

Preface

Fifty years ago when I was an undergraduate biology major at Austin Peay State College, I signed up for a course labeled "Field Zoology" being taught by David Hilton Snyder, a young and energetic biology professor who specialized in vertebrates but whose knowledge ran the gamut of living things. In that course, I was introduced to the wide array of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals in Tennessee and Kentucky. Although the fishes, birds, and mammals were captivating, it was the secretive and reclusive amphibians and reptiles (collectively referred to as herpetofauna, or herps for short) that most fascinated me. During the summer of 1965, following my senior year and preceding my first year as a master's student at Austin Peay, Professor Snyder offered me the opportunity to work with him on a project funded by the Tennessee Valley Authority to conduct an inventory of the herpetofauna of the newly established Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL), occupying the space straddling the Tennessee-Kentucky border between Kentucky Lake (impounded Tennessee River) and Lake Barkley (impounded Cumberland River). Over the next two years, Professor Snyder, his family, and a crew including me and several other students crisscrossed LBL and its adjacent waters in search of its herpetofauna, gathering data on the variety of species, their distributions, and their habitat preferences. We meticulously recorded all of this information in notebooks, ledgers, and catalogs, and it was to serve eventually as the knowledge base for a book on LBL's amphibians and reptiles. In 1967, I left Tennessee for my first teaching job at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, and in 1968 David Snyder moved to South Bend, Indiana, to work on a Ph.D. in zoology at Notre Dame University. In 1971, he was granted a doctorate and returned to Austin Peay to resume his teaching duties and other obligations, which included completion of the LBL herpetofauna book. In 1972, his book *Amphibians and Reptiles of Land Between the Lakes* was published by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and until it went out of print, it was the main source of information on these fascinating creatures in the LBL region.

The current edition is based on Dr. Snyder's 1972 book but includes new species accounts, factual updates, and corrections of minor errors. The

layout follows that of the earlier publication: an updated introduction is followed by separate sections on each major group (amphibians first), with general information preceding the individual species accounts. Subheadings have been added to the species accounts to help readers more easily find the information of most interest to them. The species accounts are followed by keys to species, a list of marginally occurring forms, acknowledgments, an appendix, a glossary, a list of suggested references, illustration credits, and an index to species—all of which have been updated. All but one of the photographs in the 1972 book have been replaced by digital images taken by the authors and others.

My collaborators and I hope that anyone interested in the animal life of LBL will find this work of value as they explore its forests, fields, ponds, lakes, and adjacent reservoirs. Reptiles and amphibians, though often maligned, are an integral part of the web of life, serving as both predator and prey as energy passes through whatever ecosystem they are a part of. Knowing more about them and their roles in nature will likely lead to an increase in the respect and appreciation they deserve.

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