

BOOK REVIEW

The General Care and Maintenance of Milk Snakes; by Robert Applegate. *The Herpetocultural Library Special Edition*. 1990. Published by Advanced Vivarium Systems. Lakeside, CA 92040, U.S.A.

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A professional work of 72 pages, written by an experienced snake keeper (at least in my opinion) and supported by 49 photos and a number of drawings. This is a brief description of a very attractive booklet meant mainly for the more professional snake keepers among us but which can also be of importance to those of us who keep snakes purely as a hobby.

The whole of the contents is aimed at setting up a breeding program as large as possible, although a lot of attention is also given to the so-called 'side-issues', such as the buying of snakes, housing, food, shedding, keeping notes and diseases. Of interest for those who love *Lampropeltis triangulum* are the pictures of a number of remarkable subspecies; for instance *Lampropeltis triangulum hondurensis* (Tangerine) which is also known here. In my opinion much less commonly seen is *Lampropeltis triangulum elapsoides* in which the yellow bands fade instead of being clearly visible, one specimen of *Lampropeltis triangulum dixonii* with a great deal of black pigmentation, one *Lampropeltis triangulum sinaloae* whereby the posterior body contains no bands but has black-orange spots instead, one *Lampropeltis triangulum campbelli* on which there are no bands after the fifth band, only red, and by far the most beautiful is a specimen of *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata* where the banding is no longer visible but where the underside is a beautiful red and the dorsum shows black spots with yellow in between. Extremely beautiful and especially striking by the total absence of the banding which is so typical for milk snakes.

At the beginning of the book there is a list of 24 species of milk snakes with their common names, latin names and country of origin. Furthermore, a lot of attention is paid to housing and different systems for the incubation of eggs. Finally, and worth mentioning, six anecdotes from the author's own experiences are summed up, among which for instance the breeding behaviour of a *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata* which laid 126 eggs in a 9 year period from which 119 viable young hatched.

In general this is a nice and interesting book well written in understandable English, bought by me for only \$9,00 in the U.S.A.