

MY BREEDING OF *LAMPROPELTIS TRIANGULUM SINALOAE*

By: Tony Moerkens, lange Voren 7, 5133 TM Riel, The Netherlands.

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THE ANIMALS

In 1990 I bought an adult pair of *Lampropeltis triangulum sinaloae*. The snakes had been imported as young animals. The male was bred in the U.S.A. in 1986 by Steve Osborne; the female came from Great Britain and hatched in 1985. Now (early 1992) they are over one metre long. The breeding stock of Osborne came from the Dimas and Cotala areas, Sinaloa, Mexico.

HOUSING

Like my other *Lampropeltis* both animals are housed separately in terraria measuring 60x50x23 cm (lxwxh). The terraria are illuminated and heated by a 15 Watt bulb under which the animals can warm themselves when required. Under the bulb is a flat stone which provides warmth for some time after the bulb is switched off.

FOOD

The animals differ in their feeding habits. Whereas the female eats adult mice and three to five-week old rats, the male eats only adult mice. A third animal, a female obtained in 1989, eats three to four-week old rats. The animals are fed every week. Only dead prey is offered. In this way it is unnecessary to remain with the animals when food is in the terrarium and there is no danger of the prey injuring the snakes.

Uneaten food is removed, frozen and offered again to the same snake the following week. When the snakes have eaten, or when the uneaten food has been removed, water is offered. The water-bowl is removed one day later. The animals are thriving under this system and the terrarium stays clean.

WINTER REST

From early December 1990 I let the animals overwinter in the terrarium. Three weeks prior to this I stopped feeding them to prevent decomposition of any food remaining in the body. During the winter rest water was given once each week, as usual.

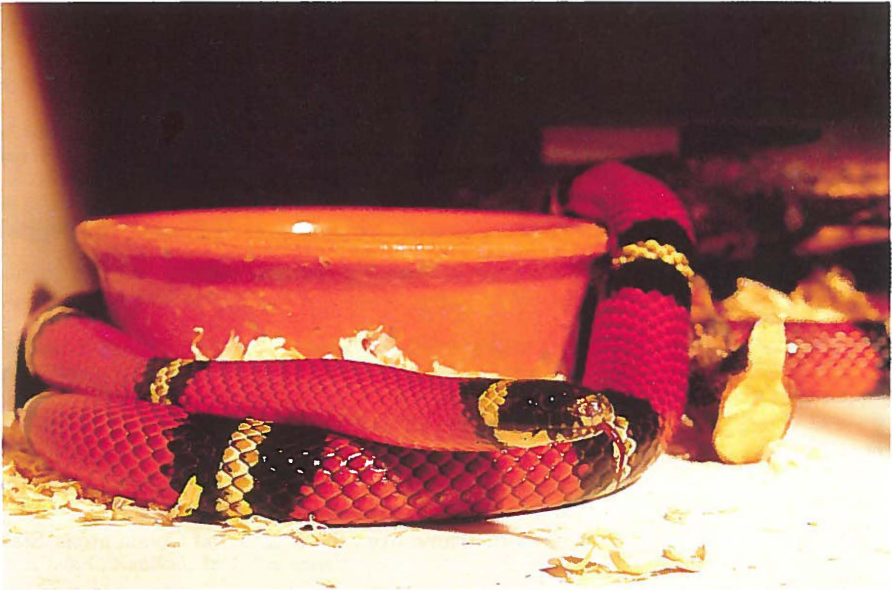


Foto 1: *Lampropeltis triangulum sinaloae*.
Foto A. v. Gool / A. Moerkens.



Foto 2: *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata*.
Foto A. v. Gool / A. Moerkens.

COPULATIONS

I switched on the lamps again in April. This had little effect at first, the snakes becoming active one month later. There were no copulations, however. When the male was placed with the female she reacted unfavourably and went to lie coiled so the male could not mate with her. At every attempt to mate, she started to beat fiercely with her tail. This behaviour was repeated at every attempt to bring the animals together.

On May 30, 1991, at around 10.45 pm, I saw the male pushing restlessly against the front of the terrarium. Possibly, he reacted to the odour of the female. I opened both terraria and helped the male into the female's terrarium, which was situated beneath his. The female remained calm and copulation followed.

Date	Time the male was placed with the female	Time and duration of the copulations
300591	± 22.45 hrs	22.59 till 23.17 hrs
020691	12.58 hrs	13.20 till 13.27 hrs 13.29 till 13.38 hrs
130691	18.25 hrs	18.31 hrs till ?

Table 1: copulations.

GESTATION

After the copulations the female began to eat, sometimes two items each meal. This continued until two weeks before laying. I did not wait until the female had shed but placed a laying tray of moist sawdust into the terrarium straight away - it is better to replace a laying tray than to have to throw away dried-up eggs!

THE EGGS

The female shed on July 14. On July 19 she investigated the laying tray and on July 23 she entered it around 12.00 noon. On July 24 she laid twelve eggs (see Table 2). The temperature in the terrarium was 27°C, falling to 26°C during the night.

At 00.30 am I placed a water-bowl near the laying tray so the female could drink. At 01.01 am she drank, after which she left the laying tray. I removed the water-bowl after this in case there was a further egg laid. As soon as they were laid, all eggs were removed and placed in a tray with moist vermiculite. At first the eggs were yellowish but later they became whiter. Incubation was achieved by placing the tray in water that was held at a minimum temperature of 24°C by means of an aquarium heater. The temperature remained around 26°C for most of the time.



Foto 3: *Lampropeltis triangulum celaenops*.
Foto A. v. Gool / A. Moerkens.



Foto 4: *Lampropeltis triangulum arcifera*.
Foto A. v. Gool / A. Moerkens.

Egg nr.	Time
1	before 18.45
2	19.12
3	19.46
4	20.18
5	20.43
6	21.08
7	21.37
8	22.06
9	22.35
10	23.10
11	23.47
12	00.18

Table 2: Time the eggs were laid.

THE YOUNG

All the eggs hatched between October 7 and October 11. After making the first slit it still took each young snake one day to leave the egg. Apart from two, the young were perfectly banded and very large. I put this down to the low incubation temperature.

REMARK

During my visit to Osborne in 1991 I saw many partly mouldy *Lampropeltis* eggs. According to Osborne, who rinses these eggs every day, they hatch normally.

Translation: Fons Sleijpen.



Foto 5: *Lampropeltis triangulum campbelli*.
Foto A. v. Gool / A. Moerkens.