

## BOOKREVIEW

*The Reproductive Husbandry of Pythons and Boas.* By: Richard A. Ross & Gerald Marzec. Published by: The Institute for Herpetological Research, Stanford, California.

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In the last ten years snake breeding has increased significantly. Through increased efforts by the snakekeeper regarding the circumstances in which his snakes are kept, and also the pressure of public opinion, we have reached the stage where in the amateur-herpetological circuit often young snakes of even rare species are offered, often so many that the regular trade in wild-caught animal is stopped.

The reviewed book will again contribute to a new series of bredable snakes will be added. In almost recipe-like descriptions it clearly explains how things work.

The book consists of two parts. The first part deals with the anatomical and physiological aspects that are important to know about hatching and breeding snakes. Of course the well-experienced snakekeeper feels that he does better. But it is worthwhile to study carefully this part and to reflect on whether one's own techniques are less good or even quite harmful. In lucid scheme's anatomical and physiological data are presented and explained. The disruption of the normal processes of reproduction and hatching by tender or causative agent is fully covered. It is explained scientifically and also clearly. Everyone should learn from this section.

The second part contains extensive data about breeding. For many large Boid species periods of mating and hatching are provided schematically, together with special features about sub-species. It is quite useful for the (even experienced) breeder to study these schemes and to discover that between sub-species quite large differences in e.g. mating periods occur. To prove that these data are not based on theoretical studies the authors have published many highly informative pictures.

To pay a bit more attention to these pictures, they are informative and of good quality. Also in the first section of the book many pictures illustrate good and bad husbandry in snake breeding. It is evident that this specification has its impact on the photogenicity. But one small point of criticism. Why should a newspaper be used as background? At least a white sheet of paper should be used. Anyhow, it is proof that the authors judging the object to be photographed, have seen the object alone and have wished to show it as clearly as possible.

In conclusion, an eminent book, that would be well situated on the bookshelf of every snake breeder, or better still next to his vivarium, because you have to use this book. The price of \$ 75.-- will not be a problem to the breeder of these expensive animals. The book can only be ordered by direct ordering from the Institute for Herpetological Research in Stanford, California.