PROBLEMATIC OVIPOSITION IN A SPECIMEN OF *ELAPHE GUTTATA* (RED PHASE ALBINO).

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MY ANIMALS

My animals were born on 1 June 1984 and are in very good condition. They consume an average of three mice a week and are quite active. Because I installed red lamps in the cages, which remain switched on during the evening hours, in addition to the normal daytime lamps, I am able to watch my animals in the evening.
From hatching they have eaten pinkies very avidly and have been growing well. Early in December they started hibernating. I provided a simple hibernation box for them in the following manner. To a cat's box I glued a U-section in which a glass pane can be fixed. On all sides there are perforations for ventilation. In this box I put wood wool and a small water basin. The animals are placed in a room with a temperature of 5°C for about five weeks, of course only after I have made sure that there is no food left in their digestive tracts.
After hibernation, I separated the animals and put them in a cage with 16 hours daylight (abruptly). The next day they ate two mice, and did so again after two more days. After a week I brought the couple together. They started mating immediately. During the next two weeks I repeatedly observed copulations.

In May the female deposited five unfertile eegs, probably due to her immaturity. In December 1986 the whole hibernating procedure was repeated. On 6 January 1987 they were taken out of hibernation. On 13 January the male was brought to the female, and again he started to court her immediately. Copulations were observed until 20 January. After that, the female ate two mice on 7 February, and then stopped eating until the delivery.

THE DELIVERY

On 26 February 1987 the female shed, and on 7 March 1987 she started to deliver. Immediately she appeared to have difficulties with the eggs, which were too large (there even was one of 67 mm). At 13.30 hours she had laid four eggs, but then she was clearly worn out and stopped labouring. I covered her cage to calm her. The next morning I asked the advice of Dr. Lateur, who gave the animal Oxytocin and injections of calcium, and introduced an antibiotic ointment into the cloaca. The animal did not respond to this treatment, so in the evening of 9 March the decision was made to apply a caesarian section.
At 20.30 hours that night we put the animal in a plastic bag with Fluothane and oxygen, to anaesthetize her. After 12 minutes she appeared to be still active. She then got an injection with Lidocaine HCl 2%. Operation started at 20.45 hours. An incision was made at the third egg on the median line in the direction of the tail. The oviduct was opened and six eggs were removed. Oviduct and epidermis were stitched with Dexon, and a plastic spray dressing applied. During the operation oxygen was constantly administered.
At 21.05 hours the operation was finished. The animal was now left to recover, but there was only a weak pulsation of the heart and no activity. At

21.55 hours the animal recovered from the narcosis and was immediately active. She was put in a sterile cage with a small water basin which was glued to the floor to prevent it being overturned. The eggs were put in an incubator at a temperature of 28^{0}C. The four already laid eggs were rather smooth and white at first, but after some days brown spots appeared and they started to shrivel. The eggs that were removed during the operation spoiled after some days too , and were clearly not fertile.
The female ate a small mouse at 13 March 1987 and shed on 22 March.

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POSTSCRIPTUM OF PROF. DR. P. ZWART

It is important to grant the animals a sufficient period of rest between gestations (Zwart & van Riel, 1982) and to provide for a sufficient quantity of calcium in the food, for instance by smearing the prey mice with a pulp of calcium-lactate or Amrepcal, Gistocal etc.

REFERENCES

Zwart, P. and C.A.P. van Riel, 1982. Repeated breeding with *Boa constrictor constrictor*. Litt. Serp., Vol. 2 (4): 180-181.

Translation: Ton Steehouder.