



Cold Blooded Newsletter

February 2020

Tabitha Hootman, MS, Herpetologist: Movements of Florida Peninsula Cooters (*Pseudemys peninsularis*) and Florida Red-bellied Cooters (*Pseudemys nelsoni*) Found in a Central Florida Springs System



by **Monica Pierson**

Tabitha Hootman has a Masters in Science and conducts research with the North American Freshwater Turtle Research Group (NAFTRG), a part of the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA).

The Florida Red-bellied Cooters (*Pseudemys nelsoni*) and Florida Peninsula Cooters (*Pseudemys floridana peninsularis*) are common freshwater turtle species here in Florida, but there was little information available regarding their movements. Research conducted in the 1990's thought that they stayed in a relatively small home range.

July 2018, they outfitted 48 turtles (12 males and 12 females of each species) with radio transmitters. The turtles were tracked every weekend for a year and presented some astounding results. The distance traveled was nearly 2 to 3 times further than previously thought. The males traveled more often, going back and forth along the riverine system, but the females traveled further total distances.

Clearly these turtles' habits were grossly underestimated and further research into their lives should be conducted.

Tabitha was a well informed and excellent speaker. Thank you Tabitha for educating us on your research.

Reminders

- Out of respect to our speakers, Turn Off or Mute your cell phones during the meetings.
- Please conduct all phone calls in the lobby.
- Please do not allow doors to slam shut, it can be heard throughout the museum.
- Sign In on the Sign In Sheet when entering.
- Please do not wear any political attire. In these polarizing times it can have unintended consequences.

BOARD MEMBERS

President- Chuck Smith

Vice President- Billy Finley

Treasurer- Kathy McIntire

Secretary- Monica Pierson

Sgt. at Arms- Ed May

Sgt. at Arms- Gary Carlson

Member at Large- Chuck Saitta

Member at Large- Christine Finley

Member at Large- Stephanie Jackson

USARK Reps- Nick and Kayla Young

Treasury Report

	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Total</u>
--	-----------------------	---------------------

	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Donations</u>
<u>JHS</u>	<u>N/A (\$806.51 Current)</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>Ashton</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>PENDING</u>
<u>S.C.U.T.E.S.</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>PENDING</u>
<u>Rattlesnake Conservancy</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>PENDING</u>

.....

COMING EVENTS

March 2 - Double Feature!



Mark Mumma Director of Tree Hill Nature Center.
www.treehill.org/Home.aspx



Rebecca Means of The Coastal Plains Institute. www.coastalplains.org

APRIL 5

Tiffany Bright, SE Regional Director of The Rattlesnake Conservancy
www.savethebuzztails.org

APRIL 27



**Parking Info. for the
2019 Joseph A. Strasser
Butterfly Festival--April 27th**

A shuttle van will run from 10am- 5:00pm.

Parking is off campus at these locations

Parkwood Baptist Church
7900 Lone Star Rd
Jax, Fl 32211

Arlington Park Cemetery
6920 Lone Star Rd
Jax, Fl 32211

St Andrews Episcopal
7801 Lone Star Rd
Jax, Fl 32211

.....
THIS MONTH'S
TOP STORIES

Rainbow Snake Seen In Florida's Ocala National Forest For First Time Since 1969 February 20, 2020

by John Virata

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
rainbow snake (*Farancia erytrogramma*) i



**FWC Fish and Wildlife Research
Institute**



on Wednesday

A Rare Sighting!

Tracey Cauthen recently reported stumbling upon a ~4 ft Rainbow Snake, *Farancia erytrogramma*, while hiking in the Ocala National Forest. The [Florida Museum of Natural History](#) confirms this is the first record of this species in Marion County since 1969! Our biologists speculate the recent drawdown of Rodman Reservoir had this rainbow snake on the move.

Rainbow snakes are highly-aquatic, spending most of their life hidden amongst aquatic vegetation; seldom seen, even by herpetologists, due to their cryptic habits. Burrowing near creeks, lakes, marshes, and tidal mudflats, rainbow snakes specialize in eating eels, earning the nickname “eel moccasin”.

Photos and information about this special sighting were submitted to the Florida Museum of Natural History. Find out more about this secretive snake: bit.ly/2uNh6Kr

sighting of the elusive species since 1969.



The institute wrote on its Facebook page that the Florida Museum of Natural History confirmed that the sighting is the first in Marion County, FL since 1969.

“Our biologists speculate the recent drawdown of Rodman Reservoir had this rainbow snake on the move,” the institute wrote on Facebook.

The rainbow snake, also known as the eel moccasin, is a non-venomous colubrid snake that is primarily aquatic and feeds on eels, frogs, tadpoles and other amphibians. In addition to being a strong swimmer, the reptile is a proficient burrower as well. It grows to about 36–48 inches (91–122 cm) in length, with larger specimens reaching up to 66 inches (168 cm). They are said to inhabit tidal mud flats, creeks, lakes and marshes.

A subspecies, the south Florida rainbow snake (*Farancia erythrogramma seminola*), was declared extinct in 2011. That population lived in the Lake Okeechobee region in southern Florida before it disappeared.

The original article appeared in Reptiles Magazine www.reptilesmagazine.com/Rainbow-Snake-Seen-In-Floridas-Ocala-National-Forest-For-First-Time-since-1969/

Galápagos experts find a tortoise related to Lonesome George



Thirty tortoises partially descended from extinct species found, including one of same species as famed individual

Associated Press in Quito

Sun 2 Feb 2020 06.56 EST

Conservationists working around the largest volcano on the Galápagos Islands say they have found 30 giant tortoises partially descended from two extinct species, including that of the famed Lonesome George.

The Galápagos national park and Galápagos Conservancy said one young female had a direct line of descent from the *Chelonoidis abingdonii* species of Santa Cruz island. The last of those tortoises was Lonesome George, who died in June 2012 and was believed to be more than 100 years old.

Another 11 males and 18 females were from the *Chelonoidis niger* line of Santa Cruz island.

The 45-member expedition was working around the Wolf volcano on Santa Cruz island. It said pirates and whalers had taken tortoises from other islands in the archipelago and left them near the volcano.

Those found during the latest expedition were hybrids descended from both the extinct and other species.

The Galápagos is a volcanic archipelago and province of Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean. The islands, whose variety of endemic species helped inspire Charles Darwin, were home to 15 closely related species of tortoise, according to the Conservancy, which estimates that 20,000-25,000 wild tortoises live there. At least four of the species are considered extinct.

The original article appeared in The Guardian and can be found here:

www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/02/galapagos-experts-find-a-tortoise-related-to-lonesome-george.



An unofficial replica of the new 50-peso banknote that has surfaced on social media.

Xochimilco's endemic axolotl to appear on new 50-peso bill

Chinampas, the manmade islands of the area's canals, will also be pictured on the note

Published on Thursday, February 20, 2020

The axolotl, a species of salamander endemic to Mexico City's Lake Xochimilco, may be endangered but it recently got some news that could give it something to smile about.

The Bank of México (Banxico) announced that the amphibian will grace the new series of 50-peso notes to be put into circulation in 2022.

Accompanying the grinning creature will be an ear of corn and an image of farmers tending crops on the famous chinampas, or manmade islands used for agriculture.

The original article in its entirety can be found here: <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/axolotl-to-appear-on-new-50-peso-bill/>



www.jaxherpsociety.com