



Frog Defined

by Joyce Gibson Roach

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PHRYNOSOMA is a fancy word for horned frogs.

I've always called them horny toads, and I've played with them all my life, but I never meant to get so tangled up with them. It was elephants I wanted. As a child, I used to go down the aisle, at every church, every summer, at every opportunity to rededicate my life to whatever cause was pending at revivals. Since I was "saved" and a baptized Baptist—and they only give you one chance at that—I had to make do with rededication, which you could do as many times as you felt like. I felt like it a lot. One of my favorite causes was to commit myself to the darkest jungles of Africa where I meant to clothe the naturally naked folks I had seen in the forbidden *National Geographic*, quickly give them the plan of salvation in English, of course, and then cut straight for the elephants.

I fell in love with the gentle beasts at the Saturday afternoon Tarzan picture shows. Tarzan called the elephants—and a lot of other animals, too—with his mighty yodeling technique. I had practiced that and was ready to join him. Tarzan seemed to me a kind of missionary, dressing in some sort of animal skin, living in

trees, protecting his world from greedy outsiders who wanted to capture animals to put in a zoo.

The years passed and I didn't get to Africa; had to make do with the zoo. If someone had actually spirited away the elephants from my Tarzan to put in my zoo, it was a notion too complicated for me to grasp. And I read a lot; became fully

informed about Africa, everything and everybody there. Then getting a higher education got in the way, and a football player, and dancing and a lot of other foolishness came along, and, well, I just never did make it.

At TCU, a case of practicality set in. I got "real." The mascot was the Horned Frog, not the elephant, and

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Upcoming Events

Earth Day in the Woodlands (Houston, TX)

April 6, 2002

contact Bill Brooks (Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu)

Earth Day at Brazos Bend State Park (Texas)

April 20, 2002

contact Cheryl Franks (Cheryl.Franks@med.ge.com)

Horned Lizard Survey at Chinati Hot Springs Preserve

May 4 & 5, 2002

www.chinatihotsprings.org

contact Bill Brooks (Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu)

5th Horned Lizard Conference

June 21-23, 2002

Southwestern Research Station - Portal, Arizona

www.hornedlizards.org/conf2002

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I had played with the spiny creatures all my life, not elephants. Then I got wind of the fact that horned lizards were in trouble, disappearing, endangered, just like elephants. I discovered, too, that I could help wildlife scientists save horny toads—could get “in the field” so to speak—and give up the call to Africa with a clear conscience.

Rural children of the past in Western America and in Mexico captured horned frogs, kept them in shoe boxes, tied strings to their necks and dragged them around. I was one of those children, but have since repented of my wicked ways. Horned lizards are endangered now, but not because too many children played with them. There are many reasons offered, among them that man has ruined their habitat by razing and bulldozing or by burning and grazing practices. Pesticides are killing their food supply of harvester ants, known to my generation as “big red aints.” Commercial collectors are gathering them up to offer for sale because they are an oddity. Scientists are studying other reasons for their decline.

In 1990 the Horned Lizard Conservation Society was formed in Austin, Texas. I am a card-carrying, lifetime member of this group and joined them for a hunt two summers ago in Amarillo for the purpose of taking blood samples looking for a malaria virus that is suspected of causing the horned lizard’s numbers to decline.

They gave me the quick course, telling me such things as:

-- Horny toads are lizards and belong to the reptile family. (Reptiles? No way.)

--They depend on their environment to control their body temperature and they live in desert or semi-arid places because they like it hot.

--Their most obvious characteristic distinguishing them from other lizards is their body shape—wide,

flat, spiny with a crown of horns on the back of their heads and spiny everywhere else except under their bellies.

--They prefer a diet of ants.

--They have natural enemies such as hawks, roadrunners, snakes, coyotes and ground squirrels.

--They can squirt a stream of blood from the corner of their eyes to drive predators away.

--There is more than one kind of lizard, such as Coast, Short, Flat-tail, Regal, Round-tail, Desert and TCU’s Texas horned lizard.

-- And horned lizards are found in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Montana, Washington, the Dakotas, and Canada.

We arrived at the ranch owned and



operated by William Seewald and his sister, Nancy, about a mile and a half south of the Canadian River and north of Amarillo. It was hot. I was hotter because I had dressed for safari—heavy twill pants, T-shirt under another long-sleeved shirt, vest with lots of pockets over the shirt. The pockets contained lip balm, sunscreen, first aid kit, water, camera, notebook, passport, insurance card, number to call in case of emergency, next-of-kin, burial plot information. A bandana was tied around my neck. A thick hat and lace-up hiking boots completed my ensemble. Oh yes, and a walking stick. It took two people to get me out of the van.

Nancy suggested a place that might yield horned lizards. The area was on low ground overgrown with cactus, mesquite, rocks, boulders—

wicked country probably harboring more than *Phrynosoma*. We had been trained for such work, however, and began to fan out with arms outstretched to gauge how we would cover the distance. When we were in scientific position standing straight and tall and ready for action, William addressed the troops. “It is July,” he said. “Rattlesnakes are shedding and blind and strike at anything. Anything. Maybe you, and you, and you! Keep the grandchildren close to you. Hold them by the hand. Watch out for the cactus, rocks and other wild things that live here. Now, be off and good hunting.”

His warnings changed the whole nature of the hunt. At the word, forward, 12 of the 16 broke ranks and charged for open and higher ground. You never saw folks move as fast in your life. I would have been among them except for my clothing and gear. I knew if I didn’t come out of that garb and get most of my clothes off, I was going to die. Three were behind with me and, while they didn’t hang back just to rescue me, they did indeed save my life. After stripping down to T-shirt, pants, hat and walking stick, they allowed me to hunt horny toads with them in the normal way; that is, to observe and investigate everything—plant, insect, animal, bird life, and rocks. I joined Clare Freeman, treasurer of both the state and national board of HLCS; Bill Brooks, an animal technician in research at UT Austin, and, at the time, live-on-site ranger at the Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve in Austin, and now current president of HLCS; and Leigh Sanders, plucky member, in a slow and deliberate search. Bill and Leigh poked under everything, but turned up nothing but bugs and some other crawly things identifying them as well as some plants by their scientific names for my benefit.

Clare picked up *Alibates* flint found in the area, some of it show-

ing knapping, meaning that it was being shaped for some purpose such as tools or arrowheads. The Alibates Flint Quarries are unique to Texas occurring in a 10-mile area around Lake Meredith in the Panhandle. Ancestors of Pawnee or Wichita Indians lived in the area and transported the flint to their villages but so did other nomadic groups living hundreds of miles from the site.

I began to notice harvester ant beds—several of them along some rough grooves passing for a roadbed through the ranch. Speaking in my most clinical, scientific voice, I whined, “Clare, do you reckon the high ground between these ruts might not be a good place to look. At least we could walk on level ground for awhile.” She agreed. Then she found scat—the term for horned lizard droppings—and said so. “Scat!” I had never seen horned toad scat before and it was right interesting. Getting the hang of what it looked like, I began to find more and more indicating there were many horned toads here. All concurred that it was the wrong time of the day for anything to be moving—even us.

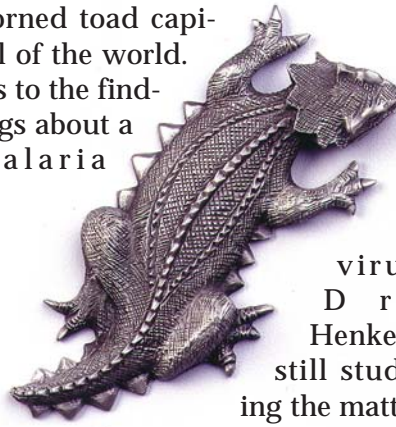
Others were returning from higher ground and using the road to get back to headquarters. They hadn’t seen a thing, they said. Dr. Scott Henke, research scientist at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University, Kingsville, and national president of HLCS, was returning from another part of the ranch where he and an assistant had searched. Neither had they seen anything. I was about to say something and take a step when I spotted a female Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) showed up. Of course, I didn’t know what kind or sex it was until later. I screamed. Most presumed I’d been bitten by a rattler, was having a seizure or religious experience of some sort as I ran through the brush trying to catch

that horned toad. Got him, but not without help.

Scott came hurrying with his kit to draw blood, determine the size, kind and weight of the horned lizard, record the data; then we went back to camp for lunch. Although we changed locations, only one more was found that day, yet dozens more were found the next day.

In spite of the fact that horned frogs are mostly gone from East Texas and their numbers drastically reduced in Central to West Texas, *Phrynosoma*, in some places, thrive. In the deep southwest Texas town of Kenedy, the horned lizard population is so large that the town has declared itself the horned toad capital of the world.

As to the findings about a malaria



virus,
Dr. Henke is still studying the matter.

I only know I did my share and was mighty pleased with myself.

For primitive man, long before the word endangered arrived, the most important consideration for any beastie was whether or not it could be eaten, or people could be eaten or hurt by it. It may have taken awhile on both counts to decide about *Phrynosoma*. Horns, spines, swelling up, playing dead and ejecting blood from the eyes must have given early man pause. Once food and fear issues are decided, then the folk assign names based on firsthand observation, also a scientific method. In English, *Phrynosoma* are called horned lizards, horned frogs and horny toads. In folk-Spanish they are known as torito de lo Virgin, little bull who protects the Virgin, because they charge when fac-

ing enemies. In spite of their diminutive size, they are regarded as sacred because they cry tears of blood. Lagartito, little alligator, and sapo con quernitos, toad with little horns, are other labels. The Mexican name is camaleon, perhaps because of its camouflage coloring rather than ability to change colors.

The earliest acknowledgment of *Phrynosoma* appeared in prehistoric art forms of the earliest cultures of the Southwest. The Anasazi, Mogollon, and Hohokam of the desert regions painted images of horned lizards on cave walls of cliff dwellings, and pottery, marked petroglyphs into the surfaces of rocks, sculpted spiny creatures of clay for effigies, carved fetishes of stone and etched seashells with the design—hundreds of years before Columbus.

The descendants of these prehistoric peoples make use of horned lizards in their stories and legends. The Pima connected horned lizards with the ability to change health and happiness, recognizing them as dangerous if offended or hurt. There must be those who know how to sing the horned lizard songs and apply fetishes to cure illness.

A Zuni tale tells of horned lizards that are life-size, can laugh and are sacred. Ethnographer Frank Hamilton Cushing wrote down the story about a wicked shaman who turned a hunter into a mouse. A benevolent spirit in the form of a coyote took the mouse to the cave of the Great Horned-Lizard Medicine Band where the spell was broken. Some covered him with a sacred blanket while others heated a magic crystal in the fire and, at the right time, removed it touching the mouse with it. After chanting and dancing the mouse regained his human form as the horned lizards, “chuckling to one another, shrank into the shadows.”

The Zuni were, and still are, well known for carving the horned toad

from mineral and rock and for making use of the design in silver jewelry such as pins.

An old Navajo tale appears in modern, illustrated form complete with a moral. Coyote heard that Horned Toad had a good farm, a clean hogan, worked hard and raised corn and squash. Coyote went over to Horned Toad's house and started to take his things, telling him to get out. When Horned Toad wouldn't, Coyote ate him, but Horned Toad began to make Coyote uncomfortable, then sick. Finally, he crawled up Coyote's windpipe and choked him to death. "After Coyote was dead, Horned Toad crawled out. He said to the dead Coyote, 'See what happens when you try to take things from weak people!'"

The Navajo also made use of horned toads in sacred sand paintings of the past which were used as part of curing or blessing ceremonies.

The Comanche and other Plains tribes consulted horned lizards to ask where buffalo were located, believing that whichever way they ran denoted the direction to take to find the mainstay of Plains' life.

The Spanish noticed horned lizards while on a scientific expedition to the New World. Information about them was published in Rome in 1651, including their extraordinary ability to shoot drops of blood "up to a distance of three paces." Francisco Hernandez, who wrote the treatise, reported that baked horned toad could be pulverized and added to wine or water to cure painful syphilis. (Yes, indeed, baked horned toad and a little Chardonnay, sounds like Southwestern cuisine to me.)

In 1828, a German scientist, Arend Wiegmann, named the genus. Meriwether Lewis noticed them on that famous expedition in 1804. He questioned the French name of "prairie buffalo" which linked the

buffalo to the horned lizard because of the horns and humping of the back in a posture of defense. Lewis sent a specimen back to Thomas Jefferson who had it placed in the first natural history museum. Charles Girard, who with others explored the Great Salt Lake, published a report in 1851 describing them.

And, of course, TCU selected the horned frog as its mascot and totem not only because so many of them roamed Thorp Spring, the original site of the University, but also because the critter was tough, tenacious, and willing to tackle enemies bigger than they even if bluffing and looking mean were their only defenses. But then you knew that



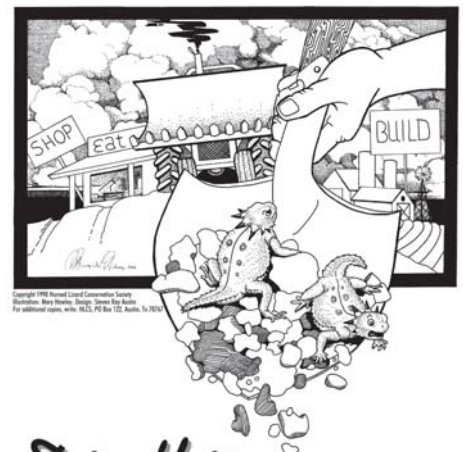
already, didn't you?

I am a folklorist and a writer, not a scientist, obviously, but the bond between folklore and science is solid and fortunate is the respect on both sides. It may be that in time to come, the only evidence remaining of my Horned Frogs and yours will be the lore, tales, songs and stories gathered by folklorists; in images preserved in photography, art, silver, stone and sand; in scientific studies and information; or in the prophetic and quicksilver words of a Wade Sherbrooke:

We find horned lizards engaging both our curiosity and imagination. . . . Time and a place for reflection are indispensable if we are going to see that the mother of all life twinkles in the eyes of horned liz-

ards too. For the story of horned lizards is not an isolated one. Are they not, like us, but another color in the rainbow of life shining out of the past through the prism of time, and onward into the unknown future?

Folklorist and writer Joyce Gibson Roach '58 lives in Keller and is an adjunct lecturer at TCU. For further reading about the horned frog, she recommends the following books: Wade C. Sherbrooke, Unique Reptiles of Western North America, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1981; William Morgan, collector, Navajo Coyote Tales, Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1988; Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, Lords of the South Plains, Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952; Jane Manaster, Horned Lizards, UT Press, 1997; John Q. Anderson, "And Horns on the Toads," Texas Folklore Publication XXIX, And Horns on the Toads, ed. Boatright, Hudson, Maxwell, Dallas SMU Press, 1959, pp. 3-13.



*Dig this:
We live here too!*

Ralph Nader's Democracy Rising Convention: Political Activism and Horned Toads!

by Bill Brooks

On January 26th I manned a HLCS booth in quite possibly, the strangest setting ever. Somehow, an Austin member of the Green Party called me to ask if we wanted a free table at a Ralph Nader convention. (I assume she was a Green Party member. It appeared the Greens organized this event.)

I had never heard Ralph Nader speak. I knew Jim Hightower was going to make a presentation and Molly Ivens, the perennial Texas Democratic firecracker, was also going to speak. If these two were going to be on the stage I knew, at the very least, it was going to be an entertaining evening. Add to the show activist singers Jackson Brown and Patti Smith and it was a date I couldn't pass up, an evening when leftist, liberal and progressive weren't all bad words.

I arrived at South Austin's Burger Center an hour before the rally started. Things were well organized

and I was shown the display table area and allowed to pick my location. I was glad I got there early. Before the night was over, all of the 80 or so tables were filled with volunteers, each expounding on their cause.

My first thought was how much energy there was among these passionate folks. They were all so dedicated to making the world a better place according to their own vision.

The second thought I had was how odd it was for me, pushing horny toad conservation, to be around all these people pushing voter registration, women's rights and saving the children in _____. (You fill in the blank. They were all there.)

I thought people might snub our organization but nothing could have been further from the truth. People were friendly, giving and seemed to care about our cause. For possibly the first time ever, several folks just gave the organization cash and I

didn't even have out a donation jar (although I should have.)

The goals of this rally were a call for grassroots local political activism and to facilitate the forging of relationships among activists. It was a message this sold out crowd of over 5,000 wanted to hear. The speeches were inspiring and the music was great. I came away with a little more insight on what we and others are doing. The HLCS is working to save an animal we all love. We are dedicated to our cause. (I have spent over 10 years with this group.) If we succeed in preserving the horned lizard, I think the world will be a bit better place and that's the ultimate goal of all the groups that were rallying that evening.

PLEASE NOTE: I try very hard to keep my private political beliefs from affecting decisions made on behalf of the membership of the HLCS.

Letters of Support Needed

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed the flat tailed horned lizard for protection as a threatend species under the endangered species act. Please write a letter of support to protect flat tailed horned lizards by April 25, 2002. The flat tailed horned lizard has lost over fifty percent of its natural habitat in southern California and Arizona. Listing the species as federally threatened will help protect it on what habitat remains. Letters expressing your support for listing are needed. Send letters to:

Field Supervisor
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2730 Loker Avenue West
Carlsbad, CA, 92008

or electronically to -- fthl@r1.fws.gov.

A Stunning Discovery!

Abominable Snow Lizard of the East?

by Tricia Saenger

On January 22, 2002, four noted herpetologists (who recently and inexplicably moved to New Hampshire, of all places!) stumbled across an amazing find. While engaged in a favorite New England pastime, shoveling snow, a shadow was detected moving across a snowy expanse. Investigation revealed a pure white lizard whose outward morphology was very suggestive of the *Phrynosoma* genus. When approached, it froze for an extended period of time (again typical of *Phrynosoma* spp.) which allowed for close study. The snout-to-vent length was estimated at 36" and the weight at about 40 pounds. It appeared to have a double row of lateral fringe scales and two prominent occipital horns reminiscent of a

Phrynosoma cornutum. It lacked dorsal horns however and, of course, pigmentation.

As eyes adjusted to the cryptic coloration and monochromatic scene, another discovery was made - frozen right in front of the lizard were two white ants that appeared to be of the *Pogonomyrmex* genus. Being outside the expertise of the observing herpetologists, further inquiries will be required.

Unfortunately, while gathering appropriate tools for data collection (bathroom scale, tape measure, wheelbarrow, mittens, etc.) the lizard and ants disappeared. A fecal pellet was collected but before examination it was mistakenly destroyed in a snowball fight.

Disarming skeptics, several issues

were presented including the incredibly cryptic coloration of the lizard and the paucity of observers out and about in the dead of winter in New Hampshire. There is also a here-to-fore unexplained myth in the Narraganset culture of a horned snow monster that would sneak into longhouses and with a flick of its tongue, devour babies.

The possibility that this find represents a case of convergent evolution can not be dismissed out of hand. There are leucistic variants of many reptiles and perhaps a leucistic mutation is the key to the survival of this most northern of *Phrynosoma*. I mean, if you can have polar bears why not polar Phrynos???



Argentine Ants Threaten Horned Lizards

By Cat Lazaroff

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Photos courtesy Chris Brown, USGS

SAN DIEGO, California, February 26, 2002 (ENS) - Argentine ants, which have infiltrated the coastal regions of California, invading homes and displacing native species of ants, are also contributing to a sharp decline in the state's population of coastal horned lizards. California biologists have learned that the invasive ants are exacerbating the problems the lizards already face in their declining habitat.

The tiny dark brown and black Argentine ants, which are about two millimeters in length, are thought to have entered the United States aboard ships carrying coffee or sugar from Argentina during the 1890s, then expanded throughout California and the southern parts of the United States. In the Southeast and much of the South, their proliferation is limited to some extent by the introduction of fire ants.

But in California, where those competitors are largely absent, the ants thrive in the temperate and damp coastal regions, killing and displacing native ants, many of which are 10 times larger in size. Their smaller size appears to be one main reason why populations of coastal horned lizards, which prefer to feed on the larger native ants rather than on other, harder to capture insects, have declined by 50 percent or more in areas where Argentine ants have invaded.

"Although the biomass of Argentine ants is greater than the biomass of the native ants they've displaced, the horned lizards don't seem to want to eat these introduced ants," said Ted Case, a professor of biology at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) and a coauthor on two studies released this month. "Even in the laboratory, when we feed them Argentine ants and nothing else, the growing lizards can't maintain their weight. They're not getting enough nutrition. They don't seem to want to eat these ants."



In a series of laboratory experiments, Case and Andrew Suarez, a former graduate student at UCSD, showed that baby horned lizards fed a diet of insects typical of a community after invasion of Argentine ants can not grow and, in many cases, decline in weight. When their diet is switched to insects typical of an uninvaded community, the scientists found that the baby horned lizards grow normally.

"A comparison of diets among age classes of coastal horned lizards suggests a diversity of ants is necessary

to support lizard populations," write Suarez and Case in their paper in the February issue of "Ecological Applications."

"The diet of horned lizards changes as they get bigger, from smaller to larger ant species," said Suarez, now a post-doctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. "This indicates that ant diversity is important to preserve entire populations of lizards."

Robert Fisher, a zoologist at the U.S. Geological Survey's Western Ecological Research Center in San

Diego and the first author of the second paper, published in "Conservation Biology," said another important factor in the decline of the coastal horned lizards is "their preference for open sand, such as coastal sand dunes and thick chaparral habitats."

Many of these once pristine, sandy coastal areas have become fragmented by developments, he explained, while chaparral habitats at low elevations, where these lizards are present, have been given low priority for preservation by land managers, because chaparral habitats at higher elevations are so much more abundant.

The lizards, which are designated as a species of concern in California, are candidates for federal and state listing because of their sharp declines, according to the scientists.

"Horned lizards may be one of the few 'charismatic' reptiles people

might care about in California," noted Fisher, who has been conducting a comprehensive survey of reptiles and amphibians from Los Angeles to the Mexican border since 1995.

"Many people remember finding horned lizards growing up in Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Bernardino or San Diego because their habitat was abundant in the large river bottoms," noted Fisher. "This is not a legacy we are passing on because most of these places are now flood channels and have been destroyed. These lizards are hanging on in localized patches now within the reserves and will need monitoring and management into the future."

In the paper published in the February issue of "Conservation Biology," Fisher, Suarez and Case report that in their survey of 21 sites in four counties in southern California, they found that where Argentine ants had invaded, populations of coastal horned lizards were either very low or non-existent. Their survey also showed that inland areas where Argentine ants had invaded and where coastal horned lizards were either absent or declining were close to

urban or suburban developments.

"Argentine ants got into southern California 100 years ago, but they've only become problematic as we've become more urbanized," said Case. "That's because they require water and cooler temperatures, which you get from our manipulation of the



landscape."

One lesson learned from the decline of the coastal horned lizard is that land managers attempting to preserve open space around new suburban or urban developments may succeed in preserving natural vegetation, but if they do not take care to avoid fragmenting the landscape, the natural fauna of the area will not be preserved, Case said.

"Even though we're setting aside open spaces as we develop in south-

ern California, that open space may not have all of the natural characteristics that we had hoped to preserve," said Case. "It may look the same. The major plant species may be the same. But many of the fauna - lizards, insects, nocturnal species that are hidden from view - are heavily influenced by their proximity to people."

"The next nightmare for the lizard may be the red imported fire ants, which have been spreading through urban habitats in southern California since 1998," added Fisher. "They have destroyed small vertebrate communities through the southeast and may do the same here."

"If we want to preserve populations of this beautiful lizard in the future, we not only have to make sure that enough habitat is put aside, we also have to make sure that the remaining habitat is monitored to prevent the invasions of exotic ants," Suarez concluded. "Essentially, the impacts of Argentine ants in California starts with the displacement of native ants and then cascades throughout the ecosystem."

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:

- \$25 Regular
- \$10 Student or Senior
- \$25 Family + \$10 Additional Member
- \$50 Contributing
- \$250 Corporate
- or
- \$300 for a Lifetime membership.

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

Chapter Updates and News

National

After several years as the editor of *Phrynosomatics*, Pam Allison has retired from the position to work on other projects for the HLCS. HLCS would like to thank Pam for all the dedication and hard work. Scott Messec is new editor.

Nevada

For two years I have been trying to get enough members for HLCS in the state of Nevada to help form a Nevada Chapter for HLCS. At the time, I was working as a park ranger in Death Valley National Park. I found that I did not have the time or flexibility I needed from my employers to do too much. My wife, Laura Cunningham, and I just purchased the Parker Ranch from the Nature Conservancy. It is a 6 acre inholding surrounded by a 560 acre Nature Conservancy reserve for wetlands critical for the survival of the Amargosa toad (*Bufo nelsoni*). It is also home to the desert horned lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*) along with an overall rich diversity of herpetofauna. It is located 5 miles north of Beatty, Nevada in the northern Mojave Desert. We would like to form our own non-profit organization dedicated to research and environmental education. We would also like to help enlist more Nevada members for HLCS. We are open to ideas. If there are any people in the area who would like to help us please e-mail us at elgaria@hotmail.com. To learn about some of the herpetological research we are involved in, please see our website: Desert Lizard Ecology in Death Valley Park at <http://cluster4.biosci.utexas.edu/deathvalley>. This land has a nice bunkhouse for researchers to stay in. If you know of anybody interested in researching *Phrynosoma* or anything in this area, please let contact us.

Thanks,

Kevin Emmerich
Nevada Chapter

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Wildlife Diversity Program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation has received funding through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program to begin several new wildlife projects in Oklahoma. The purpose of this program is to provide financial and technical assistance to the States under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act for benefit of a diverse array of wildlife and associated habitats. This is a one time appropriation of federal funds that will be used for wildlife conservation, wildlife education, and wildlife recreation projects. One of the new projects is to begin monitoring efforts on certain sensitive species in Oklahoma including the Texas horned lizard! The project is scheduled to begin this summer and the Department is hoping for volunteer assistance. I think this project is another great way for members of HLCS to lend a hand in horned lizard conservation efforts. If interested, please call (405) 521- 4616 to see how you can help!

Richard Stark
Oklahoma Chapter President

Texas

There will be a Horned Lizard Survey at Chinati Hot Springs Preserve, May 4 and 5. Three species can be found at CHS, Round Tailed, Short Horned and the Texas Horned Lizards. Participant cost is \$5. Camping and cabins are available at the preserve. For more information call (915) 229-4165 or visit the CHS website www.chinatihotsprings.org

April 6 - Earth Day in the Woodlands (Houston)
contact Bill Brooks
(Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu)

April 20 - Earth Day at Brazos Bend State Park
contact Cheryl Franks
(Cheryl.Franks@med.ge.com)

Letters

To Who It May Concern:

I do not know if you would care to publish this story in your Conservation Society Newsletter, but it is such a true-to-life funny story, I just had to share it.

'Horny Toad' - Confusing????

While traveling in South Texas, five friends and I visited the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Being interested in horned toads, I walked up to the counter in the little museum at the refuge and asked the attendant (an older lady) if she had any information about "horny toads". She paused, looked at me in a very quizzical way, then began to laugh. Puzzled, I began to explain that I was asking about a little toad with horns that become somewhat nonexistent in Texas. She stopped laughing and answered, "Oh, I thought you where asking about a man!" I explained further, not the more dangerous species, but the endangered species was what I was interested in. We all had a good laugh and then as we started to leave the building, she yelled after us, "Have a good day, enjoy your visit at the refuge and if you see and old gentleman on the grounds, he is my husband and I call him my 'Old Toad'". Only then did we understand why my original request was so unusual and funny to her.

Sincerely,
Lorina Chaffin

The Lizard Lady

by Bette Armstrong

I have never met the LIZARD lady (Mary Surginer of Odem, TX) in person, but I know her by her love of the Horned Lizard, her quilting work and her generous nature. I know her by her e-mails or her voice on the phone.

Once again, this LIZARD lady had donated another beautiful quilt to HLCS. The Horned Lizard design is by Larry Wisdom of Blooming Grove, TX. Mary used the design to create this unforgettable once in a lifetime quilt.

Mary we will proudly display this quilt in your honor and in honor of the Horned Lizard everywhere we go. Thank you for your generous nature and all your hours of hard work.

HAVE WE TOAD YOU LATELY THAT WE LOVE YOU?



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 (Families=\$25 for the first person and \$10 for each additional member).
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