

## REPTILES Magazine Photo Shoot

**Many reptiles recently visited the REPTILES magazine editorial offices for a photo shoot.**

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If you read REPTILES you may have noticed that an integral part of the magazine – indeed, many readers' favorite part – is the inclusion of reptile photos. After all, what good would a reptile magazine be without reptile photos? But in addition to the reptile photos used in the magazine, BowTie has need of reptile images for a variety of other uses, as well. This blog would be one. Marketing materials, such as the sell sheets the sales department uses, is another. You never know when we need to lay our hands on a good-looking reptile photos.

The magazine has long relied upon the services of ace reptile photographers, such as Bill Love (who also writes REPTILES' long-running column, "Herp Queries"), David Northcott, Zig Leszczynski and others. These guys are the true masters, and their photos have been a huge factor in the fact that the magazine is still around.

In recent years we've been building an in-house photo library comprised of BowTie-owned images (for those who don't know, BowTie Inc. is the publisher of REPTILES and many other pet magazines). The library is the result, in large part, of photo shoots that we've been holding here in the Irvine, Calif., office. Because we publish Dog Fancy and other dog magazines it's not uncommon for dogs to be photographed here. Cats, too, have had their time in the photo studio, and birds.

We've had some reptile shoots, as well, but recently I decided it was time to really beef up the reptile quotient in our photo library. So I contacted Mike Barnes at California Zoological Supply, a reptile wholesaler located in nearby Santa Ana, Calif. The guys at Cal Zoo, owner Ty Dillon and manager Mike, have always been gracious when I've called upon them for various favors. They've let me bring my staff to Cal Zoo for some reptile education, and they loaned me live animals when I gave a reptile presentation at a local elementary school – stuff like that. I asked Mike if he would be interested in bringing a bunch of herps to BowTie to be photographed, and he sent me his current stock list. I chose more than 70 species and last Friday Mike arrived with animals in tow.

I've written in the past about how fun it is to show reptiles to the public, especially non-reptile people who are not overly familiar with the animals. This goes for BowTie editors, too. While the REPTILES and ReptileChannel staff are of course familiar with herps, and are exposed to them at reptile expos, etc., not all the editors, as well as other people such as production coordinators, graphic designers, etc., get to observe them as often. One such person was our assigned photographer during the shoot, Gina Cioli.

Gina has photographed reptiles here before, including some pretty large pythons, but up to last Friday she had never been confronted with as diverse a selection as the one Mike brought for our all-day shoot. Soon after his arrival, once the boxes were unpacked and the various deli cups, pillowcases and Chinese takeout boxes (!) were emptied, she found herself nosing her camera lens up to all manner of snakes, lizards, turtles and frogs. Mike, REPTILES Managing Editor Stephanie Starr, ReptileChannel associate editor Ben Weiner and I all got a kick out of the sudden jerks backward Gina would make when a snake slithered toward her lens, or when a frog would leap in her direction. These were all pretty young specimens, and some were pretty fast, but Gina was a great sport, and she had a great time photographing all the animals.

The shoot wasn't overly complicated, and it didn't require a lot of set preparation. All the animals were photographed against a white background, and some were placed on bark or branches, also provided by Mike. He not only brought the reptiles but was also the primary herp wrangler. This means Mike was the one who was on the receiving end of a couple of nips from some of the grumpier subjects -- the one standing out in my mind is the Tokay gecko that was hanging from his hand. There was peeing, too, which isn't entirely unexpected in such circumstances (and no, I don't mean on behalf of any of the humans involved).

All the reptiles and amphibians were treated very carefully, and everyone present helped position them for photos, or corral those few that managed to escape our grasp temporarily. I remember a red-eyed treefrog that I became quite adept at catching in mid air as he kept jumping out of frame. And I never really thought of milksnakes as being particularly quick, but we had some very quick slitherers that day.

It was a fun shoot, and by the end of the day I was pretty worn out. I'd like to thank Mike and Cal Zoo for once again

helping me out with another reptile project. Because of them, the reptile representation in the BowTie photo library has grown by leaps and bounds, literally!

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