

February 2009 Editor's Note

Hey now, they're the all-stars, get your game on ...

By Russ Case

I never expected to use the lyrics from Smash Mouth's "All-Star" in an editorial title, but they seemed appropriate.

The occasion for this mind-boggling burst of literary creativity and pop culture reference is our first "Herp All-Stars" issue. The all-stars are the most popular pet herps available in the hobby today, and it is some of these animals — the pet store mainstays, the species you always can find at a reptile expo — that are the focus of this special issue. These bread-and-butter herps are the commonly encountered species that many people favor as pets, and — very importantly — they also serve as many beginners' introduction to the reptilekeeping hobby.

All-star herps will always have a home in REPTILES. Our new column, "Herpers' Most Wanted" will ensure that. This special issue could be considered prong number two in a two-pronged plan to highlight the animals that remain favorites with the herpkeeping crowd. Leopard geckos, boa constrictors, painted turtles and corn snakes are on the roster for this issue. All four reside within the upper echelon of the most popular herps available in the hobby today.

Longtime subscribers and veteran herpkeepers need not worry that the pages of REPTILES will be flooded with "beginner" articles. Upcoming issues will have much to interest all herpers no matter what their experience levels. Big constrictors and tortoises, venomous snakes and other species best left to the experts will always have a home here, as will articles about all other herps both in the wild and in captivity, field herping, herp health, conservation and everything reptilian.

In addition to the all-stars, this issue includes our interview with Bryan Christy, author of *The Lizard King*. We spoke with Christy and his subject, Mike Van Nostrand, whose past reptile smuggling activities figure prominently in the book, to see what motivated them to work together and how their lives have been affected since the book was published.

Should we plan future Herp All-Stars issues? Give us your vote.