

October 2022



The Reptile Review

Haus of Voodoo Reptile Sanctuary



Payson, Arizona



The Haus of Voodoo Team at the Northern Gila County Fair with “Buns” the Anaconda, in Payson, Arizona (Sep. 2022).

Our Inaugural Monthly Newsletter

September in review plus the latest from the Haus

The Haus of Voodoo is excited to bring you our new monthly update. We hope to give you a sneak peek into some of the work that we do at the Haus, introduce you to the people who make it possible, and highlight the incredible animals that make it all worthwhile. Enjoy!

September started out busy with the Northern Gila County Fair at the Payson Event Center. The Haus of Voodoo Team spent three days camping out with some of our Ambassador Animals to ensure they received round-the-clock supervision and care. You may have seen us there with “Gris Gris” the Gila Monster, “Hoodoo” the Emu, or “Aphrodite” the Tegu.

A special thanks to the Phoenix Herpetological Society for loaning us an incredible guest for the weekend: “Avocado” the American Alligator. Additional thanks go out to Hold Fast Reptiles & Exotics in Apache Junction, for the honor of hosting “Buns,” the eight-foot Green Anaconda, for the weekend. “Avocado” and “Buns” were without doubt crowd favorites.

It was an honor to meet so many of our Rim Country neighbors at the Fair and hear so much appreciation for our work.

September was a big month for intakes, and we welcomed a host of new residents to the Haus, including: a Savannah Monitor; an Arizona Mountain Kingsnake; an Arizona Longnose Snake; Leopard Geckos; a Ball Python; Bearded Dragons; and a group (called a knob, knot, or nest) of native Sonoran Desert Toads, also known as Colorado River Toads.

Late September brought some very exciting news – our acceptance as one of the fourteen founding members of the Association of Reptile Rescue Organizations (ARRO), a nationwide network of Reptile Rescues.

We finished the month with an appearance at the Payson Tractor Supply Company Farmer’s Market. We love sharing our mission and Ambassador Animals with locals at events like this, and we are honored and grateful for the continued support of the folks at TSC in Payson.

Upcoming Events

Vulture City Paracon

October 7-9, 2022

Join us at this paranormal gathering designed to assist with the ongoing preservation of historic Vulture City. We will be there with several of our Animal Ambassadors exploring the haunted history of this western town.

Haus-O-Ween

October 15, 2022

We will be celebrating Halloween and raising money for some fence repairs at the Haus. There will be hot dogs, a mini-Haunted Haus, candy, a costume contest, and REPTILES!

Hotrod Horror

Hootenanny 2022

October 22, 2022

The 2nd annual HHH at the Horny Toad in Glendale will have food, fun, vendors, cars, live music, and it will be raising money for the Haus.



Avocado the American Alligator stretching his legs at the Northern Gila County Fair, in Payson, Arizona (September 2022).



Two of our Haus "Wannabes:" a harmless Arizona/Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake in quarantine, where it will remain for thirty days before being placed in a more permanent enclosure (left); and a harmless Sonoran Gophersnake having a stretch on the floor of the Haus "Reptile Room" (right). Both snakes can be found locally and are excellent examples of Batesian Mimicry.

The "Wannabes"

Batesian Mimicry at the Haus

The October issue of Reptiles Magazine featured a great piece on Batesian Mimicry (*Batesian Mimicry and the Evolution of Snakes*, October 4, 2022), a subject near and dear to our hearts here at the Haus, as September saw the expansion of our "Wannabes" collection.

So, what exactly is Batesian Mimicry, and how is it relevant to the Haus? Put simply, Batesian Mimicry is when a generally harmless snake (although it occurs in many species) evolves to mimic, or imitate, the *aposematic* (coloration and character) traits of a more dangerous species (*Id*). We have several great examples of this evolutionary trait at the Haus

One of the most prominent examples of this in nature (referenced in the Reptiles Article) occurs in Kingsnakes, a harmless Colubrid, who in some cases have evolved to mimic the coloration of their local subspecies of Coral Snakes (a potentially venomous Elapid). Locally, the harmless Arizona/Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis pyromelana*) has evolved to match the coloration of the venomous Arizonan/Sonoran Coral Snake (*Micruroides euryxanthus*).

Another prominent Arizonan example can be seen in our *harmless* local Gophersnakes. The subspecies endemic to our area, the Sonoran Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer affinis*), has evolved to mimic the coloration and behavior of the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*). In addition to their Rattlesnake-like pattern and coloration, a Sonoran Gophersnake may take a coiled striking position and flatten their head into a triangular shape to mimic a Rattlesnake when threatened. Additionally, they may shake their tail very rapidly and rub it against leaves, as well as hiss very loudly, to make a buzzing sound like a rattle.

Our final "Wannabe" at the Haus is The False Water Cobra (*Hydrodynastes gigas*), also known as the Brazilian Smooth Snake. This mimic will "hood," or flatten, its neck to resemble a Cobra when it is threatened. These snakes, found naturally in South America, can grow to an impressive 8 feet and are semi-aquatic. Their venom is apparently as powerful as a Timber Rattlesnake. However, they are rear-fanged, so they lack the means to effectively deliver it. As such, they are generally not considered dangerous to people.

Check out our "Wannabe" Ambassador Animals at one of our Upcoming Events (Page 1).

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Tractor Supply Co., Payson

Phoenix Herpetological Society

Hold Fast Reptiles & Exotics – Apache Junction



False Water Cobra (*Hydrodynastes gigas*) "hooding" to look like a Cobra.

"Red on yellow kill a fellow" ... follow this rhyme and it may be your time...

"Red on yellow kill a fellow. Red on black friend of Jack."

Most have probably heard this oft-cited mnemonic, used to identify a Coral Snake, and differentiate it from other harmless species of snake that may have similar coloration.

But did you know this rhyme is only *generally* consistent with the Eastern Coral Snake (*Micrurus fulvius fulvius*)? What about the Texas Coral Snake (*Micrurus fulvius tenere*); the South Florida Coral Snake (*Micrurus fulvius barbourin*); or our local Sonoran Coral Snake (*Micruroides euryxanthus*), a distinct genus entirely from other U.S. Coral Snakes? What about the dozens of subspecies of Coral Snake throughout South America and the rest of the world?

Sure, some will fit the rhyme. But when you consider that the deadly Arizona Coral Snake may have no yellow at all (often having whiteish bands instead), and over 150 other snakes (some dangerous, some not) attempt to mimic the coloration of the Coral Snake with varying degrees of success, do you really want to leave it to a rhyme? We don't!