

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 12, Issue No. 1

FEBRUARY 2007

Horned Lizard Conservation Society Representation at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Wildlife Expo

By Rollo Newsom and Bill Brooks

Again this year, the Horned Lizard Conservation Society had a booth, really a tent, at "Expo," an outdoor faire hosted by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and held on the grounds of their headquarters in south Austin. This took place on October 7 and 8. And, again it was a super success. Our booth was on the main street near the main entrance and we saw literally several thousand people and discussed horned lizards with most of them. We also sold about \$1,000.00 of HLCS goods, so this was a great weekend for the society

The TPWD's Expo provides two exceptionally important opportunities for us in the HLCS. First, it is a tremendous educational event. We do a lot of one-on-one teaching about horned lizards, not always what we think the public should know, but more importantly teaching them what they want to know! We answer questions from folks who grew up with horny toads "all over the place" and from the ever increasing number of unfortunate souls who have never even seen one. We answer questions concerning land management



Bill Brooks is standing behind the display and is answering questions about the horned lizard at the Expo. In the picture, Rollo Newsom is behind Bill's right arm selling T-shirts. Sheri Overton, Linda Weber and Arlene Garey are working the kid's activity table to the right. Photo taken by Leslie Nossaman on October 8, 2006.

practices, superstitions, (Did you ever stop to think - the natural history of the horned lizard is stranger than their folklore.), the importance of "big red aints," and imported fire ants, and why horny toads don't make such good pets and so on and on.

We have interactive displays that are in constant action; we have coloring and ink stamps for the younger folks. We sell hats, t-shirts, and good books for both children and adults. And, for all ages some of the neatest (and cheapest) horned

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lizard jewelry you can imagine. That brings us to the second important opportunity Expo provides the HLCS, it is one of our major fund raising efforts. We did well this year as we nearly always do.

Those of you who do not attend Expo are missing a great festival, good food, (including wild game) demonstrations; training with actual fishing, biking, fire arms, rock climbing, outdoor cooking and the list goes on and on. All kinds of wildlife are on display. You can get a very close look at birds of prey, bats, snakes, alligators, and many other wonderful creatures (including some rather

strange people). And those of you who have not worked our booth are missing the chance to proclaim the virtues of our beloved critter from a high pulpit and to have a great time doing it.

A special thanks goes out to our excellent HLCS EXPO volunteers: Leo Reed, Karen Hobbs, Carolyn Todd, Kris Thorne, Ruthann Panipinto, Chris Masie, Amy Trost, Bill Brooks, Leslie Nossaman, Eva Thomas, Vivian Thomas, Sheri Overton, Linda Weber, Nick Burkhalter, and Arlene Garey. You were all great!



Amateur Photography



Baby Texas Horned Lizard. Photo taken by Diana Fitzgibbons on her land in Val Verde County near Del Rio, Texas. Her son is holding the lizard.



Texas Horned Lizard. Photo taken by Diana Fitzgibbons on her land in Val Verde County near Del Rio, Texas

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

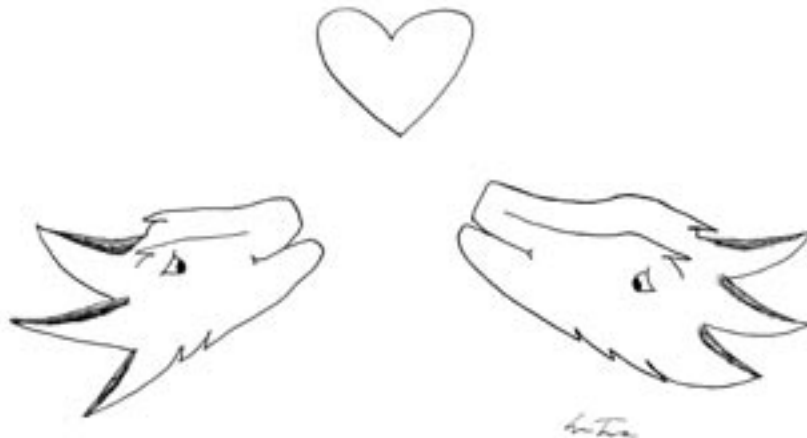
Lifetime membership\$300

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

Neither Wind Nor Rain

By Allan W. Eckert

Hey, looky there! A horney toad
Jus' clum up from his dim abode
An' crawled acrost a field unsowed
Whar only prickly cactus growed.
He come a-waddlin' down th' road
An' tho' the wind done howled an' blowed,
It shore din't stop that horney toad.
The sun was hot, it shined an' glowed,
But heat don't slow no horney toad!
An' purty soon a dark cloud showed
An hid the sun from on the road;
Unfazed, that little critter strode
Along the wind-blown dusty road.
Then rain come hard an' washed the load
Of grit an' grime clear off the road,
An' tho' that water splushed an' flowed,
It couldn't stop ol' horney toad.
Th' air turned cold an' then it snowed,
An' tho' his pace was slightly slowed,
Still on he trudged with head unbowed.
The thought within me bloomed an' growed,
Warn't nuthin' now could change his mode.
By jinks, Ah'm wrong! Wal Ah'll be throwed!
He's stopped hissself along the road.
Ah see it now - shucks, should'a knowed!
He's found hissself a lady toad!



The Horned Lizard in Literature, Music Lyrics, and Movies Contest

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is holding a contest! It is for everyone and anyone, whether you are a member or not. The person who sends us the most references to the horned lizard in literature such as books and poetry (nothing scientific), music lyrics, and movies made for entertainment (no educational TV shows or documentaries) in the approved format will win. The literature and music must be published and in the public domain and the movies must also be in the public domain. This contest would make a good school project.

First prize is a painted set of Texas Horned Lizard family members donated by Tom McCain. Tom has a company named Horny Toad Connection, Inc. which creates and sells life-like horned lizards as figurines and jewelry. His website with pictures is: www.hornedlizardcreations.com. It is also a great website if you would like to see what the different species look like.

Second prize is *Horned Toad Canyon* by Joyce Gibson Roach. This is an illustrated book about a horned lizard and his experiences in the desert.

Third prize is a choice of an HLCS t-shirt or a hat.

Required formats:

Books – Title, ISBN number (optional but nice), author,

chapter, page number, excerpt with the reference
Songs – Title, composer, verse, Album or CD name where it can be found, excerpt with the reference
Poetry - Title, poet, stanza, book or website where it can be found, excerpt with the reference
Movies – Title, director, movie genre, date of release, description of the section of the movie in which the reference is made, any lead actors' names

We will need to have enough information to validate the entries so if you do not provide this information we may not be able to validate.

Two examples are:

Book: *The Red Pony* by John Steinbeck. ISBN number 01401.77361. Chapter III. Page 57. Excerpt: "Jody had seen the thorny crown of a horny-toad moving under the dust of the road. His grimy hand went out and grasped the spiked halo and held firmly while the little beast struggled. Then Jody turned the horny-toad over, exposing its pale gold stomach. With a gentle forefinger he stroked the throat and chest until the horny-toad relaxed, until its eyes closed and it lay languorous and asleep."

Music: Song: "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" by Elton John

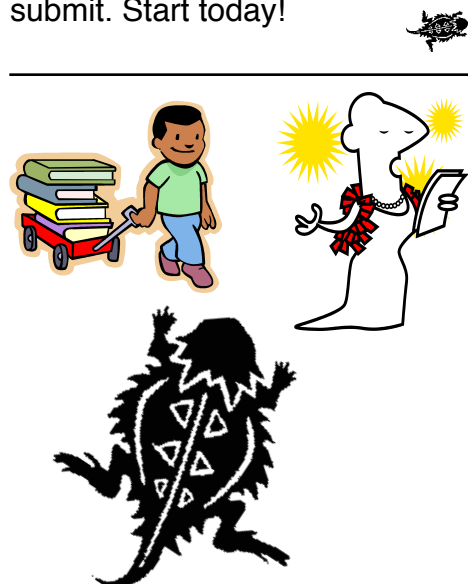
from the Album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. Fourth verse. Excerpt:
"Back to the howling old owl in the woods,
Hunting the horny back toad.
Oh I've finally decided, my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road."

Send entries to Joyce Roach at jroach35@earthlink.net

Contest entries must be sent by April 1, 2007. This should give interested contestants enough time to collect the information and submit it.

Any questions can be sent to Joyce or Leslie Nossaman at poppies14@houston.rr.com. We will then review and validate the submissions then publish results in a later quarterly newsletter.

This is a big contest with big prizes, don't wait until the end to submit. Start today!



The Horned Lizard Working Group Meeting at Windmill Ranch, Texas

By Wendy Hodges

The Horned Lizard Working Group met September 15 – 17, 2006, at the Windmill Ranch, west of Snyder, Texas. The working group was formed in 2005 to bring together regional biologists and land managers and to discuss research priorities for conservation of Texas horned lizards (THL: *Phrynosoma cornutum*). This year's



A picture of a female Texas Horned Lizard at the Windmill Ranch. Taken by Lee Ann Linam on September 16, 2006.

program expanded to include flat-tailed horned lizards (FTHL: *P. mcallii*). We hope to see further expansion in the future.

Eleven speakers from Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Arizona presented recent and ongoing

research related to horned lizards (*Phrynosoma*). Topics included life history, seasonal and daily activity patterns in wild and urban populations of THL, effects of burning and grazing management regimes on THL, citizen monitoring program for THL, and captive care and husbandry of THL at the Ft. Worth Zoo, conservation genetics of the FTHL, GIS model of niche evolution in horned lizards, and management of red harvester ants. A round-table discussion of the importance, necessity and difficulties of reintroducing THL to parts of its former range completed the primary activities of the meeting.

Abstracts for the 2006 meeting can be read online at the HLCS Webpage:
www.hornedlizards.org

Attendees noted that service and support by the staff of the Windmill Ranch was impeccable. Next year's meeting was discussed with board members of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society to coincide with a larger national meeting in Fort



Joyce Roach with a Texas Horned Lizard at the Windmill Ranch. Taken by Lee Ann Linam on September 16, 2006.

Worth, Texas, in mid to late summer.

Next year's meeting will strive to include research efforts on additional *Phrynosoma* species and management and conservation issues related to these lizards. The HLCS also intends to provide small research grants for the 2007 field season, and an announcement should appear on the Society's web site in the near future.

JOIN US and Help Protect the Texas



State Reptile

www.hornedlizards.org

**HORNED
LIZARD
CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

A Published Summary of the Windmill Ranch Meeting

By Bill Brooks

In the Dec. 2006 issue of "Iguana" magazine there is a nice short (1 column) article on the Horned Lizard Working Group meeting at the Windmill Ranch, September 15-17, 2006.

A picture was also published of twelve attendees. Our mission keeps spreading.



Sunset at Windmill Ranch. Taken by Lee Ann Linam on September 16, 2006.

Horned Lizard Literature Watch

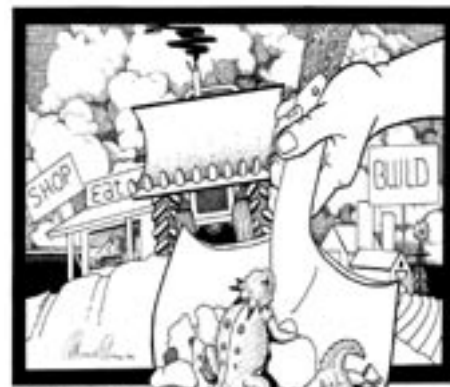
By Bill Brooks

There may be those of you who get (or can get) a copy of the September 2006 edition of "Iguana" magazine, a periodical devoted to the "conservation, natural history, and husbandry of reptiles". In the September 2006 edition, there is a nice selection of historical reprints on Horned Lizards from "Science, New Series". Included in this issue, are:

- "Life Habits of *Phrynosoma*" (no author listed) from the May 1836 issue
- "A Horned Lizard at a High Altitude" by T.D.A. Cockerell from the July 19, 1901 edition

- "A Note on Distinction of the Sexes in *Phrynosoma*" by W.M. Winton in the August 28, 1914 edition
- "An Examination of Blood-ejecting Horned Lizards" by W.M. Winton in the November 27, 1914 edition of "Science"

The editor of the magazine, Gad Perry of Texas Tech University, included a nice little "Editor's Remarks" column and on the back page there was a wonderful full page plug for the HLCS. Please get a copy if you are interested from the International Reptile Foundation, <www.IRCF.org>.



*Dig this:
We live here too!*



Old Rip Fest in Eastland, Texas

By Vivian Thomas and Leslie Nossaman

This festival is to honor the horned lizard named Old Rip. This horned lizard was placed in a cornerstone of the county's third courthouse when it was built in 1897. When the building was demolished in 1928 the cornerstone was opened and the lizard was still alive. It was named after Rip Van Winkle who also went to sleep for a long period of time and then awoke. The lizard got to meet Calvin Coolidge and the story is listed in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. In 1955 the cartoonist Chuck Jones and writer Michael Maltese created a cartoon based on the story called "One Froggy Evening." This character was the inspiration for the Michigan J. Frog who is the current official mascot of the Warner Brothers Television Network. For more on Old Rip you can check out the following website: <http://www.eastlandvisitor.com/oldRipHistory.html>



From left to right - Bill Brock, Eva Thomas, Vivian Thomas, and Leslie Nossaman work the Horned Lizard Conservation Society booth at the Old Rip Fest in Eastland, Texas. The performance stage and the Courthouse are in the background.

You can also check the Phrynosomatics February 2006 newsletter issue for more information. This issue also has scanned images of the actual Eastland newspaper of that time.

This festival happens every year around late September to early October. This year it occurred on October 7. People mostly come from Eastland and neighboring towns. Streets are blocked off around the courthouse to make room for an abundant number of fantastic craft and food booths. There is also a parade which goes down Main Street and crosses in front of the courthouse. The parade this year lasted around an hour and a half.

The Eastland High School Art Club created an 18 foot long horned lizard from wire and painted paper mache'. They had just finished painting it the night before the parade so it is a new float entry. There is a sign on the front that says "Old Rip". It was impressive.



The 18 foot paper mache' horned lizard float created by the Eastland High School Art Club for the Old Rip Fest. Also in the picture from left to right are Vivian and Eva Thomas. The Courthouse is in the background on the right. Photo taken by Leslie Nossaman on October 7, 2006.

Four of us worked the booth and we were kept busy most of the time. We had a table display with simulated horned lizards and their environment. Many people wanted to talk to us about their experiences with horned lizards and why they thought they were not seeing as much today. Two people mentioned they wanted to go on surveys with the conservation group the next time we have one. Some people mentioned places that would make a good place to survey. We took notes and will be following up.

We handed out horned lizard conservation materials and sold hats, bookmarks and stationary. Since our booth was almost in front of the stage, we got to see all the singers and dancers. There was also a very skilled Elvis impersonator who was a local doctor by day.

The festival was a lot of fun and we would highly recommend going next year. Check Eastland's website for the schedule and other information: www.eastlandtexas.com



Sincerest Sympathies ...

By Bill Brooks

Our sincerest sympathies go out to the parents, Fred and Fannie Messec (the HLCS newsletter design editor), brother Scott Messec, sister-in-law Wendy Hodges-Messec (past national HLCS president), brother Trent Messec, and other family and friends of Melissa Messec, who was lost in an auto accident in early September of 2006. Our hearts ache for you all.

On October 3, twelve-year old, Abby Linam (daughter of Gordon and Lee Ann Linam, the national president of the HLCS) was in an auto/ATV accident. She was originally taken to the Austin Children's Hospital and then on October 24, she was transferred to the Warm Springs Hospital in San Antonio for continuing treatment of a head injury. Abby had recovered sufficiently

to be back at the family's Wimberley home for Christmas. We are all wishing for continuing improvements to Abby. If you wish to keep up with Abby's progress, Lee Ann is keeping a blog on Abby's school's web site. You can visit it for the latest updates at <http://www.abbylinam.blogspot.com/>.

Finally, on one of their fall hunting trips, which they love so dearly, John Franks (husband to Cheryl Franks, past TX-HLCS treasurer) fell and broke his hip. We wish John a quick recovery.

PLEASE, Please, please.... will all you HLCS members and friends be careful out there! May the joys of the season be tempered with the losses we have received. Let us appreciate the blessings of each and every day.



Does the Roundtail Horned Lizard Still Occur in Oklahoma?

By Richard Stark

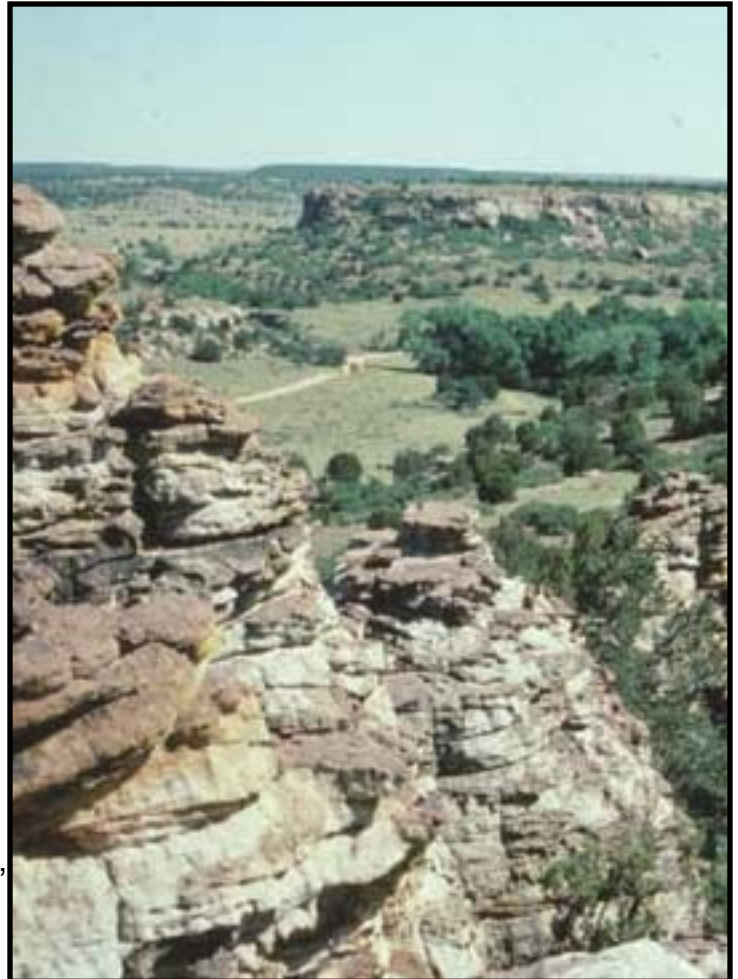
The extreme northwestern corner of the Oklahoma panhandle is a unique Oklahoma ecosystem called the Black Mesa ecoregion (Oklahoma Biodiversity Task Force, 1996). It is the coolest and driest region of the state and is characterized by flat-topped sandstone mesas capped with black, basaltic lava. The highest point in the state is found there.

Ten species of reptiles and amphibians found at Black Mesa are listed by the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory as Rare Oklahoma Vertebrates including the Texas horned lizard *Phrynosoma cornutum*. Additionally, the roundtail horned lizard *P. modestum* is historically reported from the area. This population represents a disjunct population, separated from the rest of its range in Texas and New Mexico by some 250 km. The disjunct population at Black Mesa is known from only two museum records (Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History) and two verified sight records (Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory). The most recent record is from 1990. Nevertheless, personnel at Black Mesa State Park and local landowners of the area have indicated as recently as 2002 that *P. modestum* is seen

within the park and nearby.

This summer will be the third and final field season of an extensive Herp Survey of the Black Mesa area in Oklahoma by Oklahoma State University. Survey methods include utilizing drift fences with pitfall and funnel traps, systematic visual sampling, road cruising, nocturnal surveys at amphibian breeding sites, and opportunistic encounters of reptiles and amphibians. The study also includes radio telemetry on Texas horned lizards. One of the survey priorities is to find the roundtail horned lizard, which has yet to be found during this survey effort (summers of 2005 and 2006).

The OK State Chapter has some funds to cover expenses for food and camping fees for HLCS members interested in helping out with the survey.



Picture of the Black Mesa area

Because the roundtail horned lizard has not been found during this survey, HLCS volunteers are encouraged to focus their efforts on searching for the roundtail horned lizard. Camping at the Black Mesa State Park is available for any interested volunteers. If interested and would like more information, contact Tim Periard or Richard Stark at timothy.periard@okstate.edu or starkkrv@prodigy.net, respectively.



HLCS National News

July 2007 Horned Lizard Conservation Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas

HLCS will host its biennial Horned Lizard Conservation meeting on July 27-29 in Fort Worth, Texas. July 27 will include an activity at the Fort Worth Zoo where they have a horned lizard exhibit (see the *Phrynosomatics* November 2006 issue article named "The Horned Lizard at the Fort Worth Zoo" for more information about the exhibit). July 28 will include presentations on horned lizard biology, conservation, management, and folklore at the alumni center at TCU. The alumni center, which holds a large horned lizard art collection, is not normally reserved for activities, but they are making a special exception for our group.

On Sunday morning, there will be activities at the Fort Worth Nature Center, a proposed site for horned lizard reintroduction, until noon. Then there will be a drive to a ranch west of the Nature Center for wrap-up activities.

Although there will be more information in the May 2007 newsletter issue, we wanted to let you know of the meeting so you could place it on your calendars. This will also be an early call for papers. We are looking for a diverse set of papers from biologists, ranch managers, zoologists, zoo workers, students, teachers, writers, folklorists, Texas Parks and Wildlife personnel, HLCS members, ,,, Contact Joyce Gibson Roach at jroach35@earthlink.net for more information.

In Need of a Membership Chairperson

Do you have a little time to donate to your society? The HLCS is desperately seeking a membership chairperson at the national level to keep track of our members, send out renewal cards, and send the mailing list to the printers before every newsletter. This is your chance to become more involved and help out with this essential job. Please contact Lee Ann Linam <lalinam@wimberley-tx.com> or Bill Brooks <Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu> if you can donate a little time to help with this grand organization. Thank you for your consideration.

Check Your Address Label

Something new has been added to your newsletter address label. Now your membership expiration date is right on your label and easy to check. We hope this little addition helps all our members.



Texas Chapter News

Surveys in Texas

Anyone interested in attending or hosting a horned lizard survey in Texas can contact Ruthann Panipinto at 512-439-9085 or through her email at artgecko20@austin.rr.com. We are currently looking for ideas for spring and summer surveys.





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