The Buzz

Advocates *for* Snake Preservation

Changing how people view & treat snakes

2025 • #13

A mama Black-tailed Rattlesnake hovers protectively over her new babies.

Rattlesnakes Are Awesome Moms!

Rattlesnake babies are born alive and stay with mom a week or two until they shed their skin. During this vulnerable time, mom keeps them safe. But at communal nests, pregnant rattlesnakes and visiting males may care for the babies too.

Continued on page 7...

Musings from Melissa

Happy Year of the Snake!

A couple weeks ago we took a hike down a favorite riparian canyon. One that, even during this drought, has a little flowing water in places, which makes it an important place for wildlife. On our way down we spotted Gila Topminnow in a pool we hadn't seen them in before, Arizona Milkweed in bloom, and a Turkey Vulture party at a Mountain Lion kill site, with Deer, Javelina, and Skunk scraps strewn around. We even found an Arizona Sycamore growing much farther upstream than we knew of.

Melissa admires a pink Coachwhip.

But no snakes or Gila Monsters, which were who we were hoping to see.

We turned around and started back upstream. I decided to hop over the 'island' in the middle and immediately noticed a large Arizona Black Rattlesnake less than a yard from my feet, headed into some Deergrass. He had clearly just lucked into a large meal — Gambel's Quail? Small Rock Squirrel or Desert Cottontail? — his belly bulge was so big that he wobbled as he slowly crawled away.

Despite being confronted by two potential predators (us) in a vulnerable position (that bulge would have made a fast escape difficult) and place (in the open), he was super-chill. He never rattled or assumed a defensive position. He slowly crawled a few yards away and coiled up against a branch.

After taking lots of photos, we headed back, pondering the snake's life as we often do. His long, un-tapering rattle indicated that he was *at least* in his teens, and potentially much older. His mellow demeanor supported this age estimate too; in our experience, large (=old) rattlesnakes are usually sweet and calm, as this dude was. They've probably encountered many scary things in their lives, and survived, so are just not that worried about us.

Have a lovely Year of the Snake and take a walk in nature whenever you can. You never know who you'll run into and in my experience, *you'll always feel better after spending some time outside*.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *The Buzz* as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you. Let me know what you think! And please keep sharing with your friends, neighbors, and family — spreading positive messages is like a superpower, turning 'EEK!' into 'AWW!' when it comes to snakes. Together we can keep the peace between humans and snakes, and that's seriously awesome.

THANK YOU, for all you do for snakes, every day!

Melissa Amarello (she/her), Executive Director
mel@snakes.ngo • PO Box 2752, Silver City, NM 88062

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www.snakes.ngo/email

SNAKE WEEK 13-19 JULY 2025

To celebrate this Year of the Snake, we're organizing the inaugural Snake Week, which encompasses World Snake Day on 16 July.

Because snakes are too cool to have only one day, right?

Snake Week is a whole week to celebrate the beauty and benefits of snakes! During this week, organizations worldwide are holding special events, in-person and online, to foster appreciation of and coexistence with snakes.

Snake Week is a collaboration with Project RattleCam and Australian Reptile Academy. The Snake Week logo was designed by Emma Hsiao.

Meet your snake neighbors in Ecuador; photograph courtesy of María Elena Barragán, Quito Vivarium.

Human-snake conflict mitigation in South India; photograph courtesy of Eastern Ghats Wildlife Society.

How to get involved in Snake Week

Check out the calendar of events at www.SnakeWeek.org to find a presentation, bioblitz, field trip, or other event near you.

Don't see an event near you? Snake Week, the IUCN Snake Specialist Group, and many others are holding free presentations online that are open to anyone. Learn about Sea Snakes, Coralsnake mimics, Anacondas, King Cobras, and more. Full schedule and registration information is on the website.

Snake Stories on Tap

Thirsty for snake knowledge? Join ASP at Open Space Brewing in Santa Clara, New Mexico on 19 July to toast the inaugural Snake Week! Meet co-founders Jeff and Melissa along with other members of Team ASP, including some of our snake teachers. We'll have multimedia snake stories, literature, stickers, and other swag to share. Get your questions answered in-person and share your snake stories while enjoying delicious brews from the awesome folks at Open Space – non-alcoholic and gluten-free options available.

Melissa shows Pandora (Gray-banded Kingsnake) to kids at the Hayden Library in Arizona; photograph courtesy of Jamie Wolgast.

Willie's Woe: an Invasive Irritation

We first met Willie, a Black-tailed Rattlesnake, in June 2012, hunting on a massive downed Cottonwood Tree. We didn't handle or mark him, but Jeff got excellent photographs. Black-tailed Rattlesnakes have unique head patterns that can be used to identify individuals and Willie also has two blotches on his back that are connected. Last May we ran into him again, hunting against an ancient Cottonwood Tree. Those blotches caught our eyes and we soon matched that head pattern to our friend from *11 years ago*. Willie was a large adult in 2012, so he's likely in his 20s now, *at least*! Willie was in excellent condition last May, which made us wonder: *how many other decades-old rattlesnakes have we met?*

Willie hunting on a giant Cottonwood log, June 2012.

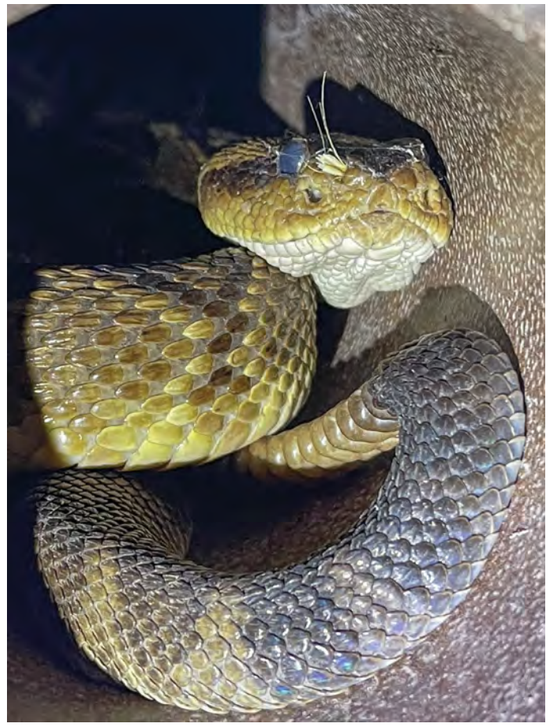
- The Buzz #12, 2024

We didn't actually name Willie when we first met in 2012. But in 2023, once we realized who he was — a tough, but sweet, old man — we named him after Willie Nelson, who had recently celebrated his 90th birthday. *Perhaps our Willie is 90 in snake-years?* I am not sure, but he is certainly older than most folks realize snakes can live. He is not unique in this, and it may not even be uncommon for snakes to live decades. It is difficult to tell a snake's age if you haven't been following them since they were very young.

We were so excited to see Willie in 2023. It had been *more than nine years* since we set foot on this site, and while we were hoping to see some old friends, we weren't really expecting to. Crossing paths with Willie seemed like a rare gift. But he was actually the first of several rattlesnakes and Gila Monsters that we'd run into that year who we last saw in 2012 or 2013. And most of them we've seen several more times since, especially Willie and one of the Gila Monsters, Turtle.

Willie spent most of last summer (2024) near our house, so we got to see him often. Mostly he was coiled and resting or hunting, but once we got to watch him court CPG, a small female Black-tailed Rattlesnake, who also lives near our house.

In June he ran into a bit of trouble. He managed to get a Red Brome seed stuck in one of his nostrils! Red Brome is an invasive species of grass in the Southwest. It grows quickly, out-competing native grasses, and increases fire potential and intensity. In addition to degradating habitat by decreasing plant diversity and increasing catastrophic wildfire risk, Red Brome harms wildlife with their sharp seeds that easily stick to animals: in mammal ears and apparently, snake nostrils. They are hard to remove for someone with hands, so it must be impossible for someone without hands or feet — *right?*



Willie is preparing to shed his skin with a Red Brome seed stuck in his nostril, mid-June 2024.

Willie's Woe: an Invasive Irritation *(continued)*

Not long after we noticed the stuck seed, Willie started preparing to shed his skin: his eyes turned cloudy and blue, his whole body took on a dull appearance, and he hunkered down in an old pipe where he'd be safe for the next week or so. We checked on him daily, wondering if he'd shed that seed along with his skin.

One day Jeff checked the pipe to find Willie gone, his shed skin cast off, the seed still embedded within it. *What a relief Willie must have felt*; not only casting off his old, tight skin, but also this invasive irritation.

We've already seen Willie a few times this year (2025). So far, no more Red Brome or other seeds stuck up his nose.

- Melissa Amarello, Co-founder, Executive Director, ASP

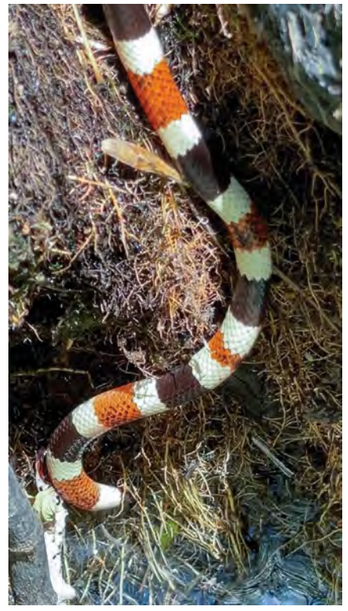
We recovered Willie's shed with the seed embedded.

Thirsty Snakes

An Arizona Black Rattlesnake and Striped Whipsnake drinking near their den.

A Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake drinking from a nearby sprinkler.

A Sonoran Lyresnake drinking on a golf course.



A Sonoran Coralsnake drinking from a stream.

Research News

Thirsty Snakes? Give 'em a Drink!

Research should be fun! If it isn't, you're not doing it right. That's what I tell my students, at least. As field biologists, we are privileged to conduct research in the great outdoors on the wild animals that we love. We get to decide what questions to ask, design experiments, and watch the animals respond, so we have the freedom to choose the most fascinating research questions. There is no better example of this than our recent study published in *Current Zoology*, in which we studied the rain-harvesting behavior of wild Prairie Rattlesnakes in Colorado.

This research was led by undergraduate Madi McIntyre, a student in Scott Boback's lab at Dickinson College. All of us spent a month in Colorado in summer 2021, collaboratively conducting a multitude of projects. The field site has multiple rookeries where dozens of pregnant females bask all summer long and eventually give birth.

Rattlesnakes in high-elevation, northern Colorado emerge from hibernation extremely dehydrated. The main source of drinking water for pregnant females that remain at summer rookeries is rain, but storms are few and far between. So, rattlesnakes maximize their rain harvesting by coiling up to collect rain within their coils, then drinking from their skin. Madi was interested in how sociality (i.e., large groups of snakes piled up together) impacts their drinking behavior.

To examine rain-harvesting behavior, Madi snuck up on wild snakes and carefully positioned the nozzle of a pump sprayer over their heads to simulate rain. Most rattlesnakes immediately changed their position and drank, allowing us to create the first illustrated ethogram of snake rain-harvesting behavior. We found that snakes drank from the ground and from their own bodies at about equal frequencies and drank off a neighbor less often. Snakes tolerated other

A Prairie Rattlesnake after a simulated rain event in the study. Note she is dorsoventral flattening her body and drinking from a trough created by the junction of one body coil (foreground) with another (beneath snake's head). Photograph courtesy of McIntyre and Boback.

snakes drinking from their bodies 100% of the time; this appears to be a reciprocal behavior that does not elicit competition. We described interesting behaviors including how snakes angled their heads, and even their bodies, to maximize rain harvesting. For example, in addition to flattening the body to help catch rain on the surface, some snakes that were resting on hills would tilt their bodies downhill, causing water to move down their body with gravity, where it accumulated, allowing them to drink. Smart snakes!

Ultimately these behaviors help rattlesnakes maintain hydration under circumstances where it is difficult to get enough water. With projected increased droughts throughout the American West, rain-harvesting behavior will become more and more essential. In addition, this research was really fun to do, popular with the media, and people find rain-harvesting rattlesnakes to be adorable, making this research project important for improving rattlesnake public relations.

MG McIntyre, M van Mierlo, MR Parker, SM Goetz, EN Taylor, and SM Boback. 2024. *Rain-harvesting behavior in free-ranging prairie rattlesnakes*. Current Zoology: zoae069.

- Emily Taylor, PhD, Board of Directors, ASP

Rattlesnakes Are Awesome Moms!

Did you know that rattlesnakes give birth to live young and take care of their babies? They sure do! Read on for an introduction to the rattlesnake reproductive cycle and family life in the southwest US.

Many may assume a tidy annual schedule of emerging from the den, mating, and laying eggs that will hatch in a few weeks — all of which happens each spring. So the *real* story of rattlesnake reproduction comes as a surprise!

See *Seasonal Patterns in Rattlesnake Behavior in the Southwest* for a look at the different seasons as they relate to reproduction.

Female rattlesnakes invest A TON of time and energy into each litter. So much, in fact, that they are virtually unable to give birth in consecutive years and skip a year or two to recover.*

There's little time for hunting or feeding earlier in the year, so rattlesnake mamas may not eat for nearly a year before giving birth!*

Gravid — carrying developing eggs.

Nest — (verb) give birth and care for babies until they shed their skin for the first time at 1-2 weeks old; (noun) site where nesting happens.

Pregnant — carrying developing embryos that will be born live.

Nesting

Rattlesnakes typically care for their newborns until they shed their skin (ecdysis) for the first time, when they're one to two weeks old. With each day, newborns become more independent, exploring the area around the nest and straying a bit farther from their mother. Once they've shed their skin, the newborns leave the nest and start hunting on their own.

What sort of care do rattlesnake mamas actually provide?

Protection is the most obvious. They actively defend their young from threats by charging or assuming a defensive posture. If the babies wander too far, mothers might shield them with their bodies or herd them back to the shelter.

Staying together also offers thermal and hydration benefits. Babies bask on or near their moms on the surface and may continue getting heat from her overnight in the shelter. Newborns also huddle together in groups to conserve heat and water loss by reducing their exposed skin surface area. This is likely especially important leading up to their first ecdysis.

What rattlesnake mamas don't provide is food.

Baby rattlesnakes, like this Rock Rattlesnake, usually start hunting shortly after dispersing.

Rattlesnakes have not been observed feeding their babies. They swallow their prey whole, which would make feeding a litter of babies difficult. It is normal for rattlesnakes to go weeks or months without eating, so this isn't a hardship, even for the babies.

So now you know how rattlesnakes take care of their kids. But wait; there's more! Sometimes they take care of their friends' kids too!?! Check out *Even Awesome Moms Need a Break* (p. 6).

*As usual in nature, there are interesting exceptions to the general schedule outlined here. For example, Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes may court and mate in the spring too, just after emerging from their winter dens. They may continue hunting and feeding throughout their pregnancy and there are records of Western Diamond-backeds giving birth in consecutive years in the Sonoran Desert, when resources are abundant (i.e., lots of rain).

Seasonal Patterns in Rattlesnake Behavior in the Southwest

Two male Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes engage in ritualized combat over an unseen female.

Monsoon: Courtship, Combat, Mating

In the arid southwest US, nearly all our rain falls in the summer, also called the monsoon, and winter. The monsoon's warm, humid conditions and increased productivity make it prime rattlesnake time, when most of their feeding and reproductive activity occurs.

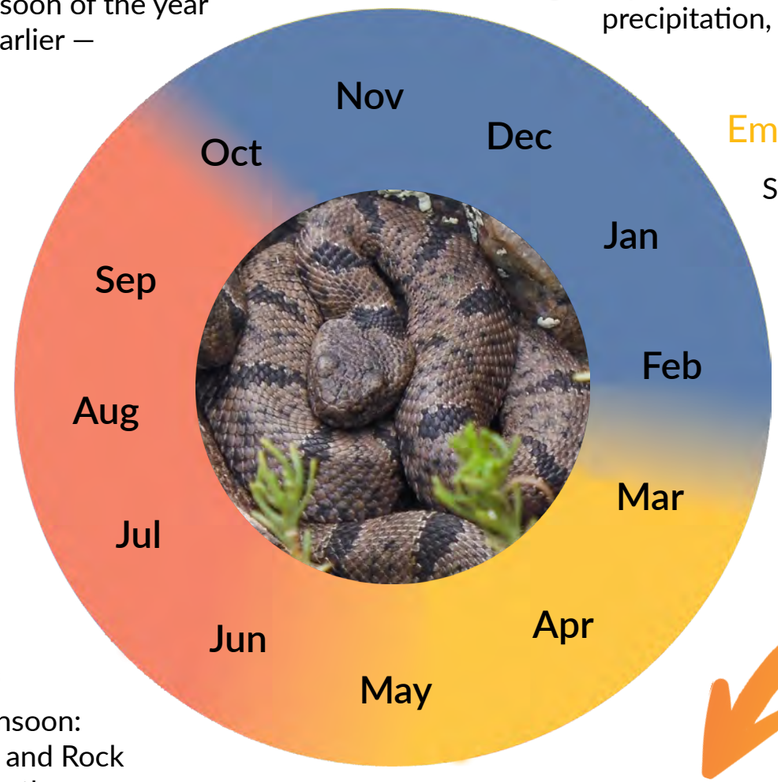
Courtship and mating occur during the monsoon of the year *before* a female rattlesnake gives birth,* or earlier — rattlesnakes can store sperm for years!

A male Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake courts a female.

Monsoon: Nesting

The Nesting season is the first couple weeks of newborn rattlesnakes' lives, when they stay close to mama. This also happens during the monsoon: early (or even a bit before the rain comes) for some species (e.g., Tiger and Rock Rattlesnakes) and late for others (e.g., Black-tailed and Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes).

New Black-tailed Rattlesnake family.



Denning

Most southwestern rattlesnakes are in or near their winter dens from October through March and even into May. They may emerge from their dens to get a quick drink from winter precipitation, even snow!

Two Rock Rattlesnakes in their den.

Emergence

Some rattlesnakes emerge from their dens and immediately head to hunting or nesting areas. But at some communal dens, they may stick around for weeks, several to dozens basking together. Pregnant females are usually the last to leave, when they're ready to move to their nesting area and start gestating.

Four Black-tailed Rattlesnakes lounging under a rock near their den.

Gestation

In the late spring and dry summer, moms-to-be are focused on thermoregulation to promote the health of their developing embryos. Most do not eat during this period because nesting areas are not often near hunting areas.*

Pregnant Arizona Black Rattlesnakes.

Even Awesome Moms Need a Break

We first observed babysitting in 2010, when we started studying rattlesnake nesting. Fifteen years later, here's what we've learned about this surprising behavior, based on observations of 43 mamas and litters at 18 rookeries.

Three Rock Rattlesnakes nested at this rookery in 2022. The female basking with babies here is still pregnant. As usual, mama is hiding inside their shelter.

The most common setup for babysitting is at a rookery with pregnant snakes of varying ages, even generations. The oldest mama gives birth first and the youngest last. After giving birth, the older mama stays in the shelter rather than hanging on the surface with or very near the babies, which is what we see at solo nest sites. The younger female(s) gets stuck caring for her nestmate's babies and eventually her own too (the eldest female does not pitch in later).

Alloparenting — caring for young that are not direct offspring, but may be related (nieces, nephews, grandkids, siblings).

Babysitting — a mutualistic (everyone benefits) type of alloparenting.

Rookery — site where two or more rattlesnakes nest.

Perhaps this seems unfair to the younger females, but this breeding strategy is mutualistic. While the older mama rests, the younger, less experienced ones gain parenting practice. Females that share a rookery are likely to be related, and there's a fitness benefit in increasing your relative's chance of surviving too.

Eve and family, plus probably a nestmate's kids (Arizona Black Rattlesnakes). Eve was the youngest at her rookery; we saw her often on the surface with way too many babies to have all been her own. We rarely saw the older mother with the newborns.

Babysitting — it's not just for girls

Males occasionally babysit too. Although we haven't observed any active care or protective behavior from males, just the presence of a large rattlesnake may deter some predators.

Roger (adult male Arizona Black Rattlesnake) showed up at this rookery shortly after the babies were born and jumped right into alloparenting. The babies behaved as they do with their mamas and female babysitters: they followed him away from shelter, into the sun, and back again.

Even Awesome Moms Need a Break *(continued)*

Babysitting is a benefit to rattlesnakes that chose to aggregate during gestation and remain together after giving birth.

Priscilla & House

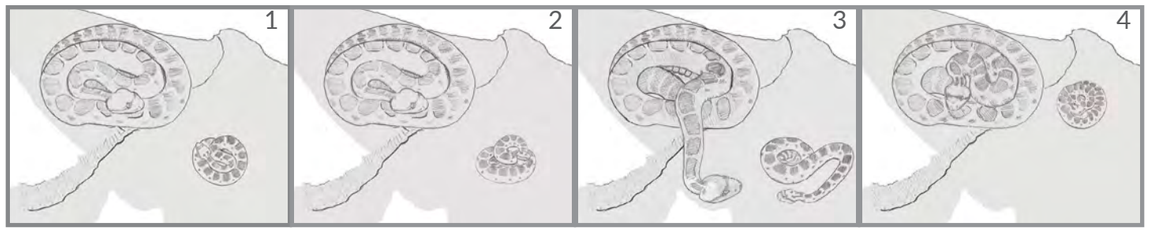
Priscilla was the first rattlesnake we observed babysitting. She spent her pregnancy with Lois and Arli (Arizona Black Rattlesnakes) at a rookery from May through August. Arli moved a few yards away to a private nest shortly before giving birth, while Priscilla and Lois stayed at the rookery.

Priscilla and House.

Lois gave birth next, and afterward we never observed her out with the babies, only resting inside the shelter. Priscilla was still pregnant, so she tended Lois' babies, and seemed to form an especially close relationship with one, House.

We observed Priscilla and House snuggling together often and one day, she kept him from wandering into a potentially dangerous situation. As Jeff described in *The Nurturing Nature of Rattlesnakes*:

> Beside a still-pregnant Priscilla, House squirmed and fidgeted beside her as I watched through binoculars.[1] Soon, he began to crawl out into the open and in my direction.[2] From her relaxed coil (she was accustomed to our visits), Priscilla darted out her head to intercept House's advance, her face directly in front of his.[3] He immediately stopped, paused briefly, returned to the shelter of the rock and coiled into stillness.[4] Basking would have to wait.



To our knowledge, this was the first observation of babysitting in a snake. But not our last!

And as always, there are some fascinating exceptions to the usual story — check out the boxes. *Isn't nature cool?*

- Melissa Amarello, Co-founder, Executive Director, ASP

Babysitting — it's not for everyone

This mama Black-tailed Rattlesnake is guarding her new babies, because oops, I got too close to this rookery! Behind her is another mama with more babies. Not pictured is their still-pregnant nestmate, basking a few feet away *with no babies*. At this rookery (and so far, only this rookery), we never observed the last female that gave birth babysitting.

No More Snake Rodeo!

Your calls, letters, and signatures put an end to the unethical slaughter and waste of wildlife at the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo. Your voice matters — together we stopped a 60-year old snake-killing contest!

Thanks to YOU, wildlife-killing contests that target reptiles and amphibians have been BANNED in Louisiana.

From the mid-1960s until 2024, thousands of snakes were shot as they basked at the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo in northeast Louisiana. Participants shot an unlimited number of snakes from their boats and were awarded prizes for killing the most and longest snakes.

Northern Cottonmouths (also known as Water Moccasins) were the target of the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo, though the vast majority of snakes slaughtered at the rodeo were harmless. Photographed by Julie Dermansky.

The campaign to end the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo was a collaboration with Louisiana Amphibian and Reptile Enthusiasts. Their website and Facebook group are great places to learn about the natural history and identification of snakes and other reptiles and amphibians in Louisiana. They also hold fun and educational events throughout the state. Learn more at LouisianaHerps.com

Southern Watersnakes, like this one photographed by Julie Dermansky, will no longer be slaughtered at the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo!

Our campaign to end the rodeo

In 2018, Louisiana Amphibian and Reptile Enthusiasts reached out to Advocates for Snake Preservation for help ending this horrific event. Together with our collective supporters, we submitted thousands of letters, emails, petition signatures, and testified before the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

In late 2023, The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries proposed a suite of stronger protections for reptiles and amphibians. One amendment prohibited events that wantonly or willfully waste amphibians or reptiles, like the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo. Despite strong opposition from those exploiting wild animals for profit, state herpetologist Keri Lejeune kept pushing to pass these protections. In November 2024, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission voted to adopt the amendments and in January 2025, they were written into law.

A huge thanks to Ms. Lejeune and her relentless efforts to strengthen protections for reptiles in Louisiana!

The unethical slaughter and waste of wildlife at the Lake Providence Snake Rodeo IS OVER.

- Melissa Amarello, Co-founder, Executive Director, ASP

Snake Hero

The Reptilist: Terry Arthur Johnson

On November 20, 2024, we lost a great defender of wildlife and wild places in Terry A. Johnson, known as *The Reptilist*.

For over 40 years Terry enlightened and endeared people of all ages to the beauty and importance of reptiles and amphibians – especially through his job in mining and as an engineering supervisor in eastern Arizona. He co-founded Friends of the Frisco, and did professional consulting and reptile relocation through his Reptile Conservation Service as *The Reptilist*.

Terry was a champion for snakes, lizards, and all other critters. During his 30 years at Freeport McMoRan's mine in Morenci, Arizona, he rescued snakes and educated co-workers about them. He did volunteer snake rescue for the Morenci-Clifton community and used his captive snakes and reptiles to allow folks to get to know their scaly neighbors.

Terry retired in early 2020 and moved to Tucson to live with his sweetheart Robin, where he resided with her for the remainder of his life.

"When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people."

Abraham Joshua Heschel (one of Terry's favorite quotes)

In May 2024, *The Reptilist* received a Snake Hero Award from Advocates for Snake Preservation for his unwavering commitment to community engagement in rural southern Arizona. The Tucson Herpetological Society recognized Terry for his dedication to herpetological outreach in the State of Arizona. In an area overlooked by other educators, Terry inspired myriad folks to care about snakes.

- Written and photographed by Robin Hall Johnson

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100% of proceeds fund our work.

Welcome New Board Members & Volunteer!

Kit Kleinschmidt's passion for wildlife and the outdoors began in her childhood spent camping, backpacking, and fishing with her family. Encouraged to pursue a more financially lucrative career, Kit spent 20 years working in finance, human resources, and quality assurance. She realized that pursuing her dreams and passions brought her more fulfillment than monetary success and decided to transition to a career in conservation. Kit has since dedicated her time to non-profit organizations, gaining valuable experience and knowledge through continuing education. With a formal education in business and human resources from Arizona State University, her diverse background brings unique perspectives and meaningful contributions to ASP in her role as a Board Member.

Kit is pictured here with a Spotted Harlequin Snake.

Julie Ray's work with snakes spans the temperate and tropical environments of the New World. Focusing on ecology and conservation, she has regularly intertwined the knowledge of the local residents into her studies. She believes that conservation starts with education and working with local people to understand their needs fosters a relationship where compromise turns into preservation. Julie has a BS in Biology from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, a Masters in Biological Sciences from Northern Illinois University and a Ph.D. in Ecological Sciences from Old Dominion University.

Julie is pictured here peering into a snake bag (who's in there?!?).

Robin Hall Johnson reached out to us last fall, wanting to continue her late husband's legacy of snake advocacy (see *Snake Heroes*) by volunteering with his favorite organization. She has attended every presentation and tabling event since — handing out literature, setting up displays, passing out surveys, answering questions about snakes and our work, and giving folks a chance to meet one of our friendly snake teachers. Robin jumped right in and has made our local events run much more smoothly and be more fun.

Robin is pictured here with one of ASP's snake teachers, Pandora (Gray-banded Kingsnake), at Give Grandly 2025.

Advocates for Snake Preservation

Just before founding ASP, Jeff and Melissa worked at a nature preserve full of snakes. Most visitors came for birds or butterflies, but left with a new appreciation for snakes. We introduced a couple who "hoped not to see any snakes during their visit" to Porter, one of our resident Black-tailed Rattlesnakes, and shared her story with them. They returned from their hike excited to share photos of the "cute snake" they spotted and wanted to learn more. Another time, we spoke with a scout leader who routinely killed any rattlesnake that showed up in his yard. He decided to reconsider his behavior after hearing about the protective behavior of mama rattlesnakes. *Stories engage people in a way that simply stating facts and figures do not.*

In 2014, we founded ASP to change how people view and treat snakes. We use storytelling to make snakes more familiar and less scary. To minimize human-snake conflicts and ensure safer coexistence with venomous snakes, we recommend changes to landscapes and our own behavior. While education and changing attitudes are the heart of our work, we also take action and advocate on pressing issues that impact snakes by voicing their importance and the need for their protection.

We are grateful that you are on this journey with us. Without you, we couldn't have:

- Killed the Arizona snake-shooting bill;
- Changed the conversation on rattlesnake roundups;
- Organized the first symposium on coexisting with snakes;
- Ended wildlife-killing contests targeting reptiles and amphibians in Louisiana; and
- Reached tens of thousands of people annually, on and offline, with our multimedia snake stories.

Black Moses, male Arizona Black Rattlesnake, resting in the brush.

Supporters like YOU make this happen — not grants, not megadonors. We genuinely mean it when we say we couldn't do this work without you. Thank you!

Who We Are

- Melissa Amarello, Executive Director
- Jeff Smith, Co-founder, Treasurer
- Steve Marlatt, Chair
- Jesús A. Rivas, PhD, Vice-Chair
- Julie Ray, PhD, Secretary
- Gordon M. Burghardt, PhD, Director
- Kit Kleinschmidt, Director
- Emily Taylor, PhD, Director

The Buzz

is published by ASP for our supporters. We welcome your questions and suggestions: info@snakes.ngo • 575-956-5231.

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The Buzz

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Adrian (Arizona Black Rattlesnake) babysitting her nestmates' babies during her first pregnancy in 2015 (above). We first met Adrian in spring 2011 at a large communal den, when she was just a few months old. We saw her again at the den the following spring, and again in 2014. She had her first litter in 2015 when she was five years old and as usual, babysat her nestmates' newborns before giving birth to, and caring for, her own. In 2019 we observed her with babies all by herself in a strange place for a nest (right). While most nests consist of a rock shelter, Adrian had selected a soil burrow. Surprises like these keep us coming back for more snake-watching!

Please Share!

When you're done, please leave *The Buzz* where others can read it and learn to love snakes too.

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