

Our purpose is to document and publicize the values and conservation needs of horned lizards, to promote horned lizard conservation projects, and to assist with horned lizard management initiatives throughout their ranges.

Volume 22, Issue No. 3

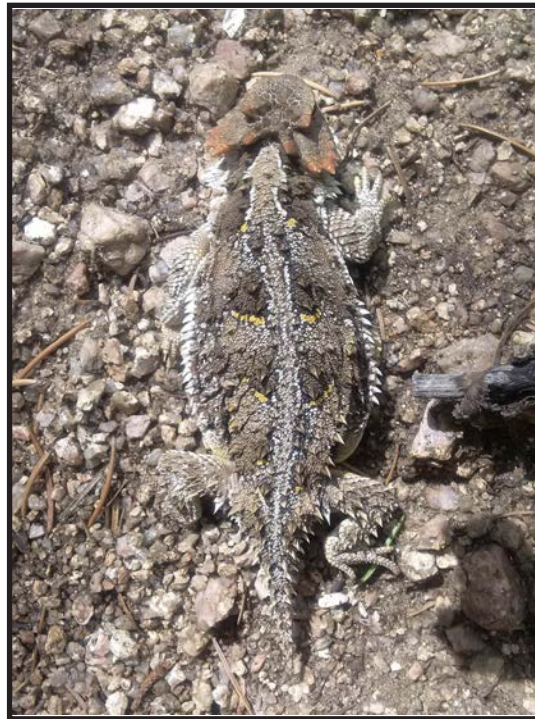
AUGUST 2017

Sighting of a Horned Lizard Near Albuquerque, New Mexico

By Steve Marshall

I always remain hopeful for an encounter with a horned lizard. On August 20 at mid-day I met an astonishingly friendly horned lizard at about 8,700' as I hiked up to the Sandia South Peak near Albuquerque, New Mexico. I spent more than an hour with the fine creature; he/she was on my palm or knee for more than 30 minutes. Not for one second did I restrain or obstruct him/her.

Aside from scrambling off the path to a more sheltered spot behind a weed as I approached, the lizard barely moved as I gradually move closer and positioned my phone-camera nearer. Eventually I decided to try stroking his back. He responded in a manner that seemed positive. Finally, I gen-



tly moved him onto my palm and picked him up. I was interested in how responsive the lizard was to a light stroke down the spine or along the outer edges of his back. Some of the images highlight the change.

He finally hopped off my knee a few minutes after another hiker came along and was surprised to see an old guy sitting beside the path with a horned lizard on his knee. I regret allowing my attention to be diverted!

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State Reptile

www.hornedlizards.org

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GOT NEWS? FOR THE PHRYNOSOMATICS NEWSLETTER THAT IS...

*Send your photos (with captions),
cartoon, artwork, poems, or articles
for the newsletter to Leslie Nossaman
at poppies14@comcast.net today!*



Old Rip Calling...

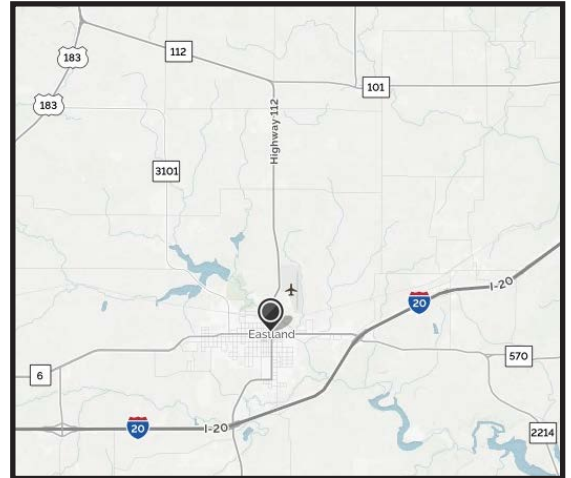
by Bill Brooks

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society has hosted a booth at Eastland's Old Rip Festival for years. The festival is always on the first Saturday in October and is a quintessential small town festival. There is a wonderful parade with marching bands and blaring fire trucks. If you like old cars, they are there. Kids have a carnival to enjoy. All kinds of food booths are represented. (I like the tacos in the morning and BBQ later on in the day.)

Civic organizations all have booths selling home made goods. All types of crafts are proudly presented for sale. Local bands play on the courthouse steps.

The festival wraps around the ornate Eastland Courthouse so it's easy to find the little glass window that looks onto Old Rip himself in blissful repose in his simple casket. (If you don't know the story of Old Rip, the most famous horned toad in Texas, look it up. It's a great Texas yarn.)

The HLCS takes all our t-shirts, jewelry, books, bumper stickers and other merchandise. We have a good time with friends and enjoy some great people watching while making some money for the Society. Last year I was there with Jim and Bette Armstrong. Bette brought her cute hat puppets that we all wore. Wade Phelps,



head of the Horny Toad Club in Kenedy drove up and brought the life-sized horned lizard costume Bette used years ago when she lived in Eastland.

I hope you will consider joining us at the booth on Oct. 7, 2017. Contact Bill Brooks if you would like to help: b.brooks@utexas.edu.



Unscramble the Words

All these words are found somewhere in this issue of *Phrynosomatics*.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1) DRAZIL | 1) _____ |
| 2) STICRONOPHYSAM | 2) _____ |
| 3) DREWLOWFLI | 3) _____ |
| 4) STALNEDA | 4) _____ |
| 5) GNART | 5) _____ |
| 6) ASTEX | 6) _____ |
| 7) TRECOSOVANNI | 7) _____ |
| 8) CRAREESH | 8) _____ |
| 9) NOJNOSH | 9) _____ |
| 10) STUNAI | 10) _____ |

ANSWERS PAGE 5

Texas Horned Lizard Making a Comeback From the Brink

This is a reprint from an article written by Athena Hessong originally published in the Texas Hill Country online magazine (TexasHillCountry.com) on June 1, 2017 in their Nature Section. The Phrynosomatics Editor would like to thank Athena and the Editor-in-Chief Shannon Salas and Erin Baxter CEO at Texas Media Group for permission to reprint this article.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Texas named the Texas horned lizard, also known as the Texas horned frog or even the “horny toad,” as the state reptile. Due to its low numbers across the state, conservation groups consider it a threatened species. In recent years, though, the Texas horned lizard seems to be surging back, thanks to the efforts of some dedicated individuals.

Though it looks like a toad or a frog, the Texas horned toad is actually a lizard. The round body gives this reptile its alternative names. As unusual as it looks, this is not a creature to cross. When cornered, it shoots blood from near its eyes, creating a

frightening sight that effectively scares away predators. Those with an aversion to ants love horned lizards as harvester ants account for the majority of their diet. This diet, though, may have contributed to their demise.

Once, the Texas horned lizard flourished across the entire state. People saw this reptile so often that Texas Christian University chose this unusual creature as its school mascot. Today, it’s rare for anyone in the eastern part of the state to see one of these lizards, and sightings in the central and western portions have decreased since their peak in the

1950s. Though experts have suggested many reasons for this decline, the exact cause remains a mystery.

Several groups currently work diligently to restore the Texas horned lizard’s numbers today. The Horned Lizard Conservation Society spreads information on how citizens can help preserve the lizards’ habitats. The Texas Parks and Wildlife encourages citizen-scientists to do counts of horned lizards in their areas. This helps experts to identify where the lizards continue to survive. The Fort Worth Zoo has one of the only breeding programs for this

reptile. It produced 200 new lizards since 2005. A private landowner, working with the Fort Worth Zoo and Texas Parks and Wildlife, allowed 13 Texas horned lizards born in captivity to be released on his property. Those working to-

gether in this program hope the released Texas horned lizards will flourish in their new home.

Though the Texas horned lizard has not returned to its previous numbers, the efforts of scientists and volunteers help to

keep this reptile to move further from its threatened status. Even though it may take years before the horned lizard loses its threatened status, conservation efforts today are helping it to move into that direction in the future.



Coloring Page

The artist left out my favorite food--harvester ants. Can you add a few before you color?



Art work from supercoloring.com

More Fun Booth Sitting at Nature Nights

By Bill Brooks

Julie Graham, the Education Coordinator at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX always gives us plenty of time to get ready or our booth for Nature Night. She emailed me in December of 2016 to invite us to the Reptiles/ Birds of Prey Nature Night on June 8, 2017. I wish more organizations would have someone like Julie who contacts us well in advance, sees to our needs, and keeps the communication lines open.

I guess that's why the Horned Lizard Conservation Society keeps coming back and supporting this exciting free Austin community event. This year 1,531 people attended.

I talked Julie into giving us 3 ta-

bles for the 5 Larry Wisdom displays we brought. We also gave out our info sheets and our ever popular horned lizard masks. This year we even sold a few t-shirts. I never bring HLCS sales goods unless I have plenty of people to keep an eye on things. This year I sent out an email to Austin HLCS members and several stepped forward to help.

Bill Davis came to work the booth. The last time I saw Bill was at our booth a year ago. Bill was at our very first organizational meeting back in November 1990. He was our very first head of merchandise. He shepherded us through the first 10 years of sales.

Amy Trost and her daughter Catie also came to lend a hand. For many years Amy has dealt

with our Austin Post Office Box, which is no small task. Both of them are great answering questions and Catie, I discovered, has a talent with sales.

Lastly Tanya Philips and her husband Chuck Reburn came to help. These folks have kindly hosted several horned lizard surveys at their vacation home in West Texas. Tanya is a past secretary and our current web guru. She watches over and updates our website. Both Tanya and Chuck are beekeepers. (Tanya is a published author on the subject.) They brought me some of their wonderful raw honey. Yummy.

The HLCS booth at the Wildflower Center was well taken care of this clear not too muggy night. A fun time was had by all.



Photo of the Booth (Photo by Bill Brooks).



Bill Davis and Catie Trost at the HLCS booth. (Photo by Julie Graham).



What is the Value of Being a Member of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society?

By Leslie Nossaman

If you have ever held a horned lizard in your hand or seen them in the wild, you would understand the value of working towards its conservation. It just feels good to try and protect the future of these lizards. They are mean looking and are covered in horns but somehow still seem cuddly.

As kids, many of us were lucky enough to hold them and turn them on their back and rub their tummy, and they

would just go to sleep in your hand.

By becoming a member, you will receive the quarterly newsletter which has articles about what people are doing to conserve the horned lizard with ideas on how you can help. There are also scientific articles on lizard research. The regional chapters also have activities that you will hear about such as art shows and surveys to look for the horned lizard. In the newsletter are announcements of

horned lizard surveys which you will be invited to and wildlife conservation expos. The articles are written by children and adults. And there are pictures of the horned lizard too.

Your membership donation goes to paying for the newsletter printing and mailing, funding research grants, conservation handout printing, and funding trips to expos among other conservation activities. We toadally need your support!



Looking for HLCS Leaders

By Leslie Nossaman

We are still looking for volunteers for Treasurer, President-Elect, and Newsletter Graphics Editor. Without these officers it will be difficult to offer the services our members have come



to enjoy and assist in horned lizard conservation for the long term. Please contact Jared (jaredansley@gmail.com) if you know of someone who might be interested in helping by joining the Board of Directors.



Horned Lizard Research Grant 2018 Application

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is dedicated to protecting horned lizards by documenting and publicizing the values and conservation needs of horned lizards, promoting horned lizard conservation projects, and assisting with horned lizard management initiatives. Towards those ends, the HLCS annually sponsors research that has direct conservation applications. To learn more about the society and past grants, go to

<http://www.hornedlizards.org/>.

We will be offering grants again in 2018. In the past, priority has been given to projects that have direct conservation implications, including public education.

To apply, send a proposal detailing the goal of the study, the rationale for it including relevance to conservation of horned lizards, and how your work would benefit from this opportunity. The pro-

posal may not exceed 1000 words. Also include a preliminary budget with any other funding sources available or received for your project. In addition, send a short resume or CV (up to 3 pages) for the lead applicant and have a single letter of reference sent to Monty Criswell: mcrisw1@gmail.com. The deadline is January 1, 2018. The decision will be announced by January 31, 2018.





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PLEASE JOIN US! Students/Seniors: \$10; Regular: \$25; Contributing: \$50; Corporate: \$250; Lifetime: \$300
Families: \$25 for the first person and \$10 for each additional member
HLCS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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