

BOOKREVIEW

Australian Reptiles and Frogs, by Raymond T. Hoser. Original Edition, 1989. Hardback, 238 pages, 613 illustrations. ISBN: 0 947068 08 2.
 Publisher: Pierson & Co., P.O. box 87, Mosman, N.S.W., 2088, Australia.

By: Eddie Even.

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The author might be known to most of the readers, as he has written several articles for *Litteratura Serpantium*. The book itself looks attractive: the front shows a *Chondropython* and the book contains over 600 colour photos. All pictures are of good quality: they show the animals from head to tail or give a close up of the head. All animals are pictured on a natural background, not one photograph is obviously taken in a terrarium. Some pictures are really remarkable, like photos of snakes mating and eating at the same time, an *Aspidites melanocephalus* with an only partially black head, a male *Chondropython* with spurs of several centimeters and cross-breedings between different pythons (these last pictures have also been published in *Litteratura Serpantium*). The major part of the book gives descriptions of Australian frogs, crocodiles, lizards and snakes. The descriptions are short and accompanied by a map that shows the area of distribution. The book also contains chapters on protection and conservation (with extensive information on the smuggling of reptiles) and on catching and keeping Australian reptiles and amphibians. One chapter is reserved for photography.

For travellers to Australia the description of all kinds of habitats might be very interesting. Pictures of these habitats are shown and a map indicates where to find the habitat. Every description gives a list of animals which can be found there.

Unfortunately not all Australian reptiles/amphibians can be found in this book. Animals of which no picture is present are not mentioned. The author states that he has left out some animals which are not really remarkable and some which look very alike. But one lizard, which is surely very remarkable and well known, is left out: the moloch! Also two frogs, which can be found in almost every book on Australian amphibians, are left out: *Notaden bentii* and *Pseudophyrnee corroboree*. However, I do not think that many remarkable snakes are missing, except one of the smaller venomous snakes. Nevertheless, a list of all frogs and snakes in Australia would have been desirable.

The author is fond of Death adders: *Acanthophis antarcticus* is pictured 54 times (of which 27 photos show one specimen eating a mouse!). Both other *Acanthophis* species are pictured 14 times. *Liasis* (in the book: *Bothrochilus*) *fuscus* is pictured only once!

The description of *Liasis* (*Bothrochilus*) *perthensis* mentions the author as the first breeder of this snake and accuses officials of nature preservation of stealing his snakes. I do not think that these facts are relevant to be mentioned in descriptive parts, but should be in chapters dealing with keeping and breeding or preservation.

In spite of some negative points I liked the book and recommend it to every herpetologist who is interested in Australian reptiles and frogs.

The price I paid (Hfl. 80.-) is worth it. I do not know whether the book is for sale outside Australia: mine was bought for me in Australia by a good friend. But this book is certainly freely available in the U.K.