

AFTERBREED JUNGLE CORN SNAKES

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For years I have been keeping and breeding *Elaphe guttata guttata* (Corn snakes). After I started with a few wild coloured species, my interest quickly shifted to the different colour mutations. The famous missing black (red albino: amelanistic), missing red (black albino: anerythristic) and snowcorn (white) were soon a part of my collection. The literature, and talks with experienced people made me think about parentage, heterozygous, genes etc.

Not only colour variations interested me, but also the possible variation in patterns like striped, motley, zigzag, etc. All this I could find in the "Color guide for corn snakes". In this book I discovered that there are far more variations of colours and patterns that I had dreamed of. This book has now been outdated by the supply on the Internet.

What fascinated me most was a hybrid form of the *Elaphe guttata* crossed with the *Lampropeltis getulus californiae*: junglecorn. At the time this hybrid seemed only to exist in America and if it was available here the price was high. I have unsuccessfully tried to cross these species for a few years in many different ways. It was also said that crossing these two species would cause infertility. (Like crossing a donkey with a horse which produces an infertile mule)

A few years ago in an exchange fair in Opwijk (Belgium) I accidentally came in contact with an enthusiast. He was interested in certain offspring species and asked if we could exchange. At his table I found that he had some junglecorns with him. They where F1

Elaphe guttata * *Lampropeltis getulus californiae*. The mutation that had been on my wanted list soon was a part of my collection.

When these animals were big enough, I put them in hibernation from October until January. After a few meals and shedding I put them together to mate. This happened without any problem. After every mating a track of blood was found in the terrarium. Unlike other pairs there where no signs of sperm in the terrarium.

Hoping for good luck, I let the animals mate repeatedly - the first time on February the 6th and the last time on February 15th.

On March 26th the female laid six eggs (few for a *guttata* but normal for a *Lampropeltis*) of which one was clearly unfertilised and the other five looked good. These five eggs I put on moist vermiculite in the incubator with a temperature of 27 - 30 degrees Celsius.

After eight weeks, on May 19th, five young hatched. There were two normal young junglecorns (black and yellow) and three albinos (shape of *guttata* with albino colours of a *Lampropeltis*: pink and yellow). The young all eat pinkies with the exception of one that only eats pinkies from multi nipple mice only.

With this article my intention was to show that the suggested infertility of the crossing between *Elaphe guttata* and *Lampropeltis* was not so. A cross between two junglecorns also produced five young. Time will tell if this generation (F2) is also fertile. I also posses a second generation of *guttata* * *Lampropeltis triangulum sinaloae*. They haven't mated this year, but this doesn't mean that they are infertile.



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IN CONCLUSION

Not everybody is happy with hybridisation, but for me it was a challenge to make these species mate. (And because I find it a beautiful colour mutation.)

Judging infertility takes more than one test, both of male and female. For example, I had a pair crossed that resulted in all infertile eggs. The male had successfully mated with an other female. The reason could be that the female who laid those infertile eggs was infertile herself. Later the same female and male mated again and this time with a very successful

result. So the time of fertilisation as well as other factors certainly play their part. Give the animals the chance to develop in optimum condition and take good care of them before judging them.

LITERATURE

Eachern, M., *A Color Guide to Corn Snakes*. Advanced Terrarium Systems, Lakeside

Translation: John Foks

Corrections: Chris Mattison



Adult Junglecorn. Photo by: Marc Vervest.