

FEEDING BEHAVIOR OF TWO CALIFORNIAN KINGSNAKES (*LAMPROPELTIS GETULUS CALIFORNIAE*)

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In 1996 I bought a pair of hatching Albino Californian Kingsnakes. They are Desert phase animals. The animals did not always eat well, hence they grew quite slowly. I fed them just like my other snakes, on defrost mice. I tried different enclosures, with various setups but the snakes remained bad eaters. One week they ate well, however feeding became erratic again. I decided to let them be. If the snakes eat irregularly and grow slowly, then it must be their natural growing process. It shouldn't be bad, as it's only natural.

When the animals were 1 year old and around 60 cm long, I wanted to put them together. It simply looks nicer. Although I was given much advise not to do it, I decided to go ahead and do it. The first moment was very exciting. I waited and wondered, would they attack one another? They did not attack each other, they were calm. This gave me the assurance I needed and I decided to leave them be, where they were.

One week later, while feeding them, I saw that they were disturbed and began to attack one another. I took the snakes and pulled the animals apart. At that moment, I learnt that snakes, especially Kingsnakes, should be fed separately. The next day the snakes were normal again and acted as though nothing had happened. Since that day, nothing special happened between the snakes, until 2 years later when I traded them with a friend, for a pair of Desert Phase Californians. These new animals were bigger and I found them very beautiful because they were typically pitch black with a fantastic white contrast. I never had any

regrets. I heard a week later, from my friend, that the 2 albinos had become restless again and attacked the Yumensis Californians. Why they displayed this act again, I do not understand. The Yumensis Californians were approximately 30cm bigger. Maybe it's the fact that they were in a completely new territory and became motivated to hunt, hence showing their cannibalistic side. Perhaps the Albinos did not see the Yumensis as their own sort. Another reason could be that these animals see the other as potential food.

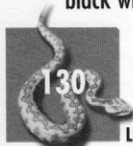
If you have any suggestions you can send me an e-mail.

AN EXTREMELY WEIRD EATING BEHAVIOR

When the albinos were almost one and a half years old, I went and had a look at them, as I usually do every night.

I was shocked when I saw that their terrarium was open and the snakes had escaped. I spent the next hour looking for my snakes. I was lucky because after a few minutes I found the male snake. He was hidden behind a wooden pallet, where the pipes were and where my litter bin is. On the other hand, I still could not find the female. I became worried as I hadn't found her by bed time. The next evening I began to search for her again and there she was, in my own "au bain-marie-incubator", between the cornsnake eggs.

After a moment of joy, I discovered that I had some eggs missing and that the lost snake was much larger than before. I was glad to find my female snake, however very hurt to think of the 6 guttata eggs that had disappeared. When I grabbed to move her, I felt



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a hard thing inside her and when I took a good look at her, I saw a long hard thing in her body. I could not think of what it was, the snake could have eaten anything while she was out of the cage. As I closed the incubator, I wanted to check the temperature but my thermometer was gone. I realized that the hard thing in the snake, was my thermometer. I tried to get the thing out of her but I was afraid that the glass would break inside her. This could cause her to die.

After nine days, I went to her again and the thermometer was out and the snake was normal. The only thing different was that she moved more quickly after the thermometer was out of her. How she did it, I just don't know. I think that she coughed it out because it would be quite impossible to get through the intestines. Can anybody tell me what might have happened?

*Translation: Jacoline Braas.
Corrections: Mark Wootten.*



A belly full! Photo by Hugo Sengers.

