

NATURE, SNAKE PROTECTION AND SNAKES FOR PLEASURE

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It appears that the yearly turnover from the snake trade, commercial as well as private, can not be underestimated. Luckily this trade concerns, for the most part, captive bred animals however there are still too many imported animals. It is understandable that dealers try to earn as much as is possible and that the breeders also try to make money from their hobby is only reasonable. If they decide to buy a car from the profits or invest in new animals or go on a trip, is their own choice.

Because snakes are 'products of nature', it seems to me only fair, that at least a small amount (for example 10%) from the profits should go towards the protection of the wild counterparts of our terrarium dwellers. There are a number of wildlife protection institutions and every organisation has its own priorities. The most well known is the WWF but these institutions have very few projects concerning snakes. The WWF is most known for the protection of mega-species such as the elephant, rhinoceros, gorilla and the tiger etc. In the areas that the WWF try to protect there live, of course, countless species of snakes, so that if you donate a part of your 'snake money' to the WWF, the trade in captive bred snakes can help their wild cousins to survive and be protected.

Another institution is the German *Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten- und Populationsschutz e.V.* This

institute tries to help especially the unknown species, 'forgotten' by the large wildlife protection institutions. This happens mostly by setting up a study into the status of these animals and if it seems that a specific species is in a bad way, they then attempt to find partners to set up a sizeable project. This can include protecting the area where the species live, by informing the local population about the species or working with zoo's and private individuals to set-up a captive breeding program.

The ZGAP has been mostly active in Vietnam and in the Philippines over the last few years. For the latter country, an employee from the ZGAP had drawn up a list of potentially endangered reptiles. On this list are no less than 31 species of snake to be found. If these species are in fact threatened, it is in most cases not known because there is no information about these animals present. Due to the fact that most of their natural living environment is disappearing, it is very likely that most of these 31 species (see list) are in fact threatened, if not already extinct.

Of course there is money needed to set up a study. If we ask snake enthusiasts to 'do one's bit', then I believe that our hobby will receive an extra dimension. By also setting up breeding programs we could make our 'know-how' available and in this way, we could play a more active role in the protection of snakes. Although there is a vast amount of money needed for protecting nature in general, every little bit can help to achieve a great deal. 45 Euro is maybe not so much, but for this amount a great deal towards the protection of nature can be done, for example in South-east Asia or South-America.





The address of the WWF is for the most of us well known. The address from the ZGAP is not so well known, and this is:
(ZGAP Franz-Senn Strasse 14
81377 Munich Germany)

Translations: Marion Jasker
Corrections: Mark Wootten

SUPPLEMENT

List of potentially endangered snakes in the Philippines (from C. Banks)

Boiga angulata	Oligodon perkinsi	Typhlops canlaonensis
Calamaria bitorques	Opisthotropis alcalai	Typhlops cumingi
Calamaria joloensis	Opisthotropis typica	Typhlops hypogia
Calamania palawanensis	Oxyrhabdium leporinum	Typhlops jagorii
Dryphiops philippina	Pseudorabdion ater	Typhlops longicauda
Hydrophis semperi	Pseudorabdion montanum	Typhlops mindanensis
Liopeltis philippina	Pseudorabdion oxycephalum	Typhlops olivacea
Myersophis alpestris	Pseudorabdion taylori	Typhlops ruber
Natrix chrysarga	Sibynophis bivittatus	Typhlops ruficauda
Natrix spilogaster		Typhlops rugosa
Oligodon maculatus		Typhlops suluensis