
THE REPRODUCTION OF *AGKISTRODON BILINEATUS*
(GUNTHER, 1888) IN CAPTIVITY.

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DESCRIPTION

Agkistrodon bilineatus is the most southern species of its genus in the New Continent. It reaches a maximum length of 120 cm.

There are three sub-species: *Agkistrodon bilineatus bilineatus* of the Pacific Coasts of Guatemala; *Agkistrodon bilineatus russeolus* (Gloyd, 1979) of the Yucatan; *Agkistrodon bilineatus taylori* (Burger & Robertson, 1951) of Taumalipas and Nuero Leon; this last subspecies is particularly in demand because of its beautiful colours.

Its habitats are hilly regions, both dry and humid, where it feeds on mice, rats, frogs, birds and fish. It is an ovoviviparous species with an extremely irritable nature.

THE TERRARIUM

In July 1984 I obtained my three-month old pair of this species. The animals were placed together in a terrarium measuring 70x50x50 cm, lit by two 40 Watt lamps for 12 hours per day. The temperature ranged from 27°C to 29°C during the day, to 18-20°C in the night.

As a substrate I have used some gravel and I have also prepared a refuge for the animals, because

they are particularly irritable.

COPULATION

In October 1985 the female weighed 500 g, and since then, I have given her an addition of D vitamin to her diet. To stimulate copulation, it has been enough to separate the female before she sloughs, and afterwards, to put her back with the male. In this way, on 5 July 1986 the animals copulated without any particular ritual; the copulation lasted for 50 minutes.

On 10 November 1986 after another slough and the same short separation, the animals copulated again; during the gestation period the female continued to eat as usual.

BIRTH

On 30 June 1987 the female, whose diameter had remarkably increased, gave birth to 12 young in perfect condition, weighing from 9 to 12 g.

The young were placed in plastic boxes with absorbent paper as a substrate; the young began their first slough 8 days after their birth.

Following the same method, the animals re-copulated on 1 August 1987. The female, always eating throughout her gravid period gave birth to 12 young on 19 May 1988, but one of them was dead and another one had a serious spinal deformity. The young began eating on their own after 3 weeks. The parents copulated again with the same system on 20 August 1988 and now the female should be gravid.

DISCUSSION

According to my results for the reproduction of this species, hibernation and a particular photoperiod are not necessary, but I think the separation is important, maybe just during the female's sloughing period. I think it is also important to offer the extra administration of vitamins.

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