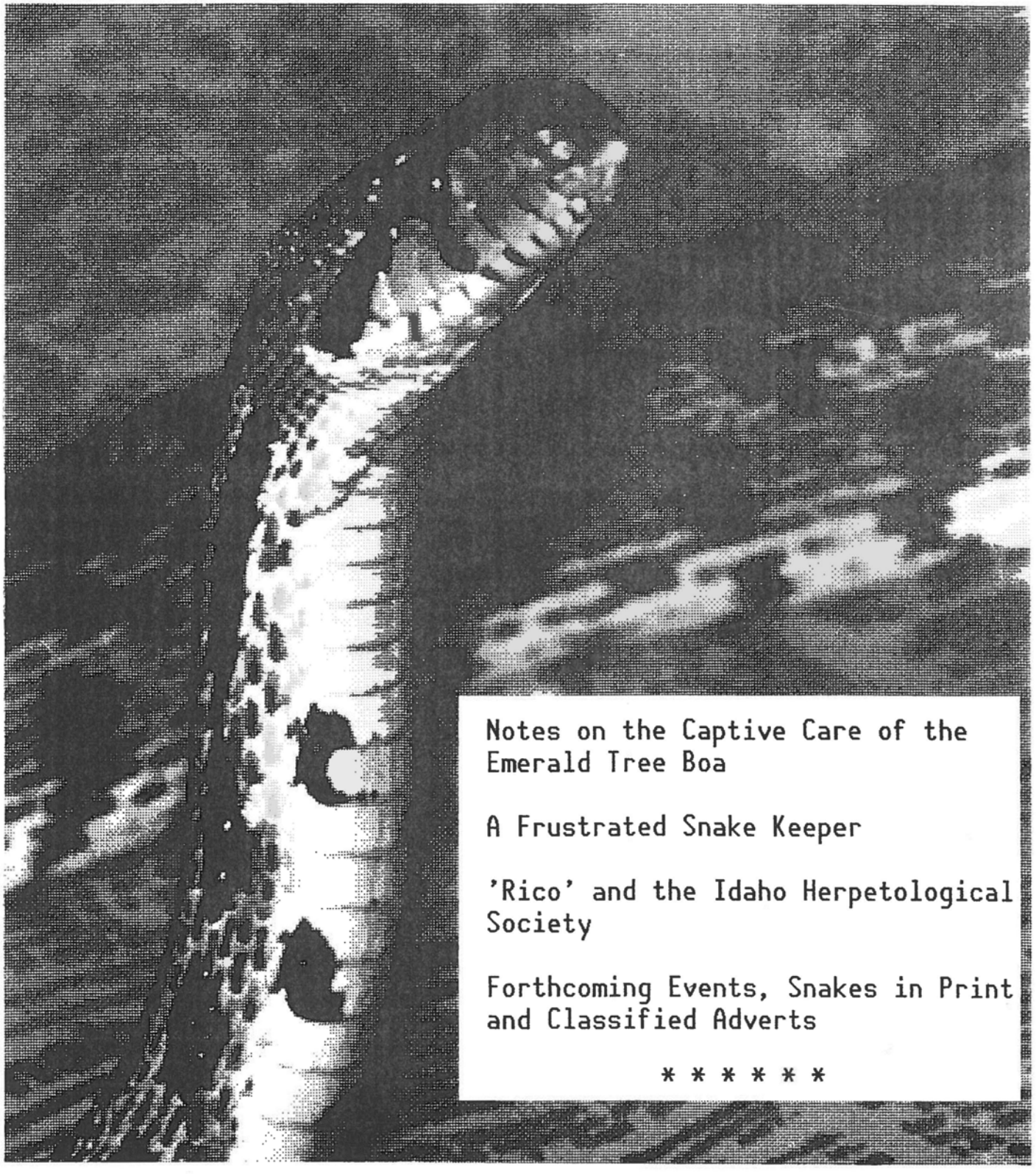
snake breeder

The International Newsletter for Snake Enthusiasts



Notes on the Captive Care of the Emerald Tree Boa

A Frustrated Snake Keeper

'Rico' and the Idaho Herpetological Society

Forthcoming Events, Snakes in Print and Classified Adverts

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Snake Breeder

The International Newsletter for Snake Enthusiasts is published by
Snake Keeper Publishing
159 Stanley Hill
Amersham
Bucks HP7 9EY
England
Telephone (0494) 722769
International +44 494 722769
Fax (0494) 728786 (Phone first)

Editor Michael Connolley
Asst. Editor Lesley M. Close

Canadian Representative:
Scott Allen
77 Baronwood Court
Brampton, Ontario
Canada L6V 3H7

Subscription Rates:
UK & Europe 6 issues £10
12 issues £18

Rest of the World 6 issues £11
12 issues £20

Payment by cash, cheque or money order in £ sterling drawn on a UK bank.

Trade Advertising Rates:
Display 1/4 page £8
1/2 page £15
1 page £30
(Prices based on ready-to-paste copy)

Animal & Equipment Supplies Box £5

Inserts (A4) £5 per 100 (UK & Europe)
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Display Deadline: Camera-ready - 10 days
Setting required - 20 days

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We always need articles and news items for Snake Breeder. The number of people keeping reptiles is growing rapidly and many newcomers to the hobby may benefit from your advice, experience or tips. Don't worry about minor points such as speeling or punctuation - we'll sort that out. Don't forget, if you don't write it - we can't print it! Obviously you would be offended if we offered you money for your contribution and we respect you for that so, instead, we'll send you five free copies of the newsletter containing your article. Your favourite aunt or uncle will view you in a new light when you present them with a copy of Snake Breeder containing your work. We look forward to hearing from you - soon!

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Front cover photograph: Gopher Snake, *Pituophis melanoleucus deserticola* by Frank Lundberg

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Welcome to the following new subscribers to Snake Breeder:

M Warnock, R Crunden, E Dixon, T Brown, M Willmore, M Miah, P Lawrence, R Pawley (USA), D Stratmann (West Germany), S Hollingsworth, A Tebbutt, A Fleming (USA), M Houlden, K Silcock, D & A McNeill (USA), Nature Conservancy Council, A Lewis, Mr & Mrs J Greaves, P Lucas (Cyprus), M Powell, M Holub (Czechoslovakia), D Lockwood, G Northey, M Callahan, D Gange, D Lewis.

SNAKE KEEPER BACK ISSUES

We can still supply copies of our previous publication. If you would like a free price and contents list, give us a call.

A Frustrated Snake Keeper

by Joe Conneeley

As a boy I was always interested in animals and particularly insects and reptiles. In fact I managed to successfully maintain two Slow Worms as pets in a small fish tank for many years feeding them on a diet of white slugs and earthworms.

During my teenage years I obtained a Grass Snake but it did not survive for long probably due to my mismanagement. From then on my interest was necessarily restricted to reading books, watching natural history programmes on television and visiting zoological gardens.

That is until just over three years ago when, after much harassment of my wife, I took proud possession of a juvenile Burmese Python, *Python molurus bivittatus*, measuring just 70cm in length. On arriving home the snake was placed in a pre-prepared glass tank and promptly christened Sam.

Despite some early feeding problems Sam proved very easy to keep and I gradually got to know her different moods. I read everything ever written on pythons and attended some British Herpetological Society meetings where I obtained some first class advice on feeding. To this day I still have to convince Sam she is eating a chick no matter what the food animal presented. Is this common?

As Sam increased in length larger accommodation became necessary and at present the cage measures 3′ x 4′ x 3′ (b x l x h). This cage is sited in a living room where, luckily, it is not too intrusive whilst allowing a full view of the interior.

I love having Sam around (she is usually friendly and always lets you know when not to disturb her) but I now wish I had opted for a slightly smaller species of snake so that I could start to think about breeding. Having only an average-sized house there is a limit to the number of pythons one can have around (in my case only one!). I find myself totally frustrated by not being able to pursue my hobby to its full potential due to the practical limitations of space and in the interests of continued matrimonial harmony.

If there is a purpose to this article it is to make any budding herpetologist take note of my plight and think hard about their long term plans before obtaining their animal. This could mean the difference between becoming a snake breeder, which is as it should be, or merely just a snake keeper.



Some Notes on the Captive Care of *Corallus caninus*

by RW Trant

The Emerald Tree Boa is to be found in the Amazon Basin - Guyana, Brazil, Peru and Bolivia - high in the branches of trees and hidden by foliage. When the snake rests its head on top of its tightly compacted coils the heat sensitive pits are clearly visible between the labial scales.

The size of this animal is a matter for debate; some authors record a length of six feet, others estimate as much as ten feet. Considering its habitat, living on branches and feeding on birds, I would surmise that its average length would be four to six feet, although monsters do no doubt exist!

To fully realise the great beauty of this snake the Emerald Tree Boa must be seen in the flesh. The body is vertically compressed and the tail long and prehensile. The neck is thin and the head large and wedge-shaped. The tricky part is describing the colouring which is bright leaf green with brilliant white bars running down its length. The underside is egg yolk yellow. All in all it is a very beautiful animal.

I feel that it is very important that any would be snake keeper considering keeping <u>any</u> species should engage in thorough research into the animal's natural environment.

Anyone who seeks a pet snake would be better off with Corn Snakes or King Snakes. Although the Emerald Tree Boa will tolerate gently handling and is not overtly aggressive, handling must be kept to a minimum, strictly during cleaning and inspection. As this species is particularly sensitive, undue handling will unsettle its desire to feed. It is a fact that this animal, when annoyed, can inflict the most painful bite. Its fangs are the longest of any non-venomous snake. In my opinion, if the owner of this snake is bitten then the cause must lie in excessive handling.

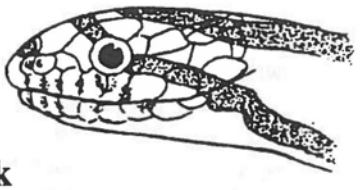
The vivarium in which I house my male Emerald Tree Boa is three feet tall by two feet square. The snake is four feet in length. The vivarium has a false bottom which conceals two Thorn 'Electrim' heating pads which permit a constant gentle heat to rise. The main source of heat is a 100 W reflector lamp wired to a Microclimate DM1 thermostat. The thermostat is set to provide a daytime temperature of 84°F which falls to 76°F at night.

As a substrate I use newspaper. The resting branches are supported by hollow, moss sticks. Natural Yucca plants coupled with a sturdy plastic plant offer the snake the security and shade it needs. A fine misting with a plant sprayer twice weekly ensures the health of the live vegetation whilst raising the humidity. Needless to say, a large water bowl is provided at all times.

Many authors suggest the Emerald Tree Boa is a problem feeder. In my experience *Corallus* boids, including



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Many other species are obtainable to order. Please enquire if there are any species not listed that you are particularly interested in obtaining. All hatchlings are guaranteed healthy and feeding. Prices quoted are for hatchlings. As the animal grows, so does the price. Unrelated can be supplied for some species but not all. Orders are taken on a first come, first served basis. Some species are only available in limited numbers. A small deposit will secure any animal ordered. Orders are despatched by Amtrak Courier Service. This is an overnight service. Orders are delivered to the depot at 1800hrs and are normally received before 1200hrs the following day. Tuesday – Friday morning deliveries cost £13 for box and carriage. For delivery on Saturday mornings an additional £15 must be added to the normal £13 charge. Books and accessories can be sent by post, cost dependent on the weight of item. When ordering please state your full name, address, post code and telephone number.

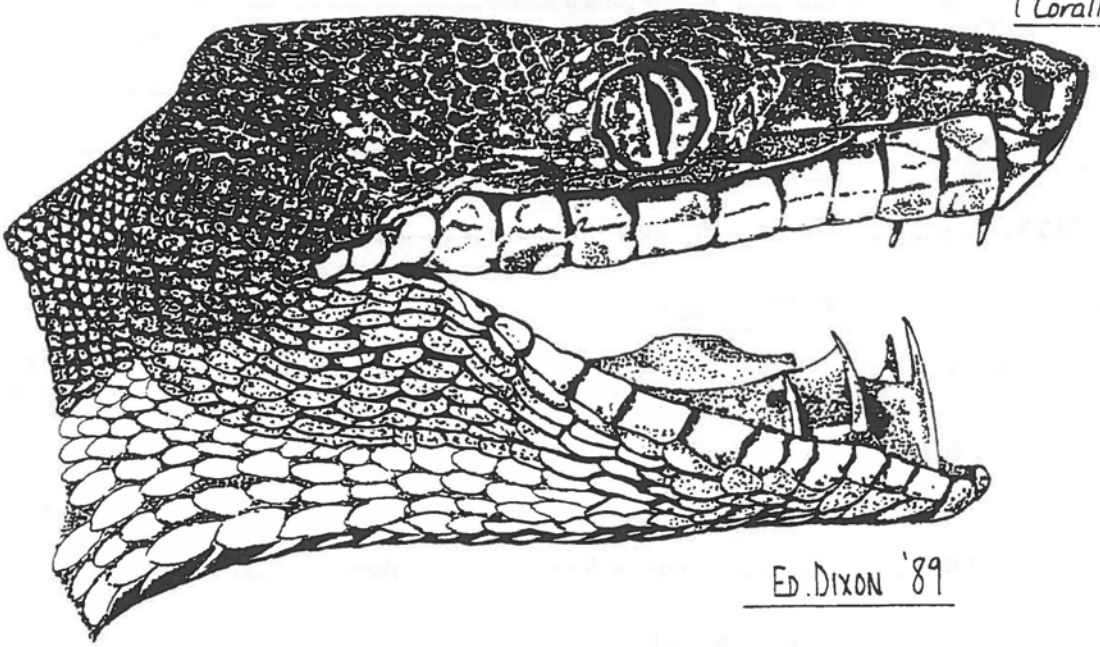
Rogers Hill Farm, Briantspuddle, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7HN
Bere Regis (0929) 471851

Corallus enydris, feed only when hungry and are seldom greedy. My animal feeds on quail (dead) which are de-winged and partially plucked to prevent feather build up in the gullet. The nett weight of the food animal is approximately four to five ounces. My snake takes food at monthly intervals. It feeds at night when it descends to the cage floor to take the quail. It throws a couple of loops around the bird and engulfs the food whilst hanging upside down from a branch. It usually defecates seven to 14 days later. I have never found it necessary to hold food up to the snake.

If a newly-imported animal refuses any food then a small finch may break the fast but this is only to be tried as a last resort. When a feeding pattern is established, mice or small rats can be offered but this experimentation relies on the willingness of the individual animal. Patience is the key to success.

In conclusion, although little published material is to be found on the care and successful breeding of the Emerald Tree Boa, I submit that although a good deal of effort is required in keeping this beautiful animal it is by no means impossible.

EMERALD TREE BOA
(*Corallus caninus*)



IDAHO'S
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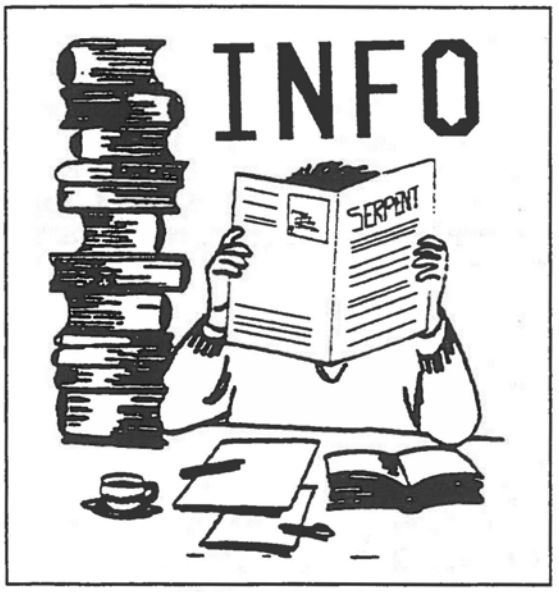
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

1st National Reptile Breeders' Expo

The Central Florida Herpetological Society have announced that the above event is to be held between August the 3rd and 5th at Howard Johnson's Florida Center Hotel, Orlando, Florida.

Schedule is as follows:
August 3rd
12 noon-5pm Registration and exhibit set-up
7pm Ice breaker & Social
August 4th
10am-5pm Exhibits on display
August 5th
10am-5pm Exhibits on display
5pm Door prize drawing - One winner door prize will be one albino Burmese Python and one patternless green Burmese Python.

To register send $10 to Central Florida Herpetological Society, PO Box 3277, Winter Haven, Fla 33881, USA. Queries contact Wayne Hill on (813) 294 2235. Howard Johnson's Florida Center Hotel reservations on 1-800 327-1364 (Toll free).

Reptile Insurance

Cliverton Limited are offering animal owners the chance to insure their livestock, pets, unusual animals, reptiles and insects. They cannot publish a rate guide but promise a quote if you fill in their proposal form. They also offer the possibility of £500,000 and £1,000,000 liability cover - essential for those keeping animals covered by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act.

Further information from Cliverton at Vale House, Stody, Melton Constable, Norfolk NR24 2EG. Telephone (0263) 860388. Fax (0263) 860068.

Dutch Snake Society Changes

Jaap Kooij, the irrepressible secretary of the DSS for the last 6 years has recently resigned. Guido Gomes has now taken over as Secretary. Ron Kivit, treasurer for almost 2 years has resigned and been replaced by Astrid Gomes. All correspondence for the DSS should now be addressed to:

Guido and Astrid Gomes
Pauwenveld 18
2727 DE Zoetermeer
The Netherlands

The DSS also announce some welcome news for all British snake keepers - a DSS representative in Great Britain is to be appointed soon. The Society also plan a change of name to the European Snake Society.

New Herpetological Society

A new herpetological society

based in the north east of England has been announced. The Northern Herpetological Society will fill the gap left by the sudden disappearance of the North Tyneside Reptile and Amphibian Group. The first issue of their magazine 'Reptile Keeper International' has been published and is available to members free of charge. For further information contact:

Colin Walton
39 Lower Rudyerd Street
North Shields
NE29 6NG

SNAKES IN PRINT

Litteratura Serpentium
Dutch Snake Society (A5)
Volume 10 No.1 February 1990
(English edition)

Bacterial Infections and Treatment with Antibiotics in Snakes, Part 3 by Robert Jooris. (13½ pages.) Covers susceptibility tests, treatment of the most frequently occurring infections; pneumonia caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*; gastroenteritis and septicaemia caused by *Salmonella spp.*; mouthrot caused by *Aeromonas hydrophila*; mouthrot caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and/or *Serratia marcescens* and sepsis.

Medieval Herpetology, part 7 by Marcel van der Voort. (8 pages.)

Repeated Breeding of the Lizard Snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*) by Hans van der Rijst. (13 pages.) Description of the Montpellier Snake covering habitat, food, toxicity, rearing problems and breeding in 1987 and 1988.

The Dice Snake, *Natrix tessellata* by Richard Wishaupt. (6 pages.) The author keeps two Dice Snakes and gives a brief description of distribution, habitat and food and offers advice on caring for this species.

Royal News
Lee Bowler
Volume 2 No.2 April 1990 (A5)

The Eggony of Defeat, Part III by Alfred Fleming. (3 pages.) Wyoming snake keeper's tale of Royal Python egg-laying and incubation.

Life with Royals, Part II. (1 page.) More Royal events from the Isle of Wight's *Python regius* expert, Stuart Gray.

Infertile Eggs (Uncredited). (2 pages.) Account of 10 eggs laid by recently imported *Python regius* which all, sadly, turned out to be infertile.

Respiratory Infections in *Python regius* (Uncredited). (3 pages.) Successful treatment of infection in 3 snakes by Tylosin.

Milton Keynes Herpetological Society Newsletter
May 1990 (A4)

The Keeping and Breeding of Pythons and Boas. (4 pages.) Interesting report of a talk given to the MKHS by John Foden of Drayton Manor.

Captive Care of the Californian King Snake, *Lampropeltis getulus californiae* by B Pomfret. (3 pages.) Advice on the care, sexing and breeding of this excellent beginners' snake.

A General Guide to Keeping King

Snakes and Milk Snakes by Jeff Protheroe. (6 pages.) MKHS Chairman and king snake enthusiast offers further advice on the care of *Lampropeltis* and includes a chart listing the various species and classifying them as suitable or otherwise for amateur keepers.

Milton Keynes Herpetological Society Newsletter
June 1990 (A4)

The Royal Python, *Python regius* by Jeff Protheroe. (2½ pages.) More advice on, what is for many keepers, a problem snake covering coloration, feeding, cooling and incubation techniques.

Reptile Keeper International
Northern Herpetological Society
Number 1? (A4)

Breeding the Reticulated Python by Peter Eckhardt. (2 pages.) GDR keeper describes successful breeding resulting in 21 eggs. Also includes details of supremacy battles between male *Python reticulatus* resulting in bites deep enough for the snakes' spines to be seen.

Philadelphia Herpetological Society Newsletter
April 1990 (A4)

Behaviourial Observations of the Mangrove Water Snake in Florida by Peter R Warny. (½ page.) Short, but interesting, note on possible imitation of dead twigs by *Nerodia fasciata compressicauda* to aid in fish catching.

The Vivarium
American Federation of Herpetoculturists
Volume 2 No.1 (8½ x 11")

Natural History and Captive Husbandry of the Western Green Rat Snake by Thurgess Cranston. (3½ pages.) An account of *Senticolis triaspis intermedia* in this glossy, colour bimonthly from the USA now available in the UK from Jerry Cole (0305) 262311.

Novel Treatment for Snake Pneumonia by Jenine Qualls, RN. (2 pages.) Broncodilation of *Python molurus bivittatus* using Alupent and atropine sulfate. A new treatment evolved by the author.

The Vivarium
American Federation of Herpetoculturists
Volume 2 No. 2. (8½ x 11")

AFH Interview with Richard Ross, (6 pages.) Part one of an interview with one of the founders and current Director of the Institute of Herpetological Research. Strong, no-nonsense views from the author of the Python Breeding Manual including; "My belief about humanity and conservation is that human beings are the most destructive organism evolution has produced" and "We can show our children and grandchildren what existed on Earth, what natural selection created, what a wild animal was - not some freak; not the creation of some amateur herpetologist who wanted to see what he could create by mixing a corn snake (*Elaphe guttata*) and a rat snake (*E. obsoleta*). To me, doing that shows a fundamental ignorance and disregard for the beauty of evolution". It's worth buying a copy just for the interview!

Care and Breeding of the Chinese Twin-Spotted Ratsnake,

Elaphe bimaculata by Holger Bartz and Vince Scheidt. (3 pages.) Description, range and distribution, husbandry and breeding of *E. bimaculata* by affable West German snake breeder Bartz and San Diego based snake breeder Scheidt who also acts as picture editor for the Vivarium. (Also noticeable by his absence as speaker at the 1989 Dutch Snake Society Snake Day.)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

14th July 11am - 5.30pm

TCHG Exhibition '90, Hazlemere Community Centre, Hazlemere, Bucks. Contact Jan Burgess on (0494) 815319

15th July 10am - 5pm

ARC Exhibition of Animals and Animal Products, Victoria Hall, Ash Hill Road, Ash, Nr Aldershot, Hants. Contact ARC on (0252) 702714.

16th September 10.15 - 4pm

IHS Reptile Fair 1990 Sports Hall, Alumwell Centre, Primley Avenue, Walsall, West Midlands.

16th September

WHS Reptile Appreciation Day, Visitors Centre, Arrow Park, Birkenhead. Contact Eve Cavanagh on (051) 639 1197.

MISCELLANEOUS

Irish Herpetological Society

First prize for the most attractive herpetological society letterheads must surely go to the Irish Herpetological Society. If you would like to join they can be contacted at

2, Vernon Court
Seafield Road
Clontarf
Dublin 3
Ireland

Membership costs £5 a year for those under 18 or over 65 years of age. Adult/family fees are £10 a year. The Society produces a 16 page bi-monthly newsletter and holds meetings on the last Saturday of each month.

UK Herpetological Society List

Many thanks to everyone who wrote or phoned to say how useful they found the herpetological society list included in last month's Snake Breeder. We hope to keep it updated and publish it at least twice a year.

We are starting work on list of UK snake breeders who can be relied on to supply good, healthy stock. If you have bought animals from a breeder you could recommend <u>without any misgivings</u> to fellow snake keepers we would like to hear from you. When completed the list will be included free in an issue of Snake Breeder.

MAILBOX

Dear Snake Breeder,

I recently bought a couple of Idaho Herpetological Society car bumper stickers from your stand at the Milton Keynes Herpetological Society display and would like to know the identity of the snake featured on them. Can you help me?

Yours faithfully, N Smith
Bucks

Snake Breeder: We had the privilege of meeting Frank Lundberg, the Editor of the IHS newsletter, when he visited England last year to attend the Herpetological Congress in Canterbury. Frank stopped by briefly whilst visiting Lee Bowler, the Editor of Royal News. In reply to Mr Smith's query, Frank offers the following explanation.

Frank Lundberg: The snake who is the model for the logo of the Idaho Herpetological Society is "Rico" (see front cover), a Great Basin Gopher Snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus deserticola*). This species was selected as the symbol of the IHS because it is the most familiar and beneficial snake of Idaho and the 'Great Basin' of the western United States. It is a familiar sight sunning itself in the morning and evening hours in the vast deserts and is equally familiar on nearby farms and ranches around grain fields and storage areas.

Rico is the first and last snake I will keep with the knowledge that it was not bred in captivity. Although the Gopher Snake is common in this area, habitat destruction is occurring at a frightening rate. We must preserve as much of life as possible in its natural state. A friend captured Rico and brought him to me either as a gift or a joke. In any event Rico sparked my interest in the conservation and care of amphibians and reptiles, especially snakes.

Rico was captured on the 5th of July 1986 at 'Hooker Flat' near the small town (pop 400) of Halfway, Oregon, USA. Halfway is on the Oregon side of the Hell's Canyon of the Snake River which divides Oregon and Idaho. About 20 miles downstream from Halfway/Oxbow the Hell's Canyon reaches a depth of 7900 feet, the deepest canyon on the continent of North America. The Gopher Snake is very common throughout this area and is of tremendous economic benefit to farmers and ranchers because of its appetite for mice and pocket gophers which destroy crops. The Gopher Snake is a subspecies of the genus *Pituophis* which includes the Pine and Bull Snakes of the United States. Although common throughout the western United States *Pituophis* is considered endangered in some eastern and southern states of the US as a result of habitat destruction.

Snake Breeder: We still have a few bumper stickers available at only £1 each including postage (UK & Europe). If you would like to know more about the Idaho Herpetological Society write to them at PO Box 6329, Boise, Idaho 83707, USA.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

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Burmese Python, male?, 9 to 10'. Good feeder and very tame. With 6' x 3' x 3' vivarium complete £250. Telephone (0380) 729521 (Devizes).

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A sexed, unrelated, adult pair of Royal Pythons. Male feeding well, female on gerbils and can be finicky. £80 pair, swaps considered. Three baby Barn Owls, ABCR, £50 each. Telephone Mick Chapman on (0279) 415372.

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Cook's Tree Boas and captive bred *Elaphe situla* and *Elaphe obsoleta rossalleni*. Telephone Mick Chapman on (0279) 415372.

Elaphe schrenckii. Telephone Pete Rose on (0522) 792166.

Male *Drymarchon corais couperi* in perfect condition, preferably 3 to 4 years old for permanent acquisition or over-winter breeding loan (other ages considered). Telephone Geoff on (061) 865 1465.

Advertisements from private individuals are printed in this section without charge. We are normally able to accept items for inclusion up to the final day of the month, subject to space. Send your advert by post, telephone or fax to Snake Breeder, 159 Stanley Hill, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9EY. Telephone (0494) 722769, Fax (0494) 728786 - Phone first.

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