

## HATCHING EGGS OF A *PYTHON REGIUS*

By: Peter Busse, Drossaardslaan 48, 4143 BD Leerdam, The Netherlands.

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### INTRODUCTION

On 9 March 1990, I bought two female adult specimens of *Python regius*. According to an expert present at the time (Frans Verstappen), both animals were gravid.

When I got home I put the animals immediately in a quiet place in my snake room, each in her own cage, with peat dust on the floor, well moistened and with a hiding place consisting of a turned over flower pot on a glazed dish (see fig. 1). In this pot I put some moistened peat in order to maintain high moisture within the pot without wetting it too much. If too wet, the eggs would decay, I was told.

### DECEPTION

On 20 March 1990 the first female deposited her eggs, though outside the pot, which enabled me to make some photo's. All fourteen eggs proved to be infertile (at any rate not viable). After one week they started to putrify, as indicated by their foul smell.

### HAPPINESS

On Sunday morning 25 March 1990 the second female layed her eggs, this time in the pot. These eggs were nicely white and estimated about 10 cm long.

The mother had to do the work herself, so I did not touch any of the eggs. Each day I sprayed three times in order to maintain the necessary degree of air humidity. Each morning the mother-to-be went out basking for half an hour. She then drank something and returned to her eggs. After a week the eggs were still well, so I started to count down: probably sixty days at 27°C - in the cage temperatures were 28°C by day, 24°C during the nights.

After some 30 days, the eggs became a little brown coloured. The upper eggs caved in a little, leading me to fear things would go wrong again, which they did not, luckily.

After 59 days I got tense. During a short holiday abroad I phoned home a lot for information. Three days after my arrival back home, the first young hatched, 73 days after the laying of the first egg. Eight days later I removed the pot and found the results: 8 living young pythons, 1 dead, 1 unhatched egg and 5 decayed eggs. The hatchlings weighed 42-64 g. The unhatched egg weighed 105 g and was 11.5 cm long. This egg hatched two days later, the 83rd day.

## RESULTS

The result in the end were nine young, three of which were completely well, six with irregular spines. One of these died, the rest are doing well.

The irregularity of the spines of the six young indicate that something must have gone wrong, but it is not clear exactly what it was.