

Phry·no·so·ma·tics

noun. 1. people enthusiastically dedicated to reversing the decline and supporting the conservation of horned lizards. From the genus *Phrynosoma*—the horned lizards.

April 1991

A Monthly Newsletter of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society

This may be your last newsletter!

If you haven't yet paid your membership fee (minimum of \$10 for subscribing or student membership), this may be the last newsletter you receive!

We would like to be able to send newsletters to everyone who is interested, but our funds are limited and printing and postage costs are high. We want your support, so send your membership fee NOW! See back page for details. ▲

Newspaper Survey Underway

The Survey Committee will be sending out news releases and the horned lizard sighting survey to about 30 central Texas newspapers in the next week or so. Lynn Virta will be inputting the data received into a database that George Perry and she are setting up. At a later time, the survey will also be released for publication in some, if not all, of the remaining 515 Texas newspapers. If you are interested in helping with mail-outs, contact Wendy Donaldson. ▲

Upcoming Meetings

GENERAL MEETING—
Tuesday, April 9th, 7 p.m.
Austin Nature Center

RESEARCH AND RECOVERY COMMITTEE —
meets next on Wednesday, April 24th, 6 to 8 p.m. at UT-Austin, RLM 7.120 (corner of 26th and Speedway).

It's Spring . . . Do You Know What the Horned Lizards are Doing?

by Wendy Donaldson

Late last October or early November, adult *Phrynosoma* (horned lizards) buried themselves in deep underground burrows to begin their winter hibernation period. Especially in northern ranges, the females are larger than the males, and so the females can withstand cooler temperatures allowing the males to begin hibernation first. Horned Lizards can survive the winter with little or no food and water.

Now that it is spring, *Phrynosoma* are being aroused from their hibernating state. Here, in central Texas, Horned Lizards can emerge in mid-March to early April. The lower critical temperature (lowest temperature they can withstand) for *P. cornutum* (Texas horned lizards) is 49° F. while they prefer 101° F. (upper critical temperature is 118° F).

Generally, horned lizard activity is bimodal, they are active during two periods of the day, early morning and early evening (the second period may extend further into the evening). Because of the low morning temperatures during March and April, activity tends to be unimodal with primary activity in the mid to late afternoon.

I do not know if *Phrynosoma* return to their winter burrow during the first weeks of arousal, but the high energy costs of digging a

deep burrow to withstand cold night temperatures combined with the emaciated state of emerging lizards suggests that this behavior may occur. Homing capabilities could also allow *Phrynosoma* to return to relatively permanent ant nest locations.

I encourage all HLCS members to visit local parks that have suitable horned lizard habitat: open country with loose soil, rocks, or sand and scrubby vegetation including patchy grasses, mesquite and cacti — remember, activity will probably be limited to afternoon hours until temperatures increase.

If you see a horned lizard, please contact me at 499-0158. Leave your name and number if you get the answering machine! ▲

References:

- Behler, John L., and F. Wayne King. 1979. The Audubon Society field guide to North American reptiles and amphibians:513-514.
- Bigony, Mary-Love. 1981. When was the last time you saw a horned lizard? Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine 39(2):28-31.
- Pianka, Eric R., and William S. Parker. 1975. Ecology of horned lizards: a review with special reference to *P. platyrhinos*. Copeia 1975(1):141-162.
- Potter, George E., and Bentley Glass. 1931. A study of respiration in hibernating horned lizards, *P. cornutum*. Copeia 1931(3):128-131.



Illustration by Hal Irby

Logo Entry Deadline: Tuesday, May 14!

We encourage anyone interested to submit a logo design for our Society. This logo will be used for all surveys, ads, announcements and our newsletter. Please help us — the more ideas we see, the better. Your entry can be a rough sketch, a layout or a finished logo design. Our logo should have two parts:

1. **The name** (Horned Lizard Conservation Society). This can be done in type, script, calligraphy or letraset art type.
2. **An image (icon) of a horned lizard.** This illustration should be immediately recognizable to the public-at-large as being a horny toad. The artwork can be an illustration or a modified photograph.

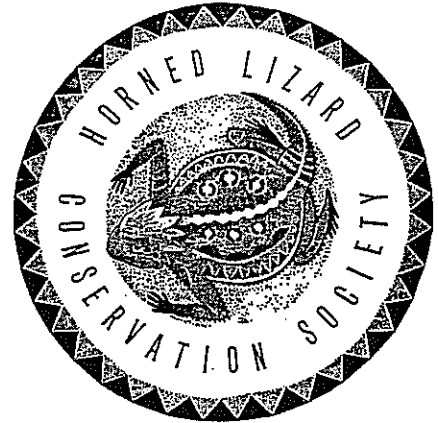
If you have any ideas or can help us, please call or write! Steve Austin, c/o Grey Matter Design, 2003 Oakglen Drive, Austin, Texas 78745, phone (512) 441-1266, home — (512) 371-7066. ▲

THANK YOU to all who submitted designs for T-shirts. We couldn't use them all this time, but your idea may be used later.

T-Shirt Designs Completed

A number of great T-shirt ideas were submitted and an exquisite design created by Mark Lind (at right) has been chosen to be printed up on the first batch of T-shirts. The design will be printed in brown ink on a large, white, 100% cotton Hane's T-shirt. Shirts are \$9.95 each, plus \$1.95 shipping. Send requests to the P.O. Box, or call Steve Austin (see logo article for his number).

Two additional designs have been prepared and are ready to print as soon as we have some orders for them. Art for the "Wanted" T-shirt was produced by Hal Irby. ▲



Design by Mark Lind.



Illustration by Hal Irby



I'm a Horny Toad Lover!

Bart's Notes —

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is at a very critical point in its development these days. With our newly proposed bylaws, our upcoming June election and the three-city blitz, we could make or break this organization. For those of you not familiar with what I'm talking about, let me briefly explain. The first, temporary board of directors, Deborah Denner, George Perry, and I, have come up with a draft of our bylaws which were passed out at the last meeting. It attempts to establish a formal structure with two levels of organization, national and local.

Pursuant to these bylaws two elections are planned, one national by mail-out ballot and one local at our June meeting. Meanwhile, Deborah, George, Lynn Virta and I plan to fly in my little, private plane to San Antonio, Houston and Dallas on

the evenings of April 10, 16, and 17. The plan is to repeat the huge success we had here in Austin at our first meeting. I can remember the butterflies in my stomach during the days before that meeting. There are three times as many flitting around as I contemplate this three-city blitz!

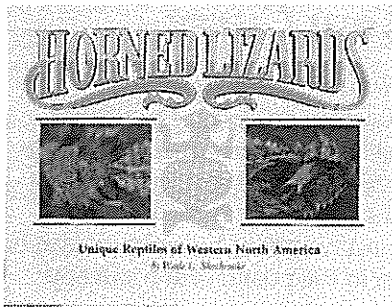
I'm getting married on April 21 and my fiancée said "I think it would have been better if you'd at least discussed it with me. After all it is the very week before the wedding." Well, what can I say? I very well *may* be trying to do too much. I may not be able to get arrangements made to do all this. We plan to design and sell T-shirts, sign up new members, start new chapters. I don't know . . .

On the other hand, I have a tremendous personal desire to *do something* to bring horned lizards back to Texas in something like the numbers

they enjoyed in the 1950's. When I talk to others in our organization I sense the same passionate desire. There are members of this society who have averaged twenty hours a week working for the return of horned lizards. I don't know what the future holds, but I want to move as boldly and decisively as I can bring myself to move (without losing the woman I love or my job).

I can't help noticing that some of our most enthusiastic early members have apparently dropped out. One thing all of us can do is to encourage our friends and fellow members to keep coming to the meetings and continue to work on committees and to volunteer for projects. Don't get discouraged! Don't say to yourselves that your contribution is not needed. We can do it. As God is my witness, we *shall* bring back the horny toads.

— Bart Cox



HORNED LIZARDS:
Unique Reptiles of Western North America
 by Wade C. Sherbrooke

48 pages, 11 x 9 1/2" paperback

\$4.95 (plus \$1.95 shipping and handling)

- Numerous full color illustrations
- How to identify the different species
- History, life cycles and habits
- An excellent resource for learning about the horned lizard – easy-to-understand language

Send check or money order to the Society post office box.

Bill Davis Reports — Notes on the Last Meeting

I was late for the start of our March meeting, but Bart was even later. I used my job as an excuse . . . Bart used a sandstorm. Go figure. Anyway, Wendy Donaldson was giving a report on her committee's progress. The Propagation and Research committees did combine forming 4 sub-committees: Survey, Literature, Habitat Concerns and Current Research. The key word here, simplify. A lot of good stuff reported. A conglomeration of all Toad articles is being amassed. Updates to follow. Horny toads started coming out in late March, early April and will be cruising for babes till around June. Should two horny toads find each other for that special soul filled relationship, they can expect "dependant" deductions on their taxes from May to July. Note: It is illegal in some areas to watch the actual breeding, like Georgetown.

Survey sheets are available for passing out. Wendy is very interested in compiling as many eyewitness reports on horny toad sightings as possible. An interesting question was brought up. Do horny toads have a home that they come and go to . . .

I Remember When . . .

by C. A. Schutze

The Texas Horned Toad is not the only "critter" to have virtually disappeared from the Central Texas scene.

Before Austin's post-WW II development the Texas Spotted Racing Lizard and the Texas Fence Swift were common throughout town. A variety of the Collared Lizard could be found in the Oak Hill area. The Texas Alligator Lizard frequented the hillsides of Zilker Park along the river. There was a colony of Zebra-tail lizards in the old gravel pit where the Austin Nature Center is now located.

There were spotted racers around Memorial Stadium and Clark Field, the old baseball park north of the Stadium. Horned toads could be found on almost every fairway of the Austin Country Club golf course, later to become Hancock. Best "hunting" was where Hancock Shopping Center is now located.

As is obvious, man and his development of Austin are the root cause of the disappearance of most of these animals. There is concrete where there was once sand for burrows. The red ants have been exterminated. There are streets that divide the area into little squares and traffic that kills whatever it hits or rides over.

other than during hibernation? My experience in west Texas says no. Does anyone have factual info on the subject? There is also a call for someone who is in the office supply business. We need envelopes!! and other items. There are none to steal where I work. I'm sure Wendy's group could use donated stamps, stationery, etc.

Bartman and company plan on going to San Antonio, Dallas and Houston to see if there's enough interest in our horny buddies to start up conservation groups in those cities. I know we all hope there's as much interest in horny toad conservation elsewhere as we have here in Austin.

The afore mentioned trips led to a push for at least 1 kind of T-shirt to have and to show or sell. Thanks to some generous folks who will front some bucks, there should be some T-shirts for our cause by the

The Texas Tortoises could once be seen by the thousands as they migrated across the highways in South Texas. Their slaughter by traffic was self-evident. They are now among the endangered species.

There have been some survivors; the green Anole that stays hidden in shrubbery and the secretive skink or ground lizard. These are fewer in number where there are cats.

There are even some newcomers. The Mediterranean Gecko is now common throughout Austin though seldom seen because of its nocturnal habits. This little lizard was introduced into the United States in the port areas of Miami, New Orleans, and Houston and has now spread throughout much of Florida, Louisiana and Texas.

The fire ant should not be overlooked. It has had an impact on all wildlife wherever it has become established.

By observing what has disappeared and what has survived we may be able to get a better answer to what happened to the horny toad. ▲

C. A. Schutze was born in Austin and has had an interest in herpetology since the mid 1930's.

San Antonio meeting. Steve Austin is the man to contact on T-shirt and logo designs.

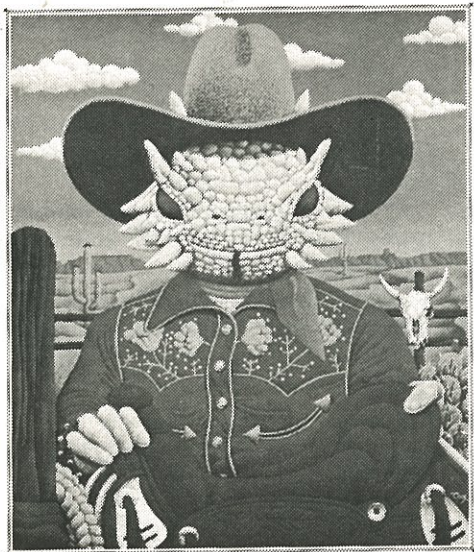
More news. Marcia Jenkins will be organizing the newsletter. Seems George Perry is designing a Program. "Like, for a play?" I ask, No, as in computer database. Sounds to mental for me.

Since we are a non-profit we are looking for people who can organize fund raisers. Even the free mail out newsletter will have to stop soon to non-paying members. Com'on, who can't come up with 10 bucks for this literary masterpiece.

Bart needs help filling out the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization forms. Too many big words. Any help to Bart would be Greatly appreciated by our group.

For our next meeting we will be discussing and voting on By-Laws. I vote yes! ▲

North Note
July 7, 1988



About the Artist — Tom Curry

Tom Curry, who works out of his Prickly Pear Studio in west Austin, has his work published both nationally and internationally in such publications as *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Texas Monthly*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. His beautifully textured, highly stylized paintings are created in richly colored acrylics on masonite and canvas.

Curry, 45, is a native of Coleman, Texas and graduated from the University of North Texas. He moved to Austin in

1976 and was an art director at the University of Texas. The rugged west Texas environment and wide open spaces of his childhood have had a profound influence on the subject matter of his work, as can be seen in the poster of the cowboy horned toad.

At our very first meeting, Susan Curry, Tom's wife, brought a number of the horny toad posters which Bart auctioned off at the meeting for an average of \$30 each. The money raised from the posters gave us the first funds with which to start operating. The Currys have now donated 20 additional posters which will be used to generate additional funds. The poster was originally printed for use as a promotional piece by a paper company, so the posters we have now are the last ones available. Susan will be working with the Fundraising Committee on future projects, and her expertise will be greatly appreciated!

Many thanks to the Currys for their generous support!

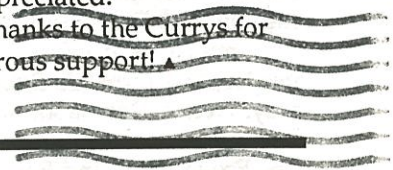
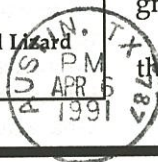
Newsletter Input

Please help build this newsletter! We need articles, graphics, maps etc. Send to Marcia Jenkins, P.O. Box 122, Austin, Tx 78767. Articles of more than 100 words must be: (1) typed originals, or (2) provided on a Mac or PC disk. Deadline for articles is first day of the month. Questions? Call me at 454-7778 weekdays or 512-321-7579 eves.

Please Join Us NOW!

- Students - \$10 • Subscribing - \$10 (newsletter only)
- Regular - \$25 • Contributing - \$50

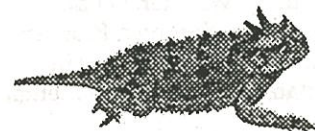
Mail fees along with Name, Address, Phone Number and comments to: Horned Lizard Conservation Society, P.O. Box 122, Austin, Texas 78767



Horned Lizard Conservation Society

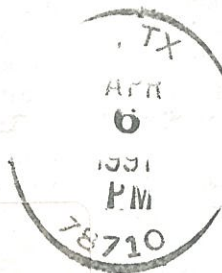
P.O. Box 122
Austin, Texas 78767

Dedicated to Conserving Horned Lizards Throughout North America



Dicie Anderson → 323-2710

Ms. Joyce T. Snodgrass
10509 Jean Drive
Austin, TX 78753



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836-7695

To North + others

Do you know of any sales or consignment in Horned Lizards?

Herpanet

Spoken
How does the Pet Trade Work?