snake breeder

The International Newsletter for Snake Enthusiasts

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our first non-snake article
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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 or US$.

Trade Advertising Rates:
Display ¼ page £8
½ page £15
1 page £30
(based on ready-to-paste copy)
Inserts (A4) £5 per 100 (UK & Europe).

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S Oliver, D Stewart, A Harvey, S Smith, K Macey, G Turner, B Ballantyne, J Coppen & J Edwards.

Suitable for Beginners?

by Tony Skinner

One question that I am often asked by potential snake keepers is, "what is the most suitable snake for beginners?" The commonest answer given to this question by most members of the snake keeping fraternity is, without doubt, the Corn Snake, *Elaphe guttata guttata*. The next question often asked by the would-be keeper is, "why a Corn Snake?" Let's look at some of the reasons why and try to suggest some credible alternatives.

There are several factors which influence the choice of species. I've listed five but no doubt there are more which I have overlooked.

Factors Influencing Choice

(i) Desirability
(ii) Temperament
(iii) Availability/Price
(iv) Ease of Maintenance/ Accommodation
(v) Ease of Breeding

I will try to explain the importance of these five factors and then examine how Corn Snakes match up to them.

(i) Desirability

Choose a snake that you like the look of. If you are not taken with its colour and form now, in 15 years you may be positively bored with it. Also if you want a snake that you can watch you will disappointed if you buy a nocturnal or fossorial snake.

(ii) Temperament

When you have kept and observed snakes over a period of time you will get to know the body postures and movements that sometimes precede a strike. Until that time comes it makes sense to choose a species with a calm disposition. It is worth remembering that snakes are individuals and although one can make a generalisation and say such and such a species never bites, someone, somewhere will have the scars to prove otherwise. In my own experience captive-bred snakes are generally more reluctant to bite than imported snakes.

(iii) Availability/Price

Snakes are not an investment! Most snake breeders know someone who spent £800 on a pair of snakes five years ago and still has that same barren pair! I will not deny that there are people who make a good living from breeding snakes but all those who I know have learnt to do so the hard way. Many of them do so by breeding very large quantities of the more easily kept snakes. The price of the snake is not always an indication of its quality - you don't *always* get what you pay for! The £40 hatchling Corn Snake in your local pet shop may not be any better than the £10 hatchling from your local amateur snake breeder. In fact it's quite likely that it is from the same clutch. Always remember that if a particular species isn't widely available it is probably not suitable for a beginner anyway.

(iv) Ease of Maintenance/ Accommodation

Let's start by stating the obvious; some species are easier to look after than others. I know that is not an earth-shattering revelation but if you are a newcomer to snake keeping it is important that you realise that keeping some snakes is hard work and requires knowledge which comes with experience. I firmly believe that if you start at the bottom and work your way up you will not only learn how to keep snakes but also why some conditions work and you will gain an understanding of snakes that will be an asset when you are ready to attempt keeping the more challenging species. Also if your choice of snake requires so much attention that it becomes a chore your enjoyment will wain. It is also worth noting that vivarium design plays a part in how easy the maintenance of any species is, in practical terms. Basic set-ups are often the easiest to maintain.

(v) Ease of Breeding

Unfortunately lots of snakes spend their life sentenced to solitary confinement. It is disheartening to think that there are still some people who look on a snake as just an oddity and keep one as a perverse status symbol or to display as a macho ornament. The novice frequently has no initial interest in breeding but when they start to get the feel of snake keeping they want to progress to breeding. At this stage contact with other hobbyists is a real lifeline to the novice as is access to up-to-date literature. I can honestly say that I will never forget the joy and sense of achievement I obtained from watching the hatching of my first clutch of eggs. I expect most hobbyists will know the thrill of that moment of hatching or birth. Once someone has successfully bred snakes they tend to stay with the hobby, which can only be a benefit to the science of herpetology.

So, back to the Corn Snake and how it fits in with the above-mentioned criteria.

Desirability. Well, personally, I think they are beautiful snakes with striking colours but that is a matter of choice.

Temperament. If captive-bred or purchased as hatchlings these snakes are gentle, almost well-mannered serpents, and are as predictable as any living creature can be.

Availability/Price. Every shop selling snakes sells Corn Snakes. The choice is almost endless. I've seen the following variations advertised this year; Carolina, amelanistic, albino, anerythristic, striped and Miami. No doubt there are more available. So availability is good, and the price? Well, the cheapest I've seen on sale to the public (not trade prices) is £12.50 which shouldn't burn a hole in anyone's pocket. (Incidently the most expensive I've seen are Carolina Corn Snake hatchlings at £45 in a pet shop; no feeding records were available and the proprietor had no idea of the care requirements or sex.)

Maintenance/Accommodation. Corn Snakes are among the easiest snakes to care for and house. Accommodation can be provided and heated cheaply.

Ease of Breeding. The number of

Corn Snakes available each year is testimony to the regularity with which they breed in captivity. With average clutches of 15 eggs these are an ideal start to snake breeding. In conclusion the Corn Snake is a very suitable first snake.

The following suggestions are a few alternatives which I feel also satisfy the above criteria.

Great Plains Rat Snake,
Elaphe guttata emoryi
Common Kingsnakes,
Lampropeltis getulus
Prairie Kingsnakes,
Lampropeltis calligaster
North American Rat Snakes
Elaphe obsoleta
(due to the variability in colour, view parents before purchasing)
Gopher Snakes,
Pituophis melanoleucus
Sand Boas, *Eryx colubrinus*
(some beginners may find the fossorial habits of this snake rather boring)

I'm certain there are many more species I've left off the list which would be suitable. I should state (before I'm accused of being prejudiced against boids) that I realise many people start with large constrictors. However, because it takes them some time to reach breeding age, coupled with their price and size, it is my opinion that they are not an ideal first snake.

Reptile-Book Collecting #2

by Richard Trant

***Reptile Life* by Zoeněk Vogel**
80pp text. 146 pages of b/w plates and 5 colour plates.
First published circa 1946 by Spring Books, London.
Price in the range of £10 to £20 depending on condition.
Possible source is JG Animals and Natural History Books, Streatham Vale London.

This large volume which often appears on dealers' lists is apparently scarce with its original dust cover.

This is a book of great value for its coverage of North African reptiles as well as a comprehensive account of North and Central American herpetofauna.

Vogel founded a herpetological station near Prague and tells of the behaviour and husbandry of the reptiles he kept there. Especially interesting is an early insight into reptile keeping in socialist countries which, in my opinion, betters any western publication of that time.

The first-hand descriptions of snake bites and their subsequent treatment, graphically described, cannot help but shock!

The black and white plates are of exceptional quality; all taken at the author's reptile station. The colour plates of snake skins are unusual to say the least.

This underestimated book is often forgotten in favour of Vogel's classic volume *Reptiles and Amphibians, Care and Behaviour*. This is a shame because *Reptile Life* certainly belongs on the discerning collector's bookshelf.

MAILBAG

snake breeder
159 Stanley Hill
Amersham
Bucks HP7 9EY



Dear **snake breeder**,

I want to complement you on the excellent quality of **snake breeder**. Not only are the articles informative, **snake breeder** provides a vital link among members of the international herpetological community. It is especially gratifying to see continued emphasis on conservation of species and captive breeding. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Frank Lundburg
President
Idaho Herpetological Society
Boise, Idaho, U.S.A.

PS In response to the letter in the July 1991 issue in which the writer stated, "Royal Python articles, although very nice and informative...How many can you take?" My response is that *it is not possible to have too many Royal Python articles!*

*****

Dear **snake breeder**,

I am compiling a directory of reptile shops, captive breeders and herpetological societies in the United Kingdom because I feel that the newcomer to the hobby is not aware of the outlets and societies that exist.

In the first edition of the directory I aim to include all outlets but in further editions only outlets that have given the customer satisfaction and have been found to give their animals the standards of hygiene and care that an animal deserves will be included.

The compilation of the directory will be a mammoth task but, with the aid of **snake breeder** subscribers who could send me details and reports of these establishments, and my own research, I feel confident that the task can be completed.

The first issue will include reptile shops, herpetological societies and organisations, zoological gardens and wildlife parks with a reptile house, equipment and accessory shops, herpetologists who are willing to share their experiences and offer advice, explanations of the EEC regulations,a list of animals on CITES Appendix 1, a list of reptiles suitable for the inexperienced keeper and an introduction to reptile keeping drawn from our own experiences.

If anyone would like to be included in the directory or can offer help please write to me.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Reilly
35 Newmarket Close
Aldermans Green
Coventry
CV6 6LO

or telephone (0203) 365631.

Chameleons In Captivity

by Stewart Bristow

Until a year or so ago if anyone had asked me how to keep a chameleon I would have told them not to bother as they soon die. However, times have changed and more information is now available to help novice keepers. I have submitted this paper to dispel a few myths about the husbandry of chameleons.



Chameleons are truly arboreal lizards with feet perfectly adapted to tree climbing. They also have a very strong prehensile tail which they use in the same fashion as the primates of the Old and New Worlds. I do not wish to venture into the natural history of chameleons as this literature does not help them to survive in captivity but where I think it is useful I will include it.

Chameleons are extremely territorial animals and will not tolerate being next to (or even yards away) from each other and this is one reason why many die; an angry chameleon will turn black and fight for its territory within its own boundaries. If one chameleon can not submit and withdraw then stress is placed on both individuals and one will die.

Even males and females must be segregated and only brought together at the time of mating. There are some chameleons which can live together in a large enclosure but for the benefit of the keeper and the chameleon do find out which these are before purchase. (Just hold a mirror in front of a male holding territory and watch what happens.)

Also before purchasing your chameleon read some literature about their captive requirements; by far the best I have read is Robert Bustard's article in the *BHS Bulletin* No.27.

I have three chameleons in my collection and I keep all of them on large *Ficus* trees which I entwine around stout branches. I direct a 60 watt spot lamp at a point on the plant which the animal prefers and this gives an ambient spot temperature of about 85° F. The chameleon can then thermoregulate at will.

The more territorial the species the higher up the tree they tend to climb. Once a chameleon has an established territory it will never leave it so if your chameleon takes to wandering around your room it is not happy with its territory and changes will need to be made.

The larger chameleons such as Parson's, Panther or Meller's need a large tree with thick branches. (My male Parson's Chameleon has 2 spot lamps.) They also need good ventilation and a window which lets in a great deal of light. The smaller species such as Johnston's Chameleon need the same regime but obviously scaled down.

Chameleons can be kept in vivaria but generally fare better under the above regime; they can be given more freedom and, in my opinion, you will gain more enjoyment from keeping them this way.

Feeding chameleons with today's market of reptile foods could not be easier. They will consume insects such as field and house crickets, spiders, mealworms, and mice for the larger species. Your chameleon can be fed by hand when it has grown accustomed to you. Vitamin supplements should be added to the diet about once a week either by dusting the food or added to the animal's drinking water. Locusts also make up a diet for the larger species but I find my chameleons tend to get bored with an unchanging diet so I try to vary it as much as possible.

Mealworms and waxworms are given as a treat but never as a staple diet as they are relatively poor nutritionally. Crickets are excellent and tend to be the main food of my animals as my Parson's Chameleon prefers these to locusts.



One method that I found helped my animals to secure their own food was to place a dead mouse within striking range of the chameleon's tongue. The mouse attracted flies, the chameleon then consumed the flies. This was a useful method to get my Parson's Chameleon to eat mice because as he attempted to secure a fly his tongue also stuck to the mouse which he then consumed. He now readily eats two juvenile mice a week which saves on the food bill as these large chameleons have very big appetites.

Chameleons also require a great deal of water and after purchasing your chameleon re-hydration is a most important step - a thirsty chameleon will never feed. Water can be offered in three basic ways. The first method is by using a pipette which is dripped a few times on the animal's nose (it will then consume the water). The pipette should be refilled until the animal's thirst has been quenched. The second method involves spraying the chameleon gently on the side of the mouth; when it opens its mouth gently spray the water until it is rehydrated. The third way to offer water is by using a drip system; mine is very basic indeed but works effectively. It consists of a plastic flask cup (the spare one in a thermos flask) with one tiny hole pierced in it. This is then secured to the upper part of the tree. When this cup is filled, water drips down and collects in a small coffee jar lid two-thirds of the way down the *Ficus*. These drip systems are irresistible to chameleons and they either drink the droplets or the water which collects in the lid.

Sometimes a newly acquired chameleon will refuse to feed and this can cause problems. I have a male Graceful Chameleon which only fed on waxworms when I purchased him. I rehydrated him and then placed a small plant pot tray on the *Ficus* within striking range of his

position. I placed a number of immobilised crickets and small hopper locusts in the tray and found that the locusts had been consumed so I continued with locusts and now he feeds by hand on both locusts and crickets. Waxworms are offered as treats.

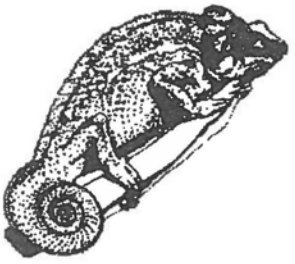
Preferred temperatures do vary from species to species but an average daytime temperature of 80° F (85 to 90° F under the spot lamp) with night-time reduction to about 70° F should prove satisfactory. The Johnston's Chameleon can withstand much greater variations and can stand temperatures as low as 32° F.

There is one area of concern which often crops up when I talk to other chameleon keepers and that is the problem of parasites and whether or not they should be removed. My reply is, generally, no; if your chameleon is thriving and it feeds, drinks and looks alert then obviously veterinary treatment is not recommended. If it is pale and listless the chances are that it will die if help is not given.

I will conclude this article with a few points with regard to what to look for when buying your first chameleon.

Almost all chameleons at present are wild-caught and are generally placed together from the time they are caught to the time they are sold. They are therefore under a great deal of stress and anxiety. Always, if possible, buy a juvenile animal and always refuse a gravid female. Look at the eyes of the animal, they should be clear. Never purchase a chameleon with sunken eyes as this is almost always a sick animal. The chameleon should have a firm grip and generally be showing a light colour. If possible, ask the dealer if you can see it feed and obviously look at the captive husbandry of the chameleon at the seller's premises. If you are in any doubt don't purchase the animal as it will only die a slow death and obviously put you off chameleons for life. This would be a shame as they are fascinating creatures and do make excellent subjects for study.

I am by no means an expert on chameleons and there are many keepers of these creatures who are very successful with their own methods. I haven't had any problems with my animals which couldn't be resolved by perseverance and patience. Should anyone require further reading on chameleons then the aforementioned B.H.S. publication is the best you will find.



I am keen to answer questions by letter or telephone.

Stewart Bristow
17 Blenheim Park Close
Leigh on Sea
Essex
SJ0 4AR
Telephone 0702 512730.

Recommended reading:

Bustard, R. (1989) Keeping and Breeding Oviparous Chameleons. *British Herpetological Society Bulletin* 27: 18-33.

Rare Diseases in a Burmese Python

by Ray Cimino

The following is an account of a series of illnesses in a Burmese Python I acquired some time ago, abridged to include only the most significant incidents. The snake died 20 weeks after it was acquired, which is perhaps not surprising when you see what it went through.

Week 1
The snake was acquired from a private owner after I heard about through a friend. I found it being kept in a 3' aquarium on 3 to 4" of damp gravel with only a 25 watt light bulb for heat. The 6½' snake was cold and torpid. Its skin and scales were in poor condition, it was barely moving and it had a respiratory infection. I paid £50 for it, probably more than it was worth, just to get it out of there.

I placed the snake in a vivarium with a temperature of approximately 85° F. After it had warmed up I saw for the first time that it was suffering from brain damage, probably from chilling. The snake was incapable of any real co-ordination, unable to move in a straight line, unable to keep its head raised and literally tying itself in knots. It showed no interest in feeding. I kept it at that temperature for two weeks without any sign of improvement.

Week 3
I placed the snake in a 24" x 18" x 18" vivarium heated by a 60 watt light bulb and a 17" heat-pad. One branch was added. Water was offered twice daily but not left in the vivarium. The snake drank regularly. The temperature was maintained at 93 to 96° F for 12 hours dropping to the mid 80s at night. Because of the small size of the cage part of the snake's body was almost always on the heat-pad.

Week 5
Having obtained some new snakes space was at a premium so I asked a friend, Paul Styles, to take the python. Paul kept the snake under the same conditions.

Week 7
After a further 10 to 12 days at these high temperatures the snake had fully recovered its co-ordination. A slight respiratory infection was present however so I administered a four day course of oxytetracycline antibiotic which cleared up the complaint. The snake had still shown no interest in eating and, to make matters worse, was now showing advanced signs of necrotic stomatitis (mouth-rot).

Week 8
The animal was taken to a vet, John Hardy, who has a genuine interest in reptiles. John had treated this particular complaint in other snakes. Antibiotic mouth spray and multivitamin and gentamycin injections cleared up the problem quickly.

Week 10
The snake had still not fed and as it had lost a good deal of weight under the high temperatures force feeding of medium to adult size mice was begun. The mice were coated in egg white and manipulated down

the snake's throat. Three to five were administered twice weekly for two to three weeks. After this the animal's general condition was still poor so I decided to take it back to my house intending to euthanase it if it didn't feed voluntarily.

Week 12
The snake took a large brown rat at its first attempt. Over the next two weeks it took a further three white rats, all offered dead.

Week 14
Just when the python was beginning to look better and put on some weight a strange skin disease manifested itself. It consisted of blisters (similar to but not quite the same as water blisters) raising themselves along the spine and bursting with fluid after two to three days. These gradually dried and split the skin along 50 to 60% of the length of the spine. The tail remained unaffected. In places the resultant wounds were raw and deep, exposing bone. I searched through my extensive herpetological library but could not find anything which remotely resembled it. The vet was also at a loss. A couple of vets in England with more experience of reptile medicine were consulted. One theory put forward was rejected by John Hardy in the absence of *bouli* between the outer layers of skin. I made an attempt to take a sample of tissue for analysis but this wasn't easy and I was unsuccessful.

Week 15
The snake had stopped feeding again. Worse still, another snake, a 9' Burmese Python began to show symptoms of the same disease despite the fact that the two snakes had never been in contact. Three other snakes (two Burmese Pythons and an African Rock Python) in the same vivarium as the larger female did not develop the disease. These three healthy snakes were taken to Paul's house for safety's sake. None of my smaller snakes showed symptoms either and I left them where they were. I can only assume that I inadvertently passed the disease on by handling the female after the infected male. Both affected snakes were being sprayed with an antibiotic spray prescribed by the vet. After daily spraying for a week no improvement was noticed.

Week 17
As there was no improvement in their condition I began, on my own initiative, to spray the snakes with an iodine solution and, with a hypodermic needle, sprayed the liquid antibiotics oxytetracycline and chloramphenicol daily. I also continued with the spraying as recommended by the vet.

Week 18
The spread of the disease seemed to have halted. The female had lost none of her usual voracious appetite but the male showed no interest in food. Both were sloughing with more frequency than normal. Unfortunately I can't be sure which treatment was responsible for the improvement.

Week 20
During this week, five months after I acquired him, I found the snake dead one night. I had been away all day and the corpse was beginning to smell so, rather than freeze it for a *post-mortem*, I buried it. With all the stress and diseases the snake had experienced I imagine the death was due more to

secondary problems associated with a reduced immune system rather than any of the specific problems I have described. Despite the fact that the snake had refused food near the end he was certainly heavier at death than he had been when I first bought him.

The only good news, as I write two weeks later, is that the larger female is feeding well and has almost fully recovered from the skin disease. I still have absolutely no idea what it was or what caused it but if any readers have any ideas I would appreciate hearing from them. My address is 2 Vernon Court, Seafield Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Ireland.

Sloughed Off

by Paul Thompson

On the 2nd May this year my female Carolina Corn Snake (*Elaphe guttata guttata*) had her pre egg-laying slough. On the 12th of May she laid 22 eggs. The next day I could see she still had two eggs left inside her so over the next 12 hours I put her in the bath to swim around and I tried to ease the eggs towards her vent. This was not successful so I put the snake in a box and took her to my veterinary surgeon.

The snake was left with the vet and over the next 24 hours he tried everything to remove the eggs. The following day he phoned me and said he would have to operate on the snake to remove them. To my surprise he rang back twenty minutes later to say she had laid the eggs; not two but three!

When I set off to collect my snake from the vet that evening I felt very relieved that the snake had not had to undergo an operation to have the eggs removed. When I picked her up I could see she had a few damaged scales caused by the vet's efforts to expel the eggs.

On the 16th of May she started to cloud over and on the 22nd of May she sloughed her skin. I was very surprised to see she was clouding over on the 31st of May and sloughing on the 10th of June. I could not understand what was happening when she clouded over yet again on the 26th of June and sloughed on the 5th of July. At first I thought she might be going to lay a second clutch of eggs as she was seen mating again after she returned from the vets.

As I write this article she has clouded over again. If anyone can offer any advice or information regarding this problem I would be very grateful. My address is 80 Chadwick Road, Woodthorpe, Sheffield S13 8DB.

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The Newsletter for Royal Python Owners Everywhere

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Enquiries to Lee Bowler
37 Sixty Acres, Prestwood,
Gt.Missenden, Bucks HP16 0PE.
Telephone (02406) 6328.



INFO

SNAKES IN PRINT

BHS Bulletin
Number 36 Summer 1991
British Herpetological Society, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY.

▸ **The Fossil History of the Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) with Emphasis on the British Fossil Record** by J Alan Holman. (6 pages.)

▸ **Addition of *Coluber sinai* to the Herpetofaunal List of Israel with Comments on *Coluber elegantissimus*** by Yehudah L Werner and Naomi Sivan. (9 pages, 4 colour plates.)

▸ **The Care and Breeding of the Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix helvetica*) in Captivity** by David Billings and Marcus Langford. (4 pages.)

Litteratura Serpentium
Volume 11 Number 3 1991
The European Snake Society, Pauwenveld 18, 2727 DE Zoetermeer, The Netherlands. UK residents can now pay their subscription, currently £13, in Sterling. Further details from C Mattison, 138 Dalewood Road, Beauchief, Sheffield S8 0EF. Don't forget to enclose an sae.

▸ **Captive reproduction in the Scarlet Kingsnake, *Lampropeltis triangulum elapsoides*** by Pete Strimple. (3 pages.)

▸ **Sydney's Snakes, Part I** by Raymond Hoser. (12 pages, 7 colour plates.)

EVENTS

Items for inclusion in this column are welcome and should include time, date, venue and a contact telephone number.

15th September 10.15am - 4pm

IHS Reptile Fair 1991
Sports Hall, Alumwell Centre
Primley Avenue, Walsall
West Midlands

Contact the IHS at 65 Broadstone Avenue, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 1JA.

22nd September 9am - 5.15pm

ASRA Seminar
Cotswold Wildlife Park
Burford
Oxford OX8 4JW

Enquiries to Richard Allen on (0488) 71439 anytime.

19th October 1991 9.30am - 5pm

Dutch Snake Day
University Centre 'De Uithof'
Veterinary Dept
Yaleaan 1
Utrecht
Holland

Enquiries to Guido Gomes on 079-416592 (The Netherlands).

MISCELLANEOUS

Philadelphia Herpetological Society News Bulletin

Gary P Lorio has taken over as editor of the PHS News Bulletin. The latest issue

contains short articles on Weaning and Deworming Indigo Snakes, the Rough Green Snake in Ohio, and Mite Control. Membership details from the Secretary, 9573 Walley Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19115-3009. Telephone (215) 464 3561.

Bill Brakes for Snakes!

The July issue of Idaho Herp News contains the amazing story of a large, gravid female Gopher Snake which was picked up by Bill Starkey in Boise, Idaho trying to cross a busy intersection during the rush hour. She was rescued, placed in a cage and the following day laid seven eggs.

Seizures and Prosecutions in Australia

The latest issue of TRAFFIC Bulletin, the quarterly publication of the TRAFFIC Network, reports that on the 13th September 1990, the Australian Customs Service issued a notice of seizure to a Melbourne Shop for 11 fountain pens covered in python (Boidae sp.) skin. The pens, retailing at AU$400 (US$306) each were imported from Indonesia.

On the 3rd of July 1990, Tammy Stokes appeared at Sandringham Magistrates Court on two charges relating to illegal possession of a King Brown Snake, *Pseudechis australis* and four Children's Pythons and a third charge related to having no licence to keep two Burton's Snake-lizards, *Lialis burtonis*. Stokes had been apprehended at a post office collecting a parcel containing the animals. The defendant was fined AU$600 (US$460) plus costs.

CITES, CORALS and CREST

The Department of the Environment Endangered Species Branch report that the CORALS computer system which deals with the processing of applications for permits under the provisions of CITES has bitten the dust. Until the replacement system, CREST, is working, a manual licensing system will operate resulting in some disruption to the service. The ESB advise that applications should be submitted well in advance of the date by which the permit is required.

SHF Congress 1992

The Société Herpétologique de France have announced that their 1992 Congress will be held at Sigean, a small village 15km south of Narbonne and 45 km north of Perpignan. The themes for next year's event which runs from the 1st to the 4th of July will be The Mediterranean Herpetofauna and the Breeding of Reptiles and Amphibians. For further details contact Jean-Jacques BOISARD, Réserve Africaine de Sigean, F - 11130 Sigean, France. Phone 68 48 20 20 or fax 68 48 80 85.

Python Attack

A recent story in the British tabloid press (30th August) told how a four year old girl in Bristol was attacked and injured by a 9ft python belonging to her mother's boyfriend. The snake was loose at the time and unattended. Most British tabloids delight in a good snake horror story so owners of large snakes should take note and take care!

The First Year of a Black Rat Snake

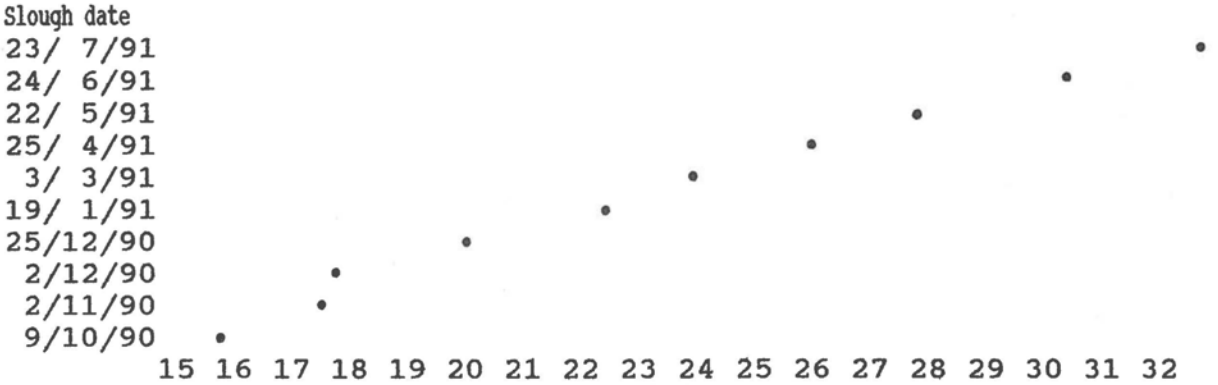
by Kelvin Waltho

I purchased a female Black Rat Snake from the 1990 IHS Reptile Fair. The snake was installed in a 3′ x 1′ x 1½′ (lxwxh) vivarium with a gravel substrate heated by a 23" heat strip and a red light bulb (for a photoperiod).

The snake was fed every five days on pink mice which she quickly consumed. Initially slightly aggressive and defensive she soon settled down although she does not enjoy being handled.

The Black Rat Snake has sloughed normally apart from two strange sloughs. She was approximately 12½" long when purchased and at present (23rd of July 1991) she is approximately 32½". Her rate of growth has been fairly steady apart from the period 2/11/90 to 2/12/90 when she only grew a quarter of an inch.

During the time I've had the snake she has consumed a total of 77 pink mice and 25 pink rats. She has only refused food twice: these were the times of the strange sloughs when she went milky, didn't slough, went milky again and then sloughed. Her colour has faded from obvious markings to marked but considerably darker and her underside has gone from white with checkered markings to dark and yellow. Her mood is slowly getting better though she can be wary.





CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

FOR SALE

Garter snake hatchlings - **Florida Blue-sided Garter Snakes** (*Thamnophis sirtalis similis*) £10 each. Blue-sided, 4 months old £12 each. **Plains Garter Snakes** (*Thamnophis radix ssp.*) £10 each. **California Kingsnake** hatchlings £35 each. Also some **Alpine Newts** £1.50p each. Phone George on (0475) 87002 (Renfrewshire).

1991 captive-bred hatchling **Mexican Black Kingsnakes**. Bred from jet black parents. Excellent feeders, £35 each. Phone Lee on (0533) 532670 (Leics).

Captive-bred, superbly marked **Corn Snakes, Grey Rat Snakes** and **Black Rat Snakes**. Feeding well on dead pinkies. All at £15 each. The Bargain of the Year! Phone Richard or Terry on (0279) 445254 (Essex).

1990 captive-bred male Carolina **Corn Snake**. Good size, feeds well on medium-sized dead mice. £40 or exchange considered. Please phone Paul or Jo on (0785) 850983 (Staffs).

Hatchling banded **California Kingsnakes**. £30 each, unrelated pairs available. Phone Henry or Fiona on (0203) 442054 after 6pm (Coventry).

C/b '90 female *Lamprophis fuliginosus* £25. C/b '90 female *Lampropeltis alterna* (Blairs phase) £120. C/b '91 *Elaphe obsoleta quadrivittata* £12.50p. C/b '91 *Lampropeltis getulus holbrooki* £25. C/b '91 *Elaphe guttata guttata* £12.50p. C/b '91 *Epicrates cenchria maurus* £70. C/b '91 *Epicrates striatus striatus* £25. Contact Nigel on (0993) 822521 after 6pm (Oxon).

Six captive-bred hatchling *Chondropythons* (with CITES papers) £400 each. Two captive-bred **Common Boa Constrictors**. Nice markings, unrelated pair, 4½'. £120 each. Telephone (0483) 67924 (Guildford).

Home bred, unrelated pairs of **Argentinian Rainbow Boas** (*Epicrates cenchria alvarezi*), **Egyptian Spotted Sand Boas** (*Eryx jaculus jaculus*). Juvenile female **Colombian Rainbow Boa** (*E.c. maurus*). No time wasters please! Phone Steven on (0273) 727328 (Sussex).

1991 hatchling **Sonoran Desert Kingsnakes** (*Lampropeltis getulus splendida*). Males only, £35 each. Pair of 1990 **Yellow Rat Snakes**, £40 each or £70 pair. Orders taken for **Honduran Milksnakes**, tangerine phase. due end of September, £80 each. Phone (0623) 657543 (Notts).

Hatchling Carolina **Corn Snakes**. All feeding well, £10 each. Phone Felixstowe (0394) 271500.

Python molurus bivittatus, 14', female, 5 years old. *Lampropeltis getulus splendida*, female, USA import, 2 years old. Phone **snake breeder** on (0494) 722769.

WANTED

Mature, albino, male, banded California Kingsnake. Phone Henry or Fiona on (0203) 442054 after 6pm.

In exchange for a male 3 year old Burmese Python, *Python molurus bivittatus* (or cash), a male banded California Kingsnake, *Lampropeltis getulus californiae*, aged 2 to 3, for breeding purposes. Phone David on (05255) 2612.