

Phrynosomatics

The Newsletter of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society

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.

June/July 1993



HLCS Conference a Success!

Horned lizards were the talk of the day on May 27, 1993 at the Joe C. Thompson Conference Center on the University of Texas at Austin campus. Dr. Wade Sherbrooke brought along 5 carousels of slides of horned lizard images and artifacts he has encountered. The slides were shown prior to the conference. We were welcomed by Dean Robert Boyer from the College of Natural Sciences. Lee Stone, HLCS President, gave an annual Report of the

HLCS describing our successes to date and our potential for future achievements.

Eleven talks were presented on different aspects of horned lizards and conservation. Wade Sherbrooke gave a broad presentation, "All about Horned Lizards." Other topics included: Ecological interactions of horned lizards with other lizard species, managing land for horned lizards, land requirements for a long-term Texas horned lizard population, spatial dis-

tribution of the Texas horned lizard relative to harvester ants, horned lizard conservation and research in Southern California, fire ants, status and notes of the Texas horned lizard, *Phrynosoma cornutum*, in Oklahoma and Texas, and genetic differentiation in the short-horned lizard, *Phrynosoma douglasi*.

One of the most memorable moments was when Joyce T. Snodgrass sang a song she wrote to accompany the curriculum guide the education committee has developed for K-3 students. Carolyn Todd, HLCS Education Chair, presented the curriculum guide to the audience during a session called, "Getting the word out about Horned Lizards: Demonstrations for Teaching Children." Another fun moment was when Wade Sherbrooke told the audience how to catch sand bass using horned lizards to hook them in sandy desert washes!

A great time was had by all. The HLCS is thankful for the help of its co-sponsors, the College of Natural Sciences and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation. And most of all thanks to all who participated and came to the event. •

Upcoming Events

GENERAL MEETING

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Austin Nature Center. Next date is July 13, 1993 at 7:00PM.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

July 7, 1993 at the home of Lee Stone at 7:00 PM. 3503 Lafayette Ave. in Austin. Call Carolyn Todd at (512) 255-6770 for information.

RESEARCH & RECOVERY COMMITTEE

June 29, 1993 and July 27, 1993 at Patterson Labs, Rm 118C at UT in Austin. Call Wendy Donaldson at (512) 499-0158 for information.

SUMMER PARTY!

August 21, 1993 at the home of Mark and Collene Sweeney, 508 Sequoia Spur, Georgetown. Call Collene Sweeney at (512) 863-4779 or 863-0020. (map on p. 7).

Spikey Teaches Kids About Horned Lizards

Horny Toad Song

by Joyce T. Snodgrass

We hide out in the desert and
we shuffle in the sand
And when we soak up sunshine
it feels so very grand

Chorus

They call us horny toads
but we're really HORNED LIZARDS
Soaking up the sun
we're little solar powered wizards

We sit so still and look for ants
Yum! Yum! Yum! (spoken with gusto
and hand movements)
Bugs are lots of fun to eat
And we must catch us some
Sometimes we get thirsty
but we must wait for rain
The water runs along our backs
into our mouths again

(slower, Yawn)

When the sun has gone to bed
It's time to hide
Good Night till tomorrow
Good night!

by Wendy Donaldson

Carolyn Todd, HLCS Vice President for Education, presented the HLCS education curriculum at the May 27, 1993 Annual Horned Lizard Conference. The curriculum guide is the culmination of hard work by the education committee (Carolyn Todd, Steve Austin, Glenda Bell, Joyce T. Snodgrass, and Wendy Donaldson) over the last 5 months.

The curriculum is currently designed for kids in grades K-3. Plans to expand the curriculum through the 7th grades are in progress. The purpose of the curriculum is to familiarize students with the habitat and characteristics of one of Texas' most unusual and threatened animal species, the Texas horned lizard. Activities include a slide show, coloring page of "Spikey," a

"Spikey and the Ants" freeze tag game, and a Horny Toad song.

One teaching session can last 15-45 minutes. It contains information pertinent to Science, Texas History, Fine Art, Geography, Language Arts, and Multicultural studies. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: 1. list the unique physical characteristics of the horned lizard, 2. discuss behaviors such as nesting, hibernating, defense, 3. locate on a Texas map the range of the lizards, 4. list reasons why the Texas horned lizard is threatened and ideas for slowing or halting their decline.

Students will receive a coloring page that was created by Steve Austin. Eight slides will be included with a narrative in the curriculum package. The committee would also like to include Wade Sherbrooke's book, *Horned Lizards, Unique Reptiles of Western North America*. The cost for the package (with out the book) will probably be around \$10.00 unless we can find a corporate or personal sponsor to reduce the cost (the HLCS is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization).

If you are interested in helping the Education Committee, new faces and ideas are always welcome (see p. 1 for meeting time and date).•



Glenda Bell shows a Texas Horned Lizard to three students at the Austin Nature Center.

Photo by Clare Freeman

Pleasanton Youth Initiates Political Process

by Wendy Donaldson

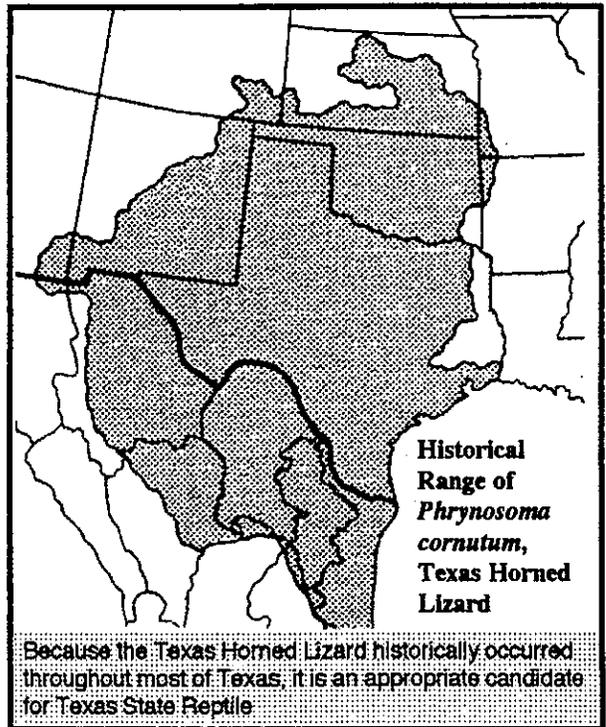
One of HLCS' newest members accomplished what others and I had tried to do for several months—found a willing Texas politician to write a Bill adopting the Texas horned lizard as the state reptile.

Abraham Holland, a ten-year-old Pleasanton, TX resident, wrote a letter to Representative Richard Raymond requesting the Texas horned lizard be named the official State Reptile. Abraham had first met Representative Raymond when he toured the state capitol with his Black Hill-Mesquite 4-H Citizenship Team in March, 1993. Representative Raymond agreed and drafted a resolution which did not quite make it through the Texas Legislature before it adjourned on 31 May 1993.

With help from his mother, Sandra Holland, Abraham is studying Texas horned lizards for his 4-H Wildlife project. Abraham has circulated a letter to the children of Pleasanton ask-

ing them to help him count the horned lizards in their town. He asks they call him so he can count, weigh, sex and measure horned lizards on their property. I met with the Hollands in May and showed them how to sex and measure the total and snout-vent lengths of the lizards and answered many of their questions. The Hollands brought pictures of the horned lizards and information about 20 calls they had received.

Abraham Holland is learning quickly what it takes to study horned lizards. He is a model who other children and adults can learn from. Without Abraham, the HLCS would still be searching for a sponsor in the legislature to sponsor the Texas horned lizard as the Texas State Reptile. He is also collecting vital information about a population of horned lizards that manage to live in a small Texas community. The HLCS challenges other folks to initiate their own horned lizard study in their



area. You can also call Representative Richard Raymond (512-463-0590) to express your desire to adopt the Texas horned lizard as the Texas State Reptile and circulate the HLCS petition to everyone you know. HLCS has only received 478 signatures—we can do better than that! Copies of the petition were mailed with previous newsletters. If you need more petitions, photocopy the original sent to you or write to HLCS. •

How much do you know about the Horny Toad?

The following questions were developed by HLCS Education Chair, Carolyn Todd. They were published in the Austin American Statesman, 25 May 1993 along with articles written by David Pego. [additional ed. remarks]

We won't ask you how many spikes a horned lizard has on its body, but we do have 10 true-or false questions to test your knowledge of horned lizards.

1. Horned lizards can "squirt" blood from their eyes.

2. This creature can predict the weather by pointing its tail in the direction of a weather change.

3. A horned lizard is a small version of a dinosaur.

4. Horned lizards hibernate.

5. Females can lay 30 or more eggs at one time.

6. These animals are really frogs called "horny toads."

7. Horned lizards can inflate

their bodies with air until they resemble a spiky balloon.

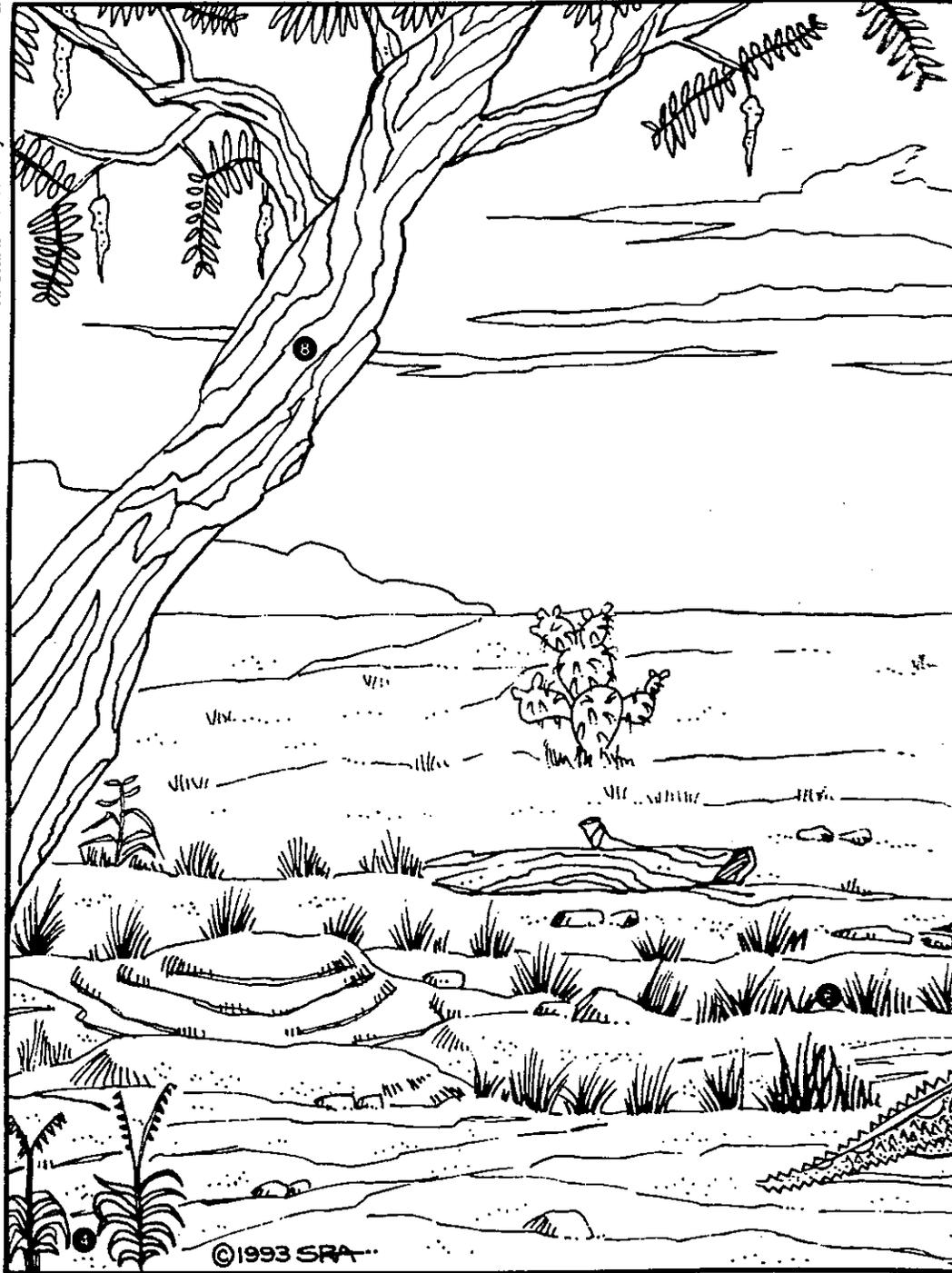
8. These reptiles can be taught to eat fire ants.

9. Horned lizards were a threat to the people of the Southwest.

10. You will find horned lizards in all areas of Texas, and they are extremely plentiful.

Answers on page 5

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Illustrations: Steve Austin

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THE TEXAS HORNED LIZARD

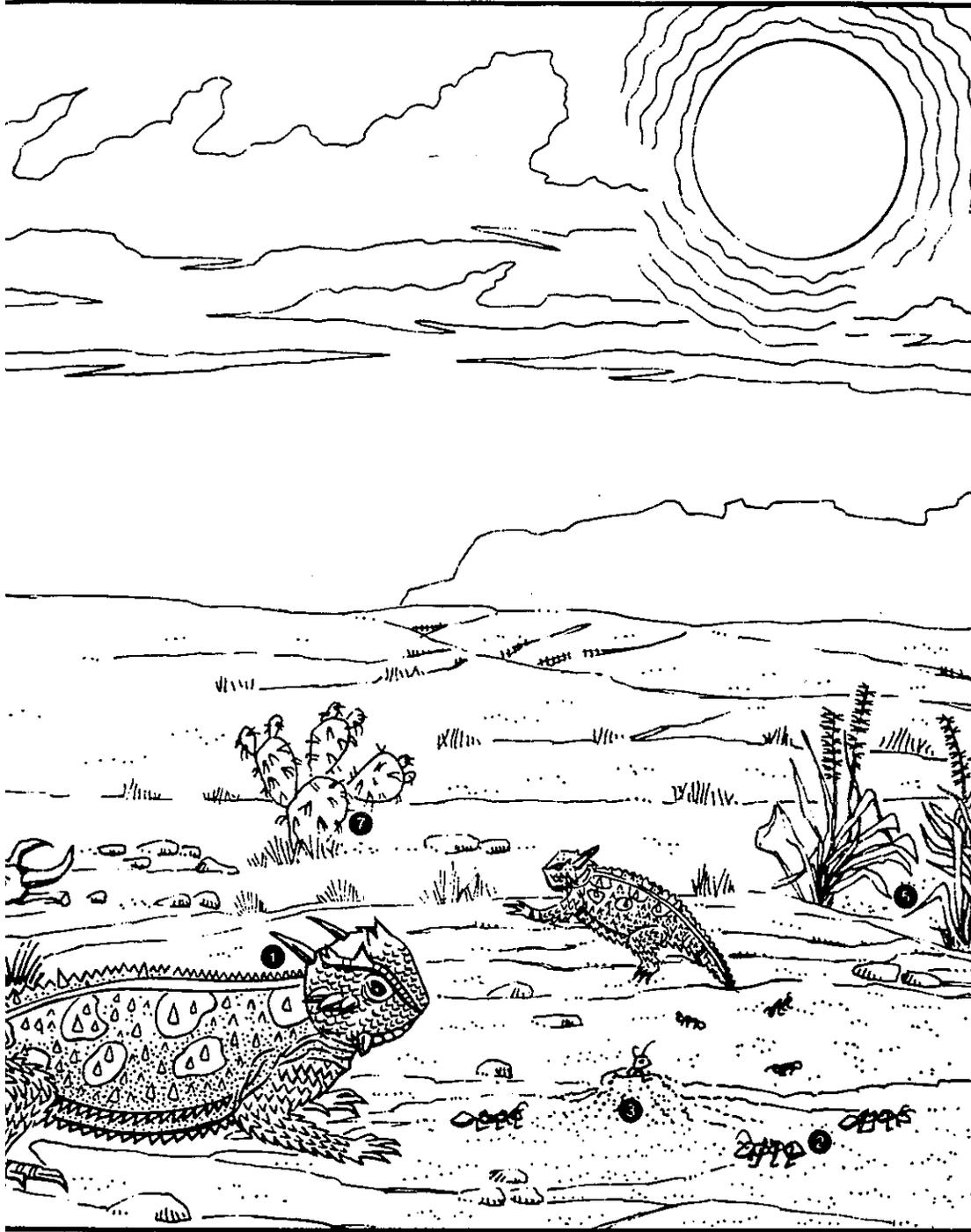
The Texas Horned Lizard (also known as the horned toad or horny toad) used to be found abundantly throughout Texas. The horned lizard is 4-6 inches in length, and is fondly remembered by Texans old enough to have seen and played with them. Unfortunately, horned lizards are no longer found in great numbers and have all but disappeared from many areas of Texas. This has prompted the State to ammend the Texas State Constitution to declare the Texas horned lizard a protected species. It is illegal to transport horned lizards- so enjoy them if you see them, but leave them in the habitat you found them in.

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is conducting surveys statewide to determine the reasons for the decline of the horned lizard, along with providing information to landowners, public groups, schools and other organizations. We also have a petition effort under way to promote the Texas horned lizard as the State reptile. If you would like to join our

organization or write us at the

1. Horned Lizard highlights
 2. Harvester
 3. Harvester
 4. Little Blues
 5. Side Oats
 6. Buffalo Grass
 7. Prickly Pear blossoms
 8. Mesquite blossoms
- Use your imagination

OLORING PAGE



If you would like more information on the horned lizard, please contact us as shown on our logo.

OLORING SUGGESTIONS

- 1 (Corny Toad): color light brown with dark brown spots, with a white center stripe.
- 2: color dark red-brown.
- 3: color a light brown earth color.
- 4: color medium green with a little blue.
- 5 (grass): color light tan.
- 6: color medium green.
- 7 (flowers): color medium green with yellow flowers.
- 8: color trunk dark brown, leaves light green and the ground green.
- 9: color for the rest of the picture. Have fun coloring!

HORNED LIZARD 
CONSERVATION SOCIETY
 Post Office Box 122, Austin, Texas 78767

WATERLOO
 Ice House



Broken Spoke Horny Toad Benefit Concert

On Sunday April 18, 1993, the HLCS held its second annual benefit concert as a joint production with The Broken Spoke. Live music was performed by:

Don Walser & the Pure Texas Band, Alvin Crow, Don McCalister, Cornell Hurd, Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, The Lords of Love, Champ Hood, Marvin Denton & the Threadgill Troubadors, Glen Alyn & the Ernest Tub Band, Karen Natania, Bill Oliver & the Otter Space Band-What a line-up!

Steve Austin was instrumental in rounding up this fine evening of entertainment, along with drawing a superb poster. The HLCS is indebted to the Broken Spoke and the many musicians who volunteered their time and talents to raise funds in our quest to protect our reptile friends-the Horned Lizards. The HLCS netted \$585.50 from donations at the door that will be used to fund research, recovery, and education programs. •

HLCS Small Grants

HLCS Small Grants Program has awarded 2 small grants. Melisa Montemavor has been awarded \$500.00 to study a new marking technique using PITs, small implants that bar code the lizards. Kelly Zamudio has been awarded \$1,000.00 to study the genetic variation of the Short Horned Lizard. •

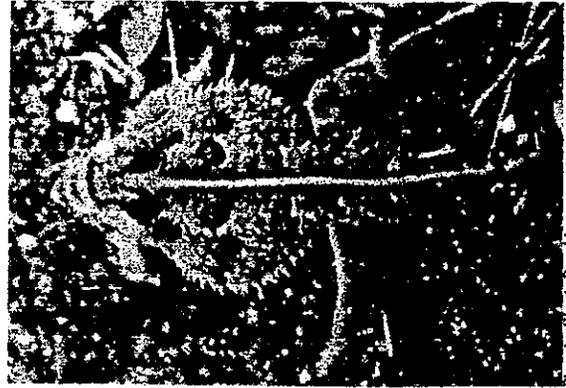


Photo by Wendy Donaldson

Earliest Written Description of the Texas Horned Lizard?

by Wendy Donaldson

note: The following excerpt was presented by a gentleman during the 1993 Horned Lizard Conference. I mindlessly requested a copy of the information without writing down the name of the gentleman who provided us with this unique reference. I ask him to write HLCS so we can give him the proper credit.

The following text is a translation of an excerpt from the journal of Henri Joutel. Joutel was the historian for La Salle, who in 1685 established the first European Colony in Texas. The text is from: Margry, P., ED 1876-86. Découvertes et établissements des français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale (1614-1754). Maisonneuve, Paris. 6 vols:

"Even as the country is fertile in every type of animal, so the rivers and lakes are also in fish.... There is a type of fish which they call armor which has a long beak, made similar to that of an eel, but much bigger. Its skin is rough and the flesh is not very good. We also have a quantity of turtles, but smaller than those that we saw in the Islands... There

is another type on land but they are smaller and rounder... One of our surgeons, looking for these turtles in some holes where they hide in the fields, was bitten by some animal on the arm, which became very swollen and he lost a finger and half of another one because of it. We didn't know if it had been a snake which had bitten him or some other animal, because I had seen certain animals made almost like a toad, having four feet and the mouth nearly the same, but the skin on their backs is raised up into hard humps and they have a little tail; but they don't jump, they walk. Was it one of these creatures or a serpent which bit him, I do not know..."

Nearly one year ago in the July/August 1992 Newsletter, we published an article sent to us from Dale Turner (Tucson, AZ) which included a description of the Texas horned lizard contained in the notes of famed explorer Meriwether Lewis. Those notes were dated May 18, 1804. •

What's Up?

22 May 1993 KXAN Channel 36 aired a brief segment filmed during an HLCS press conference.

25 May 1993 *Austin American-Statesman* publishes three features by writer Dave Pego. Information requests can be sent to: Project Earth, c/o Linda Wienandt, Austin American-Statesman, PO Box 670, Austin, TX, 78767.

28 May 1993 John Burnet, Southwest Correspondent for National Public Radio, ran an app. 10 minute segment covering the HLCS, horned lizards and the conference during All Things Considered at 5:20 p.m. (CST). Copies of the program, written transcripts (\$10.00) or tapes (\$12.50) can be obtained from: NPR Tapes (NPR

Transcripts), 2025 M Street NW, Washington, DC, 20036.

June 1993 *Texas Highways* June 1993 issue features a small article by Suzanne Martin entitled "Leapin' Lizards! The horny toad legend lives on" and photos of the Texas horned lizard. For a copy, send \$2.00 to: *Texas Highways* Circulation, Customer Service, Nox 5016, Austin, TX, 78763-5016.

Ranger Rick publishes an article by Leslie Dendy entitled "Wizard Lizard: Horned lizards shoot blood, blow up like balloons, and wear 'drinking fountains' on their back. What else is in their bag of tricks?" Send inquiries to: Ranger Rick, National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184-0001. •

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