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# 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, Tesselschadestraat 6, 3521 XV Utrecht, The Netherlands.*

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*Erfahrungen mit *Thamnophis butleri* während ganzjähriger Freilandhaltung; Udo Strathemann. Sauria (Berlin-W.), 1986, Vol. 8 (1): 5-6.*

*Thamnophis butleri* lives in the northern part of the United States of America and in southern Canada. Its biotope is mainly moist pasture-land and banks and shores of rivers and lakes. In August 1982 the author bought 4 *Thamnophis butleri* and housed them in an open air terrarium with a surface of 6 m<sup>2</sup>. This terrarium had some shelter places which were fit for hibernation. At the end of October and in the beginning of November the animals located these shelter places and hibernated in there till the middle of March. *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis* and *Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*, which were also housed in the same terrarium, appeared some time later. The mating of *Thamnophis butleri* took place from the end of April till far into May. Because it is almost impossible to feed the young snakes and because the author feared some problems with hibernation in an open air terrarium, the juveniles were brought up in another terrarium inside the house.

Die hinterasiatischen Kletternattern der Gattung *Elaphe*. Teil. 4: *Elaphe dione* (Pallas, 1773);

There are many varieties of *Elaphe dione* and therefore it is astonishing that no subspecies are yet described. The widespread area of distribution encloses northern Turkey, south-west Russia, the southern part of the Ukraine which borders on the Caspian Sea, northern Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Korea and China. The snakes live in several biotopes, varying from semi-desert and steppes to lake and river shores. In the Caucasus and Central Asia one can find *Elaphe dione* even up to the tree line. Its menu is as varied as its area of distribution is widespread. Small rodents, birds, bird eggs, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects are eaten. In the terrarium *Elaphe dione* is easy to keep. Because *Elaphe dione* is not a very active snake a terrarium of 70x50x50 cm is considered sufficient for two pairs. The author keeps his snakes at day temperatures of 25-27°C; at night the temperature drops to 20°C. The snakes take half grown mice. Though they eat pieces of meat, the author advises to offer this only sparingly, because meat never has the same food value as mice. Mating usually takes place in March and April. It is interesting to note that a female *Elaphe dione* is able to store sperm during a long period and wait till the circumstances allow a successful incubation period. The incubation time of the eggs is short: depending on the temperature it can take only 13-14 days! At day temperatures of 28-32°C and night temperatures of 23-25°C the eggs hatch after about 14 days; at temperatures of respectively 25-27°C and 20°C the eggs hatch after 25-30 days. After their first slough the young snakes eat baby mice.

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Die hinterasiatischen Kletternattern der Gattung *Elaphe*. Teil 4: *Elaphe bimaculata* (Schmidt, 1925); Klaus Dieter Schulz. Sauria (Berlin-W.), 1986, Vol. 8 (2): 23-26.

*Elaphe bimaculata* differs only slightly from *Elaphe dione*. The author gives some distinctions, but remarks that it is still not known for certain whether *Elaphe dione* has subspecies in Central China or whether *Elaphe bimaculata* has to be considered as a species on its own. Furthermore it is possible that both species have interbred. *Elaphe bimaculata* is relatively easy to keep in a terrarium. As with *Elaphe dione* it does not need a spacious terrarium. At day the temperature should be 25-28°C; at night 20-22°C. As for food half grown mice should be offered. One must take care to ensure that only one snake grasps each prey item. However *Elaphe bimaculata* prefers small bird eggs, for instance canary eggs. Some snakes also eat one-day chicks. The author gives his snakes a hibernations period during 3 months every year at a temperature of ca. 15°C. When he bred with his snakes, they measured 60-70 cm. The eggs were hatched at a temperature of 25-28°C. At night the temperature dropped to 20°C. The eggs hatched after about 30 days; the youngsters ate pink mice after their first slough.