

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.

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AUGUST 2008

The Longhorn: Texas Horned Lizard

By Don Swann, Kevin Bonine, and Roger Repp

When most herpetologists think of Tucson, we think of the Sonoran Desert, or the Sky Islands that rise up from the desert floor. But our great herpetological diversity results from the Chihuahuan Desert as well. This grand desert, the largest in North America, includes the Rio Grande Valley, much of southern New Mexico, western Texas, and eastern Mexico well down towards Mexico City. But the Chihuahuan Desert also stretches west into Arizona, and many of the reptiles and amphibians associated with it can be found around Tucson.

The Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) is one of these Chihuahuan species that occurs just east of town. The largest and most colorful of Arizona's six species of horned lizards, it is distinguished by large dark dorsal blotches surrounded by white, twin dark stripes radiating from each eye, and a prominent white stripe running the length of its back.



Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) north of Mescal, Arizona.
Photo by Roger A. Repp.

All of the horned lizards seen in the city of Tucson are Regal Horned Lizards (*Phrynosoma solare*), but most of the other Arizona species are not far away. For example, the Greater Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandes*) is found in all of the nearby Sky Islands, just above the desert floor, while the Desert Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*), a Sonoran Desert species, is (or was) found in valley bottom areas west of town.

Description and natural history

The Texas Horned Lizard reaches up to 5 inches (130 mm) in snout-vent length and is "particularly flat" (Brennan and Holycross, 2006). Like the Regal Horned Lizard, it has long spikes

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Upcoming Events

Horned Lizard Survey

Midland & Odessa, TX • August 9 - 10, 2008

Austin Herp Survey

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge
Travis & Williamson counties • August 16, 2008

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The Longhorn: Texas Horned Lizard — continued from page 1

at the back of its head, two of which protrude beyond the others. Unlike the Regal, the horns do not touch each other at the base. It is hard to confuse this species with any other horned lizard due to the long spikes (the name *cornutum* means horn in Latin), prominent colors, and large size.

Not surprisingly, individuals of this species eat ants. Various studies have looked at how large a percentage of their diet is made up of ants, and the results indicate that it can be high (up to 85%) but is often lower. Pianka and Parker (1975) examined 351 individuals and found that ants were 69% of frequency and 61% of volume in the diet, but they also eat a variety of beetles, grasshoppers, and other insects.

Texas Horned Lizards lay eggs, up to about 50 per clutch, and hatchlings in this part of the country are first seen in June through September (Ballinger 1974, Degenhardt et al. 1996). Like many horned lizards, they can squirt blood through their eyes, an interesting anti-predator behavior (Sherbrooke and Middendorf, 2001). Price (1990) presents a comprehensive overview of the biology of this species.

Distribution near Tucson

Texas Horned Lizard territory lies beyond the gateway between the Rincon and Santa Rita mountains where the elevation rises, the Sonoran influence tapers off, and the Chihuahuan influence begins. Records of this species on the western edge of its range are not common in this area, but for the past few years a number of us have stopped to look at horned lizards whenever we can and have been rewarded for our effort.

At 1710 h on 19 September 1997, one of us (Roger Repp) photographed a *P. cornutum* one

mile north of Mescal, Arizona, in Cochise County (photo on front page). Mescal is the small town north of 1-10 before the highway descends into Benson. At 1637 on 7 June 2006, two of us (Kevin Bonine and Don Swann) observed a *P. cornutum* north of Mescal on the road into Happy Valley, on the east side of the Rincon Mountains. This lizard was located approximately 0.5 miles north of the turnoff to Old Tucson Studios east, and we shot a large number of photos of it before releasing it (photo on this page). Our observations are not historically unique, but are close to the extreme western records of *P. cornutum* in Arizona. Maps in Price (1990), Brennan and Holycross (2006), and Stebbins



Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) north of Mescal, Arizona.
Photo by Kevin E. Bonine.

(2003) show the species range just touching Pima County (south of Tucson, the species also reaches into eastern Santa Cruz County). Robert Bezy (personal communication) collected a voucher specimen (UAZ 56020) from the Mescal area, and Klauber (1939) recorded it from nine miles west of Benson (very near Mescal and the Pima County line). During a recent inventory of the Whetstone Mountains, the species was found only on the eastern side of the range (D. Turner, personal communication).

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P. cornutum thus has a place in the interesting biogeography of herpetofauna in the 100-mile circle around Tucson. As noted, most of the range of the species is to the east in the Chihuahuan Desert of New Mexico and Texas. *P. cornutum* shares the western edge of its range with several other species associated with this desert, including the Western Hognosed Snake (*Heterodon nasicus*) and the New Mexico Threadsnake (*Leptotyphlops dissectus*), which also apparently occur just east of Tucson, but not in town. A few other species associated with the Chihuahuan Desert, such as the Great Plains Skink (*Eumeces obsoletus*), do occur widely to the northwest of Tucson and one species, the Desert Box Turtle (*Terrepenne ornata*), may range west into the Tucson Basin – but that is a complicated story to be told another day.

In the case of the Texas Horned Lizard, we are not aware of any records closer to the east side of Tucson than Mescal. It surely would be interesting to know whether this species slips into Cienega Creek or the Rincon Valley, or even if it is found further north along the San Pedro River.

The first Texas Horned Lizard specimen known to science was apparently collected by Lewis and Clark and brought to President Thomas Jefferson (Degenhardt et al., 1996).

Wade Sherbrooke (1990) observed this species drinking during rainstorms in a unique way, by arching the back and allowing water to drain through channels between the scales directly into the mouth.

Texas Horned Lizards enjoy no special status in Arizona except that, like all horned lizards, they cannot be collected and sold into the pet or curio trade. The species has been introduced widely on the east coast, and populations have persisted in Florida and South Carolina for decades (Price 1990). Texas Horned Lizards seem to be doing well in southeastern Arizona, though valley development east of Tucson is no doubt affecting their habitat and will continue to do so. However, this species is declining in significant portions of its eastern range, at least in part due to the invasion of the introduced red fire ant (Price, 1990).

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Recent Publications of Interest

By Wendy Hodges

For a more complete list of citations, please see “scientific literature” on our website: www.hornedlizards.org. We are up to 424 references and constantly adding more. If you know of any not listed, please send citation information to: references@hornedlizards.org. If you can include an electronic copy of the article with permission to post on the website, we will include the article online.

Lahti, Megan E. and Daniel D. Beck. 2008. Ecology and Ontogenetic Variation of Diet

in the Pigmy Short-Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*). *American Midland Naturalist* 159 (2), pp. 327 – 339.

Mathies, Tom, and Daniel J. Martin. 2008. Overwintering Site Selection by Short-horned Lizards (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*) in Northeastern Colorado. *Journal of Herpetology*

Sherbrooke, Wade C. 2008. Antipredator responses by Texas Horned Lizards to two snake taxa with different foraging and subjugation strate-

gies. *Journal of Herpetology*. 42(1): 145-152.

Sherbrooke, Wade C. and Clayton J. May. 2008. *Phrynosoma solare*, *Crotalus* Envenomation. *Herpetological Review*. 39 (1): 90-91.41:163–171.

Wack, Corina L., Stanley F. Fox, Eric C. Hellgren, and Matthew B. Lovern. 2008. Effects of sex, age, and season on plasma steroids in free-ranging Texas horned lizards (*Phrynosoma cornutum*). *General and Comparative Endocrinology* 155:589-596.



Calling a Creative Genius!

By Lee Ann Linam

HLCS recently purchased the die-cut machine used in the past to create the foam horned lizard bookmarks and figurines designed by Bette Armstrong. These items are popular sales items both inside and outside HLCS and are great for educational venues.

If you are looking for a relaxing way to help HLCS from your own home and would be interested in using the die-cut machine to make these items for HLCS, then please contact Lee Ann Linam (lalinam@wimberley-tx.com; 512-847-9480).



Bookmark shown in picture above; figurine shown in picture to the right. Photos by Fannie Messec.



Horned Lizard Survey in Midland and Odessa

By Joyce Roach

Join HLCS for a hunt and survey in West Texas at the invitation of Burr Williams at the Sibley Nature Center, Midland, Texas, and Stan and Ann Smith at the Barr Ranch Retreat, Odessa, Texas. It is scheduled for August 9 and 10, 2008. Both Texas horned lizards and roundtail horned lizard can be found in the area!

Saturday, August

9th: Arrive 7:00 am

at Sibley Nature Center for the

hunt; Joyce Roach speaks at the Cen-

ter at 11:00 am, "Horned Lizards: Fact, Fiction, and Folklore;" Cathy Hoyt of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute talks at 1:30 pm on hummingbirds and pollinators. An additional hunt is scheduled in the evening.



Burr Williams who works at the Nature Center declares that directions to Sibley are easy. "I imagine all of your folks will be coming from the east. Get off I-20 at the first Midland exit (Business 20, or old Hi-way 80) and go to the first stoplight (Fairgrounds Road) and turn right. Go north on Fairgrounds about 3 miles. A big plant nursery is on the right, and a golf course is on the left. There you will find Wadley Avenue (only going west) Turn left on Wadley and go to the first paved road ("Sibley Circle" into Hogan Park.) Our building is right on that corner, with a rock and wrought-iron fence around a native plant garden in front of the building." The phone number to the Sibley Nature Center is 432-684-6827. Their email is bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org. Their web-

site is www.sibleynaturecenter.org. The address is 1307 E. Wadley, Midland, Texas 79705.

The nature center mission is "... to increase the awareness of the natural and historical environment of the southern Llano Estacado through a broad range of interpretative programs and personal experience." The nature center encourages the region's citizens to be knowledgeable about the flora, fauna, and history of the region. It is open to the public from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Sunday, August

10th: Move to Barr Ranch Retreat (45 minutes south of Odessa). Hunt and/or relax all day. A full lunch will be provided. You are also welcome to camp but there are no amenities. The place is in the wilds of West Texas and there are Roundtails there, on good advice!



The Barr Ranch is 30 miles from Odessa and 35 miles from Midland. On the map (p. 7), note that the airport is on FM 1788 and from the airport it is very simple to drive to the Barr Ranch.

Transportation: Because of the distance to this survey site, HLCS, in cooperation with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will offer group transportation in a van or SUV from the Austin area. (Participants will assist TPWD in their genetics sampling effort for Texas horned lizards.) Transportation cost for HLCS members and their family members will be \$10 each person. Make group transportation reservations with Lee Ann

Linam (lalinam@wimberley-tx.com) by August 2. If there are multiple members traveling from other points of origin, additional carpooling options can be investigated. In addition, Southwest and American Airlines have flights into Midland/Odessa airport.

Lodging: Burr Williams has offered: "Folks with campers or trailers can spend the night in our parking lot. Tent campers can hike back on the trail and look for an open area (no fires, please.) A water faucet can be found at the building, and if needed, I can leave a key with one of the people for access to the building and bathrooms."

Regarding hotels, Plaza Inn is the closest hotel to the nature center. Chain hotels can be found in Midland and Odessa. A block of rooms has been reserved at the La Quinta Inn on Wall Street in Midland for the two nights, at a rate of \$71 plus taxes per night for a room with two double beds. Contact Lee Ann (lalinam@wimberley-tx.com) if you would like to stay at the La Quinta and if you are looking for a roommate. Please be advised that hotels in the Midland-Odessa area tend to stay full, so make your plans early.

Cost: Field trip cost is \$10 per person. Registration fees cover lunch on Saturday and drinks for field excursions. Contact Joyce Roach at jroach35@verizon.net to register. Payment for registration should be mailed to Joyce at PO Box 143, Keller, TX 76244.

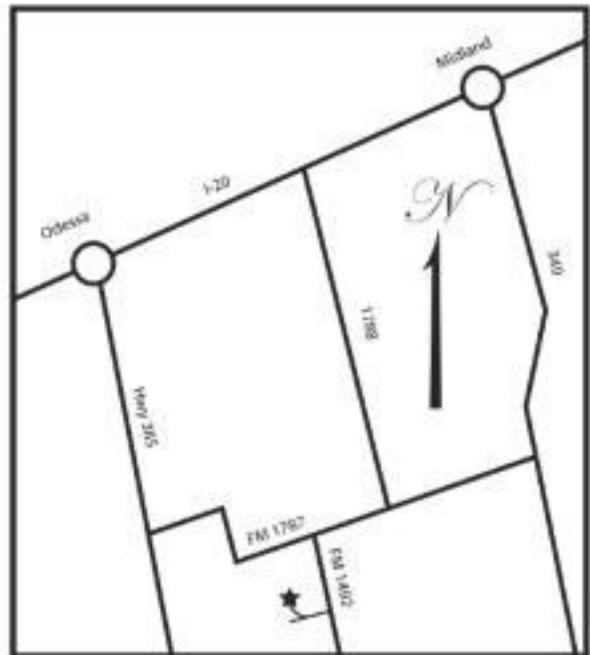
HLCS members from all over are invited to participate. Plan now - August 9th and 10th will be here before you know it!

Directions to Barr Ranch Retreat

Once you reach the intersection of FM 1787 and FM 1492, set your trip odometer as you travel south on FM 1492, approximately 6.5 to 7 miles. The ranch entrance will be on the right side of the road (west) and marked with a black metal sign reading BARR RANCH. Drive directly west down the entrance road (improved dirt road) for approximately 2 miles until you come to a "Y" in the road. Take the right arm of the "Y", traveling 1/4 of a mile, cross the cattle guard on your left and you will see the house. There are two green signs on the entrance road letting you know you are in the right place. The first is 100 yards down the entrance road on your right. The second is on the your right just before the "Y." Since many cell phone providers do not have service this far out, you may find your cell phone not working.

If you have any questions, feel free to email or call.

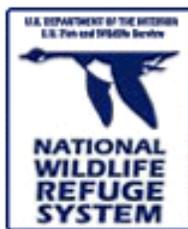
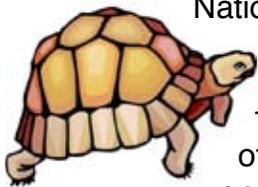
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Austin Herp Survey

By Carolyn Todd

We will have a reptile survey in the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge on August 16 located off of 1431 and Hwy 183 in northwest Travis and Williamson County. We will meet at 9:00 am at the HEB on 1431 and Hwy 183. If you are inter-



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Southwest Region 2

Balcones Canyonlands

National Wildlife Refuge

Interested in joining us please bring snacks, sack lunch and plenty of water. Proper attire for the heat plus long sleeve top and long pants are recommended.

We will be hiking during the heat of the day. The terrain is moderate to hilly. Due to access issues, please RSVP to Carolyn



Todd: carolyn.todd@tea.state.tx.us by August 11. I will send directions to the participants when I receive the RSVPs. Children aged 12 and above are welcome.

To find out more about Balcones Canyonland NWR go to <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/balcones/>.



Amateur Photography



***Phrynosoma solare*, the Regal Horned Lizard**

Photo by Annamarie Saenger

This lizard was seen on 26 April 2008 at 96 Hills in south central Pinal County, Arizona. The surface temperature was near 55 degrees C (130 degrees F!). The open mouth display is probably a heat-stress response to the high temperature.



Roundtail Horned Lizard

Photos by Tanya Phillips

“Here are pics of the Lizard we found on our property, near the driveway. (Terlingua ranch, Texas) We are about an hours drive from Sul Ross University in Alpine. We are on Mt. Williams, west of the Corozones.”



Seeking Nominees for the President-Elect Position

By Wendy Hodges

The Society is seeking a special leader to become this organization's next President. The elected position is technically the President-Elect, but this person assumes the position of President after 2-years. While a total 4-year commitment is difficult for many people to make, it allows someone the opportunity to really make a difference to the society and the conservation of horned lizards that requires time to develop.

The President-Elect's primary function is to plan and execute the society's biennial national meeting. This meeting is scheduled for 2009. Some efforts are currently underway to find the location and set a date. Though spearheaded by our PE, the burden of the meeting is shared among many people. The meeting is an important component of our

organization, but it's also fun for everyone to get together and converse about our favorite topic! What starts at this meeting is often the focus of the Society for the coming year or two.



HLCS recently approved several substantive changes to its By-Laws. It changed a rigid national - chapter structure into what we hope is a more flexible and compact organization that allows local and regional conservation activities throughout

North America without the need to establish formal chapters with additional slates of officers. We hope our next President-Elect will embrace this new approach and run with it.

The society is comprised of dedicated volunteers that are looking for a President to take them to the next level. Our strengths lie in our passion to help protect and share horned lizards with all people and generations to come.

If you would like to harness this passion and contribute to the future of our organization and horned lizard conservation, please consider running for this important office. If you know someone who has the passion and the leadership to help us, please nominate them for President-Elect by sending their name and contact information to: HLCS@hornedlizards.org.



Please renew your annual HLCS membership!!!
HLCS depends on its membership for its conservation and educational presence in the community.

Categories for *annual* memberships include:

Regular	\$25		
Student or Senior	\$10		
Family	\$25	Each additional family member	\$10
Contributing	\$50		
Corporate	\$250		
<i>Lifetime</i> membership	\$300		

The HLCS welcomes contributions in any amount you wish to submit and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Notes from the HLCS Business Meeting

June 6, 2008

By Lee Ann Linam

The meeting was held at the University of Texas J.J. Pickle Campus during the Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation conference.

Treasury - Rollo Newsom provided a treasurer's report. The current balance in the sales account is \$11,599.49. The current balance in the operating account is \$8,402.81. Several major items, including payment of annual storage rental fees, 2008 conservation and research grants, and Board meeting travel expenses are still outstanding. The group recommended that Lee Ann Linam look into the methods of obtaining a financial audit, just as a good operating measure, since one has not been conducted in many years.

Newsletter - Fannie Messec reported that she is looking into options for having the newsletter printed and distributed in a more timely and cost-efficient manner. A discussion was offered as to whether electronic copies of the newsletter should be offered or posted on the website. Since the newsletter is a major benefit of membership it was recommended that older issues be archived on the website and offered to potential members free of charge. In addition, the front page story of each newsletter could be emailed to potential members and posted on the website. Fannie will assess members' interest in receiving electronic copies with Wendy Hodge's assistance. Wendy is looking into a revision of the website and will consider the issue of archiving older newsletters there.

2008 Conservation and Research Grants – Three grants were awarded – one for work on *Phrynosoma cornutum* in Texas and two for work on *P. asio* and *P. taurus* in Mexico. A \$500 check will be awarded to Emily Henry at the PARC meeting. Rollo will confer with Wendy on the best way to deliver the grants to Mexico.

2008 Field Surveys – Carolyn Todd has secured an invitation for HLCS to assist in herp surveys on Balcones Canyonlands NWR on July 12. The Midland-Odessa survey in cooperation with the Sibley Nature Center organized by Joyce Roach is scheduled for August 9-10. The group suggested that Lee Ann look into procuring a vehicle to carpool from the Austin area. Two other invitations, to Matagorda Island and to Terlingua, have been received. Lee Ann will explore the logistics and possible dates.

By-laws Revisions – The revisions proposed in the last newsletter passed unanimously. State chapters will no longer exist, but states and regions will be encouraged to develop local councils to plan local activities.

Nominations – Wendy has secured the nomination of Tanya Phillips of Austin for HLCS secretary and Danny Martin of Colorado for At-large Director. She is still seeking a nominee for President-elect.

Future business – Lee Ann encouraged board members to be considering issues such as setting goals and a budget for HLCS, website revisions, fund-raising activities, and encouragement of state and local councils for the coming year.



National News

President's Message

By Lee Ann Linam

As I started to write this article it suddenly hit me, "This is my last article as President of HLCS!" I gotta admit—I had a sudden moment of joy. And then I had a lingering time of somewhat regretful nostalgia.

It's been an enjoyable, fulfilling, and, yes, full four years. HLCS is composed of some very dedicated people, inspired to give much of themselves for the love of a lizard (or group of lizards...). I have come to admire and enjoy the people who have entered my life through HLCS. We have learned together, explored together, educated together, labored together, laughed together, and even cried together. I appreciate all that you, as a part of HLCS, have done for horned lizards and for me.

The good people of HLCS have accomplished much over the last four years, including a great quarterly newsletter, several memorable field surveys, support of five different research and conservation projects, regular outreach activities, and a superb biennial conference under the leadership of our incoming president, Joyce Roach. Members also voted to reorganize and streamline the structure of HLCS through approval of by-laws amendments offered in the last newsletter.

Most recently, HLCS was an integral part of the 2nd annual Southwestern Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation meeting in Austin in June. I think that our presence and participation there as an exhibitor and in hosting a paper session greatly increased our

visibility to herp conservationists from other states, which I hope will translate into increased interest and support in the future. As notes from that conference become available we hope to be able to share them in the newsletter.

So, I think I'm leaving on a high note. Not that I'll be gone. I know that I could not have helped HLCS move forward over the past four years without the assistance of previous presidents such as Wendy Hodges, Bill Brooks, and Lester Milroy. Their insight, wisdom, and inspiration were invaluable. So, I'll be there to cheer on the new crowd, offer ideas on how to conserve our *Phrynosoma* friends, hopefully organize some fun survey efforts, and continue the horned lizard conversations...



Thanks and Welcome

By Leslie Nossaman



To Lee Ann, the outgoing President - We are so lucky and grateful to have had you

as our president the past two years. Under your leadership we have a new and updated constitution (which was a remarkable achievement), our

grant program was very active, our merchandising process has been reorganized and streamlined, and we have been active in educational programs and field surveys. The Society has had so many exciting events and activities and has flourished under your excellent leadership. We wish you well in your new endeavors.

To Joyce, the incoming President - Welcome! We are thrilled to have you as the next president and can't wait to see what you have planned for the next

two years. We all pledge to



do our best to help the Society to grow even more and to work hard to accomplish

our mission for the conservation of the horned lizard.





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