

LITERATURE

This column will give information about new literature, publications, books, etc. Tips concerning new literature are welcome, and should be sent to Jan Cor Jacobs, Van Diemenstraat 6-bis, 3531 GH Utrecht, The Netherlands.

BOOKREVIEW

by

JOHN VAN DER POLS

Pythons and boas by Peter J. Stafford, 1986. T.F.H. Publications, No. PS-846. Pp. 1-192. Price: £ 17.50. ISBN: 086622-1832. T.F.H. Publications Ltd., 4 Kier Park, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7DS, England.

In accordance with the title, the book deals with Boidae. The book contains 110 colour and 26 black-and-white photos. As a matter of fact the quality of the photos is not always perfect and some of them have already been published before in other books. The photos taken by the author himself however, are all of good quality.

The book gives a fairly complete survey of the Boidae. Different aspects covered include: the origin of the family, age, appearance, behaviour, diseases, etc., and also suggestions for maintaining boids in captivity.

The seven subfamilies of the Boidae, (including the subfamilies Tropidophiinae, Bolyeriinae and Loxoceminae, which are classified as families in their own right by some herpetologists) are discussed in separate chapters. For each subfamily a few species are briefly described.

However, some inaccuracies are present. For example on page 56, where Python timoriensis is described. This species has some similarities with both Python reticulatus and Python amethistinus. The author however writes that the central line on the head of Python timo-

riensis is not as long as that of *Python reticulatus*, whilst the drawing of the head of *Python timoriensis* is (almost) identical with that of *Python amethistinus*.

Furthermore the species of the genus *Candoia* have, according to the author, litters of more than twenty young snakes (p. 98). This is not applicable to at least two subspecies. Perhaps one should note that one species, *Casarea dussumieri*, lays eggs, which is unique for boas! One more remark: on page 52 a photo is shown of a *Boa constrictor* and a *Python molurus bivittatus*. This photograph however also shows a *Python molurus molurus*.

In spite of the remarks I made, the book is recommended to all boa and python lovers.

Haltung und Zucht von *Leptodeira nigrofasciata*;

F. Golder. Salamandra (1984), Vol. 20 (1): 3-10.

Initially the description and distribution of this species is recorded. The animals are kept in a sterile terrarium of 60x30x40 cm. Day temperatures range from 24-27°C and up to 30°C when direct sun shines on the vivarium. Relative humidity is 60-65% during the day and 90% at night. The snakes are active during the night only and have never yet attempted to bite.

They have been force-fed for five years, since they will not eat mice voluntarily.

The author has never seen copulation but the female has laid three clutches of eggs each year, commencing in 1979 (66 eggs in three years).

The eggs are incubated at 24-28°C and a relative humidity of about 100%. They hatch after 61-65 days. The young are 14-15 cm long and are force-fed with guppies until they are approximately 21 cm.

Ein seltener Python und seine Nachzucht: *Liasis mackloti*; J. Bulian & W. Bröer. Salamandra (1984), Vol. 20 (4): 205-211.

After giving some detail on distribution and the systematic status of *Liasis mackloti*, some earlier breeding results are reviewed briefly. The adult male had been in a small terrarium for two years, because he had been a difficult feeder. Following this the male was placed in a terrarium measuring 100x55x100 cm, fitted with a climbing branch and a small water trough.

Heating, consisting of a 40 Watt heating cable, wedged between two flagstones, and lighting, a 20 Watt neon light, are working for twelve hours a day. Day temperatures are 34°C (July)-28°C (December) and 22°C (summer) - 18°C (winter) during the night. Relative humidity is 50 plus/minus 5% all year round.

A female *Liasis mackloti* was added to the male in July 1981. Copulations were seen in December 1981 and January 1982. The female did not become gravid. In August they were separated again. They were each housed in a terrarium similar to the above mentioned except the heating was switched off, resulting in a temperature of 24°C during the day and 18°C at night.

The male was injected with vitamin E and the female was given multivitamins. The animals were then placed together on 27 September 1982, but separated again from 25 October to 20 November 1982 since no mating behaviour had occurred. Then first copulations took place on 25 December 1982 and more followed. Mating always started around 18.00 hours. The obviously gravid female stopped feeding on 30 December 1982. On 4 April 1983 nine eggs were laid, three of which were small and probably infertile.

Artificial incubation took 87-89 days at a temperature of 29 plus/minus 0.1⁰C.

The young snakes averaged 42.8 cm and 30.6 g. After their first shed two of them ate (1-2 weeks old) mice, the other four had to be force-fed before they started on little pieces of chick meat. On 11 March 1984 the largest of them is 89 cm long and weighs 186 g.