

CARE AND BREEDING OF THE PUEBLAN MILK SNAKE (*LAMPROPELTIS TRIANGULUM CAMPBELLI*)

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BREEDING STOCK

In August 1990 I purchased a pair of *Lampropeltis triangulum campbelli*. Both animals were captive bred specimens from the United States. The male was born in 1988, the female in 1987. At the time the weight of the male was 410 grams, that of the female 270 grams.

CARE

The snakes were housed in separate cages measuring 55 x 40 x 40 cm (lwh). The floor of each cage was covered with aquaria gravel and the cages were furnished with a water bowl and a branch. For lighting and heating there were 25 Watt reflector light bulbs. Temperatures generally were between 25 and 30°C. During hot periods, when the temperature was getting too high, the lamps were switched off.

Both snakes are avid feeders and are fed with prey varying from nestling rats to adult mice. Prey is offered dead.

HIBERNATION

At the end of October I stopped feeding. From 1 to 12 November I gradually decreased light and temperature from 15 hours daily to 0 hour daily. Hibernation lasted from October 12th to January 12th 1991. During this period the temperature varied between 14°C and 18°C. There was always water available.

The male weighed 460 grams before hibernation, the female ca 370 grams. After hibernation the male weighed 460 grams, the female 380 grams.

MATING

On January 12th, 1991 heating and light were changed from 0 to 15 hours daily. The male took prey (a fuzzy baby mouse) for the first time on January 13th. The female started feeding on January 12th (a mouse), one hour after the end of the hibernation period!

The female shed her skin on February 4th at about 18.00h, after which the male was introduced into her cage. A copulation was observed at 19.00h, lasting until 19.30h. The male

was removed after copulation but put back with the female the next day. From that time on, the couple was brought together every other day for 24 hours. After each copulation, the male was taken away.

A second mating took place on February 14th from 11.00h to 11.25h, after the male's sloughing. Another copulation was observed on March 5th, lasting from 19.45h to 19.55h.

PREGNANCY

The female accepted food until March 12th, at which time she took two fuzzies. On March 31st she shed. I then prepared her a nesting place: an icecream box filled with lightly moistened wood chips. From April 7th onwards she became very restless. She kept crawling into and out of the nesting box and all around the cage.

On April 11th she layed ten eggs between 15.00h and 21.30h. Afterwards, she weighed 230 grams. On March 31st her weight had been 410 grams. After the laying of the eggs she drank a lot. On April 12th she started feeding again.

INCUBATION

The eggs were incubated in a incubator, with a substrate of moist wood chips, at temperatures between 25°C and 30°C.

HATCHLINGS

From June 14th to June 23rd all eggs hatched, with an even number of males and females. The hatchlings were nice and strong and from the beginning quite keen, striking vigourously at me. The adult animals are very docile.

One hatchling started feeding before the first sloughing. The rest (except two) did so directly after their first sloughing, food consisted of dead (defrosted) pinkies.

REFERENCES

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