company for the whole family.

Bookings are now open and will remain open until **29th November, 2011**. Be great to see you all there.

The charges remain the same as last year, free for IRS members and **\$15.00 each for non-member adults, \$5.00 each for non-member children.**

If you have a single membership and would like to bring the family, you are welcome to upgrade to a family membership.

This offer is open to all other Reptile Societies members.

Be early as a limited number of seats are available.

ALL enquiries, please phone 0429 600 962.

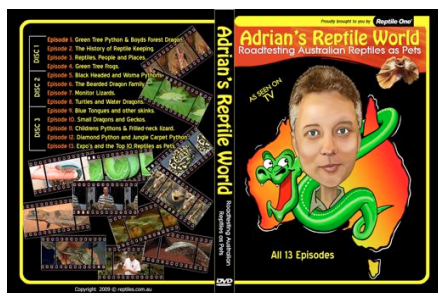
Welcome to new members

Jordan Sparrow, Mark Pickett, Blake Jennings and Daniella Antonios.

Membership Fees

Single Member is \$20 and Family Membership is \$30. Yearly fees are due in August. Direct Deposit to the following account. ILLAWARRA REPTILE SOCIETY INC BSB: 012 593 ACCOUNT:197838498 Please put your member No. in the xxx field for your identification.

Adrian Reptile World - DVD available from the front meeting desk for \$25, along with the latest issue of Scales and Tails \$8



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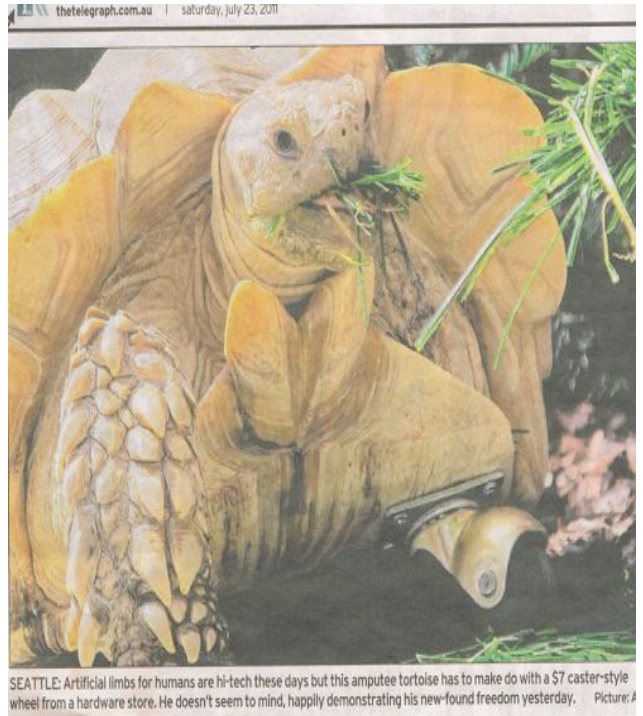
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Scales & Tails \$8

Available at each meeting and at Garth's



Justin Bieber and his baby boa, Johnson, at the VMAs. (Christopher Polk - Getty Images)

Justin Bieber has put his pet snake up for auction to benefit the charity Pencils of Promise. 11/8/11

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Hundreds of snakes spark calls for help

JAYNE RICKARD, The West Australian November 9, 2011, 4:36 am



Danella Bevis/Countryman ©

Hundreds of snakes have been retrieved from metropolitan properties in the past two months, kicking off a busy season for wildlife officers

Several days of hot weather last month and in September meant volunteer snake retrievers were inundated with more than 500 calls regarding snakes in backyards, work sites and local parks.

Department of Environment and Conservation reptile and amphibian officer Matt Swan said the high volume of calls since early September had swamped volunteers and he advised people to be vigilant around their properties.

Almost every call related to a dugite or tiger snake, some as close to the city as Victoria Park.

Snake sighting calls that come through the Department of Environment and Conservation and a Wildcare hotline are referred to volunteer snake retrievers stationed across the metropolitan area.

He recently removed a big dugite hidden under rubbish at a suburban construction site.

To report a snake, phone the 24-hour Wildcare hotline on 9474 9055.



Tree frogs often plop themselves down outside on cool nights during the dry season in tropical Australia. When they return to their dens, condensation forms on their cold skin -- just like it does on a pair of glasses when we come in from the cold. (Credit: © Patryk Kosmider / Fotolia)

Tree Frogs Chill out to Collect Precious Water

ScienceDaily (Sep. 29, 2011) — Research published in the October issue of *The American Naturalist* shows that Australian green tree frogs survive the dry season with the help of the same phenomenon that fogs up eyeglasses in the winter.

According to researchers from Charles Darwin University in Australia, tree frogs often plop themselves down outside on cool nights during the dry season in tropical Australia. When they return to their dens, condensation forms on their cold skin -- just like it does on a pair of glasses when we come in from the cold. The researchers found that frogs absorb this moisture through their skin, which helps to keep them hydrated during periods of little or no rain.

Before this study, the frogs' dry-season excursions were a bit mysterious.

"Every once in a while, we would find frogs sitting on a stick under the open sky, on nights when it was so cold they could barely move," said Dr. Chris Tracy, who led the research. "It was a real puzzle."

Tracy and his colleagues thought this behavior might enable the frogs collect condensation, but the hypothesis had never been tested.

The researchers designed a series of experiments using real frog dens in eucalyptus trees and artificial ones made from PVC pipe. They wanted to see if the

frogs could collect enough moisture through condensation to compensate for what they lost being in the cold. They found that a cold night out cost a frog as much as .07 grams of water. However, a frog could gain nearly .4 grams, or nearly 1 percent of its total body weight, in water upon returning to the warm den.

The researchers also tested how well a frog's skin could absorb water, and found that as much as 60 percent of each water drop could be absorbed.

The results show that frogs can use condensation to hydrate themselves. And in a place as arid as the Australian savannahs during the dry season, where there is essentially no rain from June through August, every little bit counts.

"When there's no water available, even a small amount can mean the difference between surviving the dry season or not," Tracy said.

Story Source: The above story is reprinted from [materials](#) provided by [University of Chicago Press Journals](#), via [EurekAlert!](#), a service of AAAS.



King cobra. A bite from a cobra or mamba can bring on death by asphyxia -- due to respiratory paralysis -- within 6 hours of the incident. (Credit: © Heiko Kiera / Fotolia

Snakebites a Public Health Problem in Africa

ScienceDaily (Sep. 9, 2011) — One and a half million people per year are poisoned by snake venom in Sub-Saharan Africa. An IRD researcher recently analysed around 100 surveys and medical reports published over the past 40 years. No large-scale study of the situation had hitherto been conducted and public health authorities had underestimated the size of the problem. This means that currently only 10% of victims are treated, owing to a shortage of antivenoms* and lack of awareness among health care practitioners. Yet the clinical complications can be very serious, even fatal. A bite from a cobra or mamba can bring on death by asphyxia -- due to respiratory paralysis -- within 6 hours of the incident. Venom injected by the ocellated carpet viper, common in the African savannah, can cause hemorrhages leading to the victim's death in a few days.

This new study provides authorities with more detailed and reliable figures which should enable them to readjust their health-care services in better tune with needs.

For snakes the best form of defence is attack. Some show complete ruthlessness when they sense they are under threat. They all have their methods. The Gaboon viper, for example, injects its venom very deep into the muscles with its 5 cm long fangs. The spitting cobra blinds its victims with its venom. And although only one out of two snake bites is venomous, these reptiles are still a real danger for humans. The number of incidents is considerable, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where they represent a sizeable public health hazard, though neglected by the health authorities



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