

## LITERATURE

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**An Estimation of the Age and Life-Span of the genus *Trimeresurus* (*Reptilia, Serpentes, Viperidae*) on the Amami Oshima Islands, Japan;** Minakami, Korebumi. *Journal of Herpetology*, 1979, Vol. 13 (2): 147-152.

Estimated duration of the life of snakes of the genus *Trimeresurus* in Japan. Two snake species of the genus *Trimeresurus flavoviridis* and *Trimeresurus okinavensis*, live on the island of Amami Oshima in Japan. They are common terrestrial venomous snakes.

*Trimeresurus flavoviridis* lays eggs on Amami Oshima from June until early in August, which hatch after an incubation of 40-41 days. At birth the juveniles are 34,0-36,3 cm long. The eggs of *Trimeresurus okinavensis* hatch already 3 or 4 days after laying. The juveniles of this species are on average 15 cm long. The measured minimum body length of pregnant *Trimeresurus flavoviridis* is 110 cm, of pregnant *Trimeresurus okinavensis* 45 cm.

In snakes it is possible to determine the age posthumously by counting the numbers of rings which have formed on the skull or in the centre of the vertebra. Initially this was done by estimation; later it was proved that in some snake species there indeed were yearly formed rings. Minakami (1979) proved this also in the case of the mentioned *Trimeresurus* species. He calculated the duration of life of *Trimeresurus flavoviridis*, on the basis of his data, as 10 years for males and 7 years for females.

It seemed to be possible to calculate the maximum length of this snake as 216 cm for males and 171 cm for females. The calculation seemed to agree with the length of the animals which were caught in the wild.: the longest animal was a male of 220 cm length. For male *Trimeresurus okinavensis* Minakami calculated the average duration of life as 19 years, whilst the maximum body length was calculated at 144 cm. For females the numbers were calculated respectively 15 years and 130 cm. This appeared to disagree with field observations; the longest animal caught was a female of 74 cm, whilst the length of an older animal was determined at 83,9 cm.

In the case of this snake further research will be necessary. It is not known by me whether this has already taken place.

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