BREEDING OF THE GRAY RAT SNAKE, ELAPHE OBSELATA SPILOIDES

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PARENTS

The parent animals were bought about two years ago, especially for breeding. The male was doing well, but the female not. She ate well but threw up the prey every time. This continued despite treatment against intestinal parasites.

After about half a year the situation changed for the better, although the stools were light pink coloured. The smell of the faeces was also different from normal. In the second year she ate much better and increased in weight but she still appears thin. Even now the stools are still pinky coloured.

BREEDING

The animals were not separated either during or after hibernation. I have not observed copulations. On July 6th, 1989, in the morning the female layed 5 eggs. One was visibly suspect. This egg weighed 11 grams, it was wet and had an oblong form. The colour was irregular and too yellow. The other four eggs were fertile, which was observed by translumination of the eggs, showing vascularisation.
The weights of the eggs was as follows:

egg no.	weight (g)	weight hatchling
1	3	-
2	12	8,5
3	3	-
4	5	3,5
5	11	-

Table 1

Egg 3 was quite abnormal in form. It had a small bulge in the form of an egg.

HATCHLINGS

Eggs 2 and 4 finally hatched. All the others were tainted during the incubation period. The smallest young did not completely digest the yolk sac and was very tiny. Compared to him the other one was a giant. Unfortunately both were male so I could not make a breeding pair.

The big young started eating nest mice directly after the first slough. I force fed the small young before its first slough with small pieces of bovine heart and mice tails. After about two weeks it started eating day-old mice.

CONCLUSION

The joy of this breeding was that I finally got hatchlings from a female that was almost written off, and that even the very tiny young is now doing well. I am pleased with this success.