

## INCUBATION AND HATCHING OF MONACLED COBRA EGGS

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On 13 December 1980 a female Monacled Cobra (*Naja naja kaouthia*) was picked up from the Toledo Zoo. This animal had been bred there and was obviously gravid.

After a return trip to Cincinnati the female was placed in a large wooden cage. A large plastic tray filled with damp peat moss was placed at one end of the cage in hope that she would deposit her eggs there.

At 9:00 A.M. on 22 December 1980 the female was found underneath the paper in her cage coiled around a cluster of 6 eggs. By 3:30 P.M. the same day she had laid a total of 26 eggs. These eggs were removed as they were laid. Each egg was weighed, measured, and then placed in an incubator set for 28°C.

The incubator was a 15 gallon glass aquarium fitted with a plate glass top. The heat source was a 100 Watt light bulb. The bulb was wired to a wafer thermostat. These thermostats can be purchased at food stores and chicken hatcheries.

Moist paper towels were used as a substrate and a covering over the eggs. The top towels were changed every week because they tend to fall apart if kept moist for long periods of time.

After two weeks of incubation eight of the eggs had gone bad. They were tan in colour, wrinkled, and slimy to the touch. These eggs were opened and found to be infertile.

By 20 January 1981 it appeared that an additional 5 eggs were going bad. These eggs were cut open and were also infertile. The remaining 13 eggs were incubating nicely. They were white and firm to the touch.

Nine of the remaining thirteen eggs were taken up to the University of Toledo for research purposes. The remaining four eggs were left to incubate.

On 25 February 1981 after 61 days of incubation the first egg hatched. On 26 February the second egg hatched followed by the third egg on 27 February. The fourth egg did not hatch until 2 March 1981, a 69 day incubation period.

At hatching the babies were between 31 to 35 cm in length. They sloughed 9 days after hatching and accepted fuzzy mice the following day. Presently (end of 1981) they are doing quite well feeding on 2 fuzzy mice every week to 10 days.