

BREEDING PROGRAMMES IN PRACTICE

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English correction by Chris Mattison.

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INTRODUCTION

In the first issue of *Litteratura serpentina* of this year there appeared an article by Twan Leenders in which he explained the importance of breeding programmes for the keeping and breeding of snakes (Leenders, 1994). Except an appeal to actively join these breeding programmes there also was an announcement for a meeting in the Rotterdam Zoo "Blijdorp" where the use and backgrounds of these programmes would be further explained.

Those who had responded to the appeal of Twan all received an invitation for this day, which was held on the 26th of March. Unfortunately there had been no response from any of our foreign members. In addition to the members of the ESS, there were also people present from Lacerta, the Dutch Society for herpetology and terrarium keeping, and the Dutch Turtle Association (NSV). Within these two societies there is more experience with breeding programmes and especially within the NSV there are already a number of active programmes for several turtle species. The main purpose of this day therefore was to exchange ideas and experiences.

At the annual spring meeting of Lacerta and the NSV on the 7th of May there was also a lot of attention for breeding programmes. Jacco van Rossum presented a lecture in which he, among other things, recalled the activities that already took place and will take place in the near future with respect to breeding programmes. Jacco is the main coordinator of the OOS, the umbrella organization for breeding programmes. The aim of this organization is to coordinate all activities concerning breeding programmes that take place within the societies. The organization registers all breeding programmes but also provides information like regulations and registration forms. They also distribute the computer programmes necessary for the registration of all animals within a particular breeding program. On their information stand at the spring meeting they presented an overview of all breeding programmes operative at present. Although not as many as there are for turtles a number of programmes for snakes have already been started. You can find a list of these programmes at the end of this article.

BREEDING PROGRAMMES IN PRACTICE

For years now breeding programmes are well known phenomena within the livestock industry or the world of zoos. The administration of all relevant data essential for the optimal functioning of these programmes is done by means of a computer program. In the Netherlands the S.N.O.D (Stichting Nationaal Onderzoek Dierentuinen) has developed a special computer program (ZRBOOK) that can be used for this purpose on a non-commercial basis by societies

like *Lacerta*, the NSV. *Dendrobatidae* Nederland and the ESS. At the moment the coordination of the breeding programmes is done by Jacco van Rossum of the OOS. Again it should be stated that participation in a breeding program is always on a voluntary basis and is not coupled to the membership of any society.

What happens if one participates in a breeding program? Anyone who wants to join should register with the bookkeeper of the program. An overview of all programmes will be published regularly in *LS*. All participants keep records of their own animals and report them to the bookkeeper by means of a special form. All mutations, like deaths and the buying and selling of animals, are to be reported to the bookkeeper through these forms. The bookkeeper then enters the information on the participant and his (legal!) animals into the computer program. The names of the participants to a particular program are and will be known only to the bookkeeper. Not even the coordinator of all programmes will have access to these data. Anonymity will therefore be guaranteed! Using the computer program the bookkeeper will determine the most ideal combinations of breeding couples and will establish contact between the owners of these animals. Thereafter it is up to the individual owners to exchange animals. Although it is the essence of a breeding program, this exchange is done completely on a voluntary basis and falls under the responsibility of the participants. The bookkeeper himself is never in any way responsible for any negative effects of this exchange. Eventually, successful breeding results have to be reported to him. When selling animals the information of the new owner will also have to be reported to the bookkeeper so a good view on the population of animals can be maintained even in the long term. Once a year the bookkeeper reports on the program and a copy of this report can be requested by all participants.

To ensure a healthy population in the long term, and to prevent import of 'fresh blood' by the introduction of animals caught from the wild, every program will have to include at least 30 breeding couples. At least 30 couples but also here the saying goes 'the more the better'!! If this initiative is to catch on among snake keepers then everybody will understand that this will only succeed with the cooperation of many. The foreign members of the ESS also play an important role in this and next to the Dutch members they are summoned to support the breeding programmes either by joining a program or starting a program within their own country. In any case please contact (or register as a participant or bookkeeper) Twan Leenders, Prof. Bromstraat 59, NL-6525 AT Nijmegen., The Netherlands. Telephone +31-80-231871.

CURRENT STATUS

At this moment a number of people have registered as either participant or as bookkeeper. The list below will, at the moment it appears in print, no longer be up-to-date. For the most recent information please contact Twan Leenders at the address mentioned above.

Please help to give our hobby, the keeping and breeding of snakes, the strongest possible position and register as a participant to a breeding program!

Registered breeding programmes and bookkeepers

Lampropeltis getulus floridana/californiae/nigritus

Herman Bronsgeest, Willem de Zwijgerlaan 255, NL-2316 EC Leiden, The Netherlands.

Elaphe guttata

Erwin van Gelderop, Poortwachter 100, NL-1188 CN Amstelveen, The Netherlands.
Telephone +31-20-6458769.

Elaphe schrencki schrencki

Kurt Langeveld, Cantharel 12, NL-2925 DJ Krimpen a/d IJssel, The Netherlands.
Telephone +31-1807-23892.

Elaphe obsoleta

Twan Leenders, Prof. Bromstraat 59, NL-6525 AT Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
Telephone +31-80-231871

Elaphe quatuorlineata quatuorlineata

René van Marle, Perengaarde 23, NL-3992 JM Houten, The Netherlands. Telephone
31-3403-77150.

Thamnophis species

Jan van het Meer, Chopinpad 34, NL-1323 RZ Almere, The Netherlands. Telephone
+31-36-5361243.

René van der Vlugt, Pomona 106, NL-6708 CD Wageningen, The Netherlands.
Telephone +31-8370-14865.

Boa constrictor

Fred Wessels, Paradijsvogelhoek 32, NL-3201 PH Spijkenisse, The Netherlands.
Telephone +31-1880-23074.

LITERATURE

Leenders, T., 1994. The importance of breeding programs for the breeding of snakes, *Litteratura serpantium*
14: 7-8.