

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF GRAND CANYON: what kind of a guide would guides like to see?

A collaborative effort¹ is underway to create a new guide to the amphibians and reptiles of the Grand Canyon Region. It has been almost 25 years since Miller et al.'s 1982 publication "Amphibians and Reptiles of the Grand Canyon National Park" (Grand Canyon Natural History Association Monograph #4). This is a very good book, and was up to date in 1982, however, it suffers from poor organization and is difficult to navigate. Additionally, the 1982 book is now outdated with new geographic records for herps available for the Grand Canyon region. Moreover, many Latin names for amphibians and reptiles have been changed and some herps' family affiliation has changed since 1982; a new treatment will reflect these new taxonomies.

Other books in the works include "Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona" (Brennan and Holycross 2006; to be released in April), and two "Atlas" projects, one for "Snakes of Arizona" (Holycross and Brennan, 2007?) and one for "Amphibians and Reptiles of Arizona Exclusive of Snakes" (Holycross, Frost and Brennan, 2008?). The plan is for a semi-technical publication to be put together after these larger, technical documents are well underway so that it may rely on distribution records that result from efforts involved with these massive (and expensive) projects. When these records are available a field guide, catered to hikers, river-runners, and rim visitors will be produced. The geographic scope for both the semi-technical document and the guide will be similar to that used by Miller et al. (1982), while the guide will include more specific information on the ecology and behavior of herps encountered in Grand Canyon, and will provide information regarding where some common species may be reliably observed. The semi-technical document will use dot records (for reliable voucher specimens) on maps, whereas the guide will rely on shaded relief maps of distributions within the Grand Canyon region. Problematic and uncertain distributions will be discussed, and there will be a call for input from the guides' community with regard to what kind of a guide they will find most useful.

¹ The group of authors includes Thomas Brennan, Geoff Carpenter, Charles Drost, Andy Holycross, Jeff Lovich, Trevor Persons, Robert Reed and Larry Stevens.