
LITERATURE

Minakami, Karebumi; 1979. "An estimation of age and life-span of the genus *Trimeresurus* (Reptilia, Serpentes, Viperidae) on Amami Oshima Island, Japan".
Journal of Herpetology 13 (2): 147-152.

Two species of the snake genus *Trimeresurus* (*Trimeresurus flavoviridis* and *Trimeresurus okinavensis*) are found on the island of Amami Oshima in Japan, where they are common, terrestrial, venomous snakes.

Trimeresurus flavoviridis lays eggs from June to early August, which hatch after a period of 40-41 days. At hatching the juveniles are 34 to 36 cm long.

The eggs of *Trimeresurus okinavensis* hatch after 3 to 4 days after being laid. On average the juveniles of this species are 15 cm long. The minimal measured body-length of gravid *Trimeresurus flavoviridis* is 110 cm, that of *Trimeresurus okinavensis* 45 cm.

The age of snakes can be determined after death by counting the number of rings formed on the skull or in the centre of the vertebrae. At first this was done by making a statistical estimation, later it was established that in some species of snake these rings in fact are formed yearly. Minakami proved this too for the named species of *Trimeresurus*. On the basis of his calculations he estimates the life-span of *Trimeresurus flavoviridis* males at 10 years and that of females 7 years. The average maximum length for this snake proved, after calculations, to be 216.4 cm for males and 171.6 cm for females. This calculation resembled the length of animals caught in the wild; the longest animal proved to be a male of 220 cm. The average life-span for

male *Trimeresurus okinavensis* was calculated at 19 years and a maximum length of 144.6 cm. For females the calculated figures were 15 years and 130.3 cm respectively. This did not resemble the experiences in the field; the longest animal caught was a female with a length of 74 cm, while an old reference mentions an animal of 83.9 cm. So extra research on this snake will be necessary.

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Translation: René van Marle.