

LITERATURE

This column will give information about new literature, publications, books, etc.

Tips concerning new literature are welcome, and should be sent to Ed Prilst, Voorstraat 61, 3512 AK Utrecht, The Netherlands.

De boomsnuffelaar (*Dryophis nasuta*); A. Zwinenberg. Aquariumwereld, 1976, 29 (1): 8-10.

This snake (also known as: Ahaetulla nasuta and Dendrelaphis nasutus) belongs to the opisthographic snakes and should be treated accordingly.

This snake occurs in several Asiatic countries and primarily inhabits rain-forests where it can be found on branches and twigs of shrubs. It feeds on lizards, frogs, birds and mammals. It is an ovoviviparous snake and has litters of up to 22 young. The new-born are 31-45 cm long and shed their skin for the first time when they are about two weeks old. The juveniles feed on young frogs and pink mice. This snake should be kept in a large well planted terrarium, sprayed regularly to give a high humidity. The temperature should range from 22-26°C. Floor heating seems to be superfluous.

Leptophis ahaetulla, een onbekende boomslang uit tropisch Afrika; A. Zwinenberg. Aquariumwereld (1976), 29 (4): 78-83.

This snake is a member of the aglyphic Colubridae, and although they are not equipped with fangs, their saliva is nevertheless poisonous and lethal to its prey. The venom causes pain and bleeding in humans.

Leptophis ahaetulla has a large range, Central-

and South America, and inhabitates areas rich in plants and with a high humidity.

It is an oviparous snake which lays 2-10 eggs.

It feeds on tree-frogs and tree dwelling lizards and in captivity will take mice.

Temperatures should range from 24-30°C and humidity should be high. In captivity intervals between feedings occur which may last up to 10 months. As a peculiarity the author mentions that, if held by the tail, the tail will break off, without losing much blood, but not growing again.

The female (about 80 cm long), after the extra eye plates were removed with cotton wool and warm water, started feeding well on chunks of boneless cod and sprats. On September 23rd she gave birth to 16 young (about 25 cm long) which on October 18th had not yet shed their skins.

Brief Notes on Breeding the Snake *Elaphe longissima* in Captivity; K. Werb. Herpetile (1982). Vol.7 (4): 12.

An adult female was caught in France and found to be gravid. Six eggs were laid on July 26th 1978 and five hatched between September 11th and 19th. One male was kept for breeding purposes; it had to be force-fed for almost a year.

When the male had attained a length of approximately 80 cm (about 31 months old), the original female was introduced (approximately 100 cm). On May 9th 1981 mating occurred immediately. They were left together for a fortnight but mating was only witnessed again on May 13th.

On June 12th a clutch of 8 infertile eggs was laid. The next year mating occurred on May 22nd, 31st and June 2nd. On July 9th and 10th 11 eggs were laid. They were incubated on damp vermiculite (27°C) and eight hatched between September 2nd and 9th.

Unusual Food Intake of a Diamond Python; J. Stopford. *Herpetofauna (Australia)*, 1980, Vol. 12 (1): 35.

The author had been given a Diamond Python (Morelia spilotes spilotes) which had just been removed from an old house and had been put in a linen bag. When the animal, in excellent condition and 2 metres long, was removed a few hours later the stomach contents were found to have been regurgitated. These consisted of: a terry toweling tea towel approximately 45x75 cm, two lengths of sash cord each approximately 1 metre long, one cigarette pack cellophane wrapping, two pieces of brown paper, a piece of newspaper, half a plastic bag and four rat droppings. On examining the animal a splinter of wood and several pieces of gravel were found lodged in the mouth. There was no further evidence of a rat. Did the snake strike at a rat and end up consuming the nest instead, or did it eat the nest because it tasted of rat?

Observations on the Yellow-Bellied Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster flavigaster*); S. Housefield. *Herpetile* (1982), Vol. 7 (4): 23-24.

The author purchased a pair of snakes from his local dealer, which on close inspection showed several things. The slightly shorter male had a puffy eye covered with several old eye plates, a small abcess on the flank, and a touch of scale rot on his belly. The female also had a puffy eye and from a slight bulge in her rear third appeared to be gravid. Each snake was placed in its own tank with a hide-box, newspaper on the floor and heated by a light bulb to 27°C. Night temperature was 21°C.

After treating the male, it has had to be force-fed every week up till now.

Social Behavior in a Captive Group of Indian Pythons, *Python molurus* (*Serpentes, Boidae*) with Formation of a Linear Social Hierarchy; Barker, David G., James B. Murphy & Kenneth W. Smith. *Copeia*, 1979 (3): 466-471.

Four male and one female Python molurus were maintained together and their social interactions observed for 85 days. The acts and the act systems involved in communication encompassed the entire elongate morphology of the snake. The sequence of events comprising the male combat ritual was observed over 60 times; a stable linear social hierarchy between the four males was established. The combat consisted of: recognition-investigation, ascent, alignment, orientation, topping and submission. Biting and vigorous use of pelvic spurs was recorded. Individual recognition of other males either provoked a snake to engage in combat or to withdraw. Courtship and copulatory sequences were triphasic: tactile-chase, tactile-alignment, and intromission and coitus. The number of successful copulations corresponded to the hierarchial status of the males and male combat occurred in only three instances after breeding.