

LITERATURE

This column will give information about new literature, publications, books, etc. Tips concerning new literature are welcome, and should be sent to: Jan Cor Jacobs, Tesselschadestraat 6, 3521 XV Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Die Arizona Königsnatter *Lampropeltis pyromelana* (Cope) 1866 - ein Schlangenujewel aus dem westlichen Nordamerika; L. Trutnau Herpetofauna (Ludwigsburg), 1984, Vol. 6 (33): 12-19.

*This article describes four subspecies of *Lampropeltis pyromelana*: *Lampropeltis pyromelana pyromelana*, *Lampropeltis pyromelana infralabialis*, *Lampropeltis pyromelana knoblochi* and *Lampropeltis pyromelana woodini*. It describes their distribution and their habitat, their behaviour in prey capture and feeding, their activity by day and at night and their hibernation. It also describes the breeding of *Lampropeltis pyromelana woodini*.*

*Mating took place on 16, 17, 20 and 28 May and on 1 June. Mating was stimulated by adding another male to an existing true pair. Temperatures during the mating period ranged from 24-28°C. Three eggs were laid on 9 July (15-17x50-60 mm). The eggs hatched on 28 and 29 September. The young weighed 4.94-5.88 g and were 225-240 mm long. A few weeks after hatching two of the young ate small lizards (*Urosaurus*) but refused freshly killed pink mice.*

*A pair of *Lampropeltis pyromelana pyromelana* mated on 6 May. Four eggs were laid on 24 June in a plastic box filled with damp peat. They hatched on 31 August and 1 September and the young (220-240 mm) sloughed after nine to ten days. The young refused to eat mice and had to be force-fed.*

Zu Haltung und Nachzucht von *Dasypeltis scabra*.

H. Kulmus. Salamandra (1984), Vol. 20 (1): 11-20.

A female *Dasypeltis scabra*, bought on 18 February 1977, laid six eggs during the night of 23 February 1977. Four eggs hatched after 63 days (two eggs having been opened during incubation). One of the young died two hours after force-feeding, one young died on 19 August of a flagellate infection, one young was given away and one, a female, was kept. A male was acquired on 11 June 1980.

The adult snakes are kept in a terrarium of 80x50x80 cm (lwxhxh) which has glass on three sides and gauze on top and part of one side. Half of the floor is covered with peat and the other half with a 1 cm deep layer of coarse, well washed sand on a layer of earth. A heating cable keeps the floor temperature at 30°C, and there are three neonlights. The heating and lights are switched on from 07.00-19.00 hours. Ample climbing branches are provided. Relative humidity is 40-70%. A drinking trough is only used by the adult snakes, the young lapping drops off sprayed plants. The snakes tolerate each other well, though pregnant females should be housed apart to avoid disturbance.

Feeding: new born snakes are provided with the eggs of finches, later with canary-eggs and after a few months with parakeet-eggs. From 35 cm on they can handle quail-eggs, from 40 cm dove-eggs and from 80 cm on pheasant- and chicken-eggs. When in doubt always give them a small egg instead of a too large one. Fertilized eggs are never accepted. Sometimes quail-eggs are regurgitated, the author believes because of their hard-to-crack scale. Every now and then protracted feeding pauses take place, sometimes lasting for months. The animals often also refuse food during the winter and wild-caught animals during the summer

(winter time in Africa!)

Because of their habit of stealing eggs from birds' nests, the wild-caught animals are almost always infected with ectoparasites. The author recommends treating them with Neguvon.

The first mating was observed four days after the male joined the female (15 June 1980).

Further matings were seen regularly. The first eggs were laid on 8 June 1981, one year after the first mating (ten infertile eggs, eight fertile). Further clutches followed 26 June 1982 (twelve fertile eggs), 19 August 1983 (ten fertile eggs), 29 May 1983 (11 fertile eggs) and 2 August 1983 (six infertile and six fertile eggs).

Fertile eggs measure 40-45x15-17 mm and increase in size until hatching when they measure 43-55x21-26 mm. Infertile eggs are usually smaller (for example 32x17 mm) and are smooth, shiny and yellowish while fertile eggs are a little rough, dull and white. Hatching takes place after 63-65 days at 28°C and 58-60 days at 30°C, and takes 4-24 hours. A few days after hatching finch-eggs are readily accepted. First sloughing takes place after 1-3 weeks, independent whether they have eaten or not.

The young are housed in two small terraria (70x30x40 cm, low) with conditions similar to those of the parents. Troublesome feeders are placed separately in small plastic terraria until they are feeding voluntarily.

The simplest way of finding out the sex of the animals is by checking their shed skin. Starting with the second sloughing the males hemipenes slough together with the rest of the skin.

Erdnattern (*Elaphe obsoleta*) - ideale Schlangen für den Anfänger; Bert Stankowski. Herpetofauna (Ludwigsburg), 1986, Vol. 8 (42): 29-34.

The author describes how he keeps and breeds Elaphe obsoleta. The snakes need a large terrarium. The substrate should not be too tightly compacted, because the snakes like to hide away under the substrate.

For breeding a period of winter cooling is required. During winter cooling the temperature should be between 10 and 15°C. If the temperature drops below 10°C, young snakes might die. When the temperature is more than 15°C, the snakes are too active. During the cooling off period, fresh water should be provided, but food is not needed.

Mating occurs between April and June; the exact time depends on the length of the semi-hibernation. Two or three months after mating, the female will produce eggs. The author incubates the eggs in a tank filled with vermiculite. The eggs are half-buried in the vermiculite. If the eggs show signs of mould, they are placed on the surface of the vermiculite. At a temperature between 24 and 30°C the incubation time is between 70 and 90 days.

After their first sloughing the snakes usually eat of their own accord. When they do not eat voluntarily, the author advises that one should not attempt to force feed them. The author supposes that it is possible that in natural circumstances young snakes might hibernate prior to feeding. The author therefore allowed young snakes which did not eat voluntarily to hibernate without force feeding them. After hibernation these young snakes were healthy and started eating of their own accord.