AFRICAN HERP NEWS
NO. 17: JUNE 1992

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ISSN 1017 - 6187
AFRICAN HERP NEWS
HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA
NEWSLETTER

FEATUREING:
by
R.M. Douglas

JUNE 1992
NO. 17
EDITORIAL

This issue of African Herp News features Rod Douglas’ Bibliographic index to the journal of the H.A.A. (no. 1 to 39). I am sure that members will find it of great historical interest and of much assistance when doing research. An extra 100 copies of this issue have been produced, and copies are available from the Secretary/Treasurer at R10.00 or $10.00 each, postage included.

I am pleased to say that arrangements for the 1993 H.A.A. Symposium are proceeding rather well, and a venue and provisional dates are now available (see page ii).

Included with this newsletter is a voting form for the election of a new H.A.A. committee. I trust that all African members will take an interest in the election and return their ballots timeously.

The next issue of African Herp News, due out towards the end of the year, will include, amongst others, the following articles: V-box Containment: a reliable method for tubing venomous snakes by Terry Dillon, Morphometric and stripe pattern differences between Geometric tortoise, Pseudemobates geometricus populations in the south-western Cape Province by E.H.W. Baard, and "Dystocia" in snakes by E.V. Cock.

It has been decided, for financial reasons, to issue only two newsletters for 1992. The next issue will, however, be another bulky one of about 50 pages.

All the best.

Mike Bates
CHAIRMAN/NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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H.A.A.  
EX AFRICA  
SICMPTER  
ALIQUID NOVI
THIRD H.A.A. SYMPOSIUM ON AFRICAN HERPETOLOGY

PROVISIONAL DATES: 12 - 16 OCTOBER 1993
PROVISIONAL VENUE: National Zoological Gardens, Pretoria

All H.A.A. members and other interested parties are hereby invited to submit proposals for topics as well as any other suggestions for the forthcoming symposium. During the symposium a FitzSimons Day session will be held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of V.F.M. FitzSimons' memoir, The Lizards of South Africa. Papers dealing with the current systematic status of the various southern African lizard families will be presented by local and overseas guest speakers. This symposium promises to be a very worthwhile experience, and as was the case at previous H.A.A. symposia, a wide variety of herpetological topics will be covered.

Proposals and suggestions should be addressed to:
Mr. W.D. Haacke, Transvaal Museum, P.O. Box 413, Pretoria, 0001 South Africa.

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC INDEX TO THE JOURNAL OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

NO. 1 (1965) to NO. 39 (1991)

R.M. DOUGLAS

Department of Herpetology, National Museum
P.O. Box 266, 9300 Bloemfontein, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The Journal of the Herpetological Association of Africa is the only journal devoted entirely to all aspects of African herpetology. For this reason, the following bibliography should become an important reference source for anyone working in this field. Early articles provide an interesting account of collecting trips conducted at the time, as well as a progressive history of African herpetology. Numerous important taxonomic papers have appeared in the journal, and with the commencement and publication of symposium proceedings, an update of herpetological research is also now being recorded. Aspects such as diet, reproduction, distribution, husbandry and snake bite have not been ignored either, with valuable contributions on these subjects being largely due to the 'Short Notes' section, which commenced in Journal #32. This bibliography, along with those bibliographies listed in Appendix 1, probably represent the most comprehensive reference sources on African herpetological literature currently available.
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RECENT AFRICAN HERPETOLOGICAL LITERATURE............................... 54

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abst. = Abstract.
Figs = Figures.
Post. = Poster.
(P.Corr.) = Page numbers in volume index incorrect, but have been corrected in this bibliography.
Revw. = Reviewer.


BOTHA, A.S. 1984. Hatchling of Snouted night adder (Causus defilippi) eggs. 38: 21. (P.Cor.)


BOYCOTT, R. 1990. Life History Note: Chamaesaora anguina: Size, reproduction and susceptibility to fire. 37: 49.


BROADLEY, D.G. 1968. An exceptional Forest cobra from Rhodesia. 4: 30.


BROADLEY, D.G. 1971. A reassessment of the northern forms currently assigned to the Cordylus cordylus group. 7: 20-22.


BROADLEY, D.G. 1972. The Wedge snouted amphibians of southern Africa. 9: 34.


BROADLEY, D.G. 1988. Life History Note: Melanoton semiornatus semiornatus: Habitat, diet and distribution. 34: 44.


- C -


COCK, E.V. & CORPORAL CARRICK. 1977. Two suspect Mamba bites: Same victim, three year interval. 16: 2-3.


COULSON, I.M. 1988. Variation in shield counts in tortoises of the Sengwa wildlife research area, Zimbabwe. 35: 9-11. (P.Cor.)


DYER, B. 1982. Reproductive information on some snakes from the Cape Province. 27: 16-17.


- E -


- F -


- G -


- H -


HAAGNER, G.V. 1986. Life History Note: *Dendroaspis angusticeps*: Reproduction, abnormalities and male combat. Figs 1. 32: 36-37.


HAAGNER, G.V. 1990. Life History Note: *Psicephalus adspersus adspersus*: Reproductive behaviour. 37: 45.

HAAGNER, G.V. 1990. Life History Note: *Philothamnus s. semivariegatus*: Avian predation. 37: 46.


HAAGNER, G.V. 1990. Life History Note: *Psammophis philippisi*: Ophiophagy. 37: 47.


HAAGNER, G.V. 1990. Life History Note: *Dipsida typus typus*: Ophiophagy. 37: 47.

HAAGNER, G.V. 1990. Life History Note: *Naja haje anaulifera*: Ophiophagy. 37: 47.


- J -


JAENSCH, M. 1988. Life History Note: Aipinelus lubricus lubricus: Captive breeding. 34:45.

- K -


- L -


LIEBENBERG, A.G. 1981. Some observations and data on the breeding behaviour, including the possibility of sperm retention, of a pair of African Tiger snakes in captivity. 24: 4-5.


LYNCH, C.D. 1988. Occurrence of squamata in termitaria in the Orange Free State, South Africa. Table 1. 34: 42-43.

--- M ---


- N -


- O -


- P -


PITMAN, C.R.S. 1972. The Saw scaled viper or Carpet viper (*Echis carinatus*) in Africa and its bite. 9: 6-34.


TAYLOR, P. 1971. Ticks from reptiles collected at Kariba. 7: 10-11.


TAYLOR, P. 1973. Some observations on the movement of marked toads - Bufo garmani Meek. 11: 8-12.


VISSER, J.D. 1966. Two lizard collecting trips in the Cape Province. 2: 17-20.


VISSER, J.D. 1967. Field work in the south western Cape. 3: 9-12.


VISSER, J.D. 1971. Unusually large Skaapsteker eggs from the Cape Province. 7: 9-10.


VISSER, J.D. 1979. Is the male the sticky partner during Breviceps mating? 20: 11.

VISSER, J.D. 1979. Herpetology and Departments of Nature Conservation: Comment. 21: 3.


--- W ---


--- Y ---


--- Z ---


APPENDIX 1

BIBLIOGRAPHIES ON AFRICAN HERPETOLOGY
AND
RECENT AFRICAN HERPETOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Compiled by:

BROADLEY, D.G.
No. 3 (1968) 4: 43-44.
No. 6 (1971) 7: 38-41.
No. 7 (1971) 8: 24-27.
No. 8 (1973) 9: 12-15.
No. 9 (1973) 11: 20-22.
No. 11 (1977) 15: 27-34.

CHANNING, A.
No. 3 (1978) 19: 17.

BRANCH, W.R.

BRANCH, W.R. & HAAGNER, G.V.

THE SMITHSONIAN HERPETOLOGICAL INFORMATION SERVICE; 1977.
Literature list not related to Africa in particular 16: 10.

No. = Bibliography number listed in date order.
These bibliographies collectively represent one of the most comprehensive listings on all aspects of African herpetology.

APPENDIX II

BOOK REVIEWS

NOTE: The information given on books in this Appendix is derived solely from information provided in the review and not from the book itself.

- A -


- B -


- C -


- E -


- F -


- G -


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APPENDIX III

OBITUARIES ON AFRICAN HERPETOLOGISTS


8th MEETING OF THE AFRICAN AMPHIBIAN WORKING GROUP
FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

We hope that all workers in Africa will be able to attend this meeting. Organizers for the 9th meeting will be solicited.

MEETING PLACE

The eighth meeting of the African Amphibian Working Group will be held at the Waterberg Plateau Park. This is a small park about 150 km north of Windhoek, the capital of Namibia.

Facilities at the park include a conference centre, restaurant, pub, various types of accommodation, swimming pool, game viewing and nature trails.

There are many interesting frogs in the area. The meeting will be held during the rainy season in January, which should offer many opportunities for fieldwork and collecting. Scientific collecting permits are essential, and may be obtained through M. Griffin, Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism, Private Bag 13306, Windhoek, Namibia. FAX (+27) - 61-63195.

AIR TRAVEL TO NAMIBIA

Many airlines fly direct from Europe to Windhoek, and there are regular connecting flights from Cape Town and Johannesburg. Travellers from North America can fly direct from New York to Johannesburg. Virgin Airlines may be operating a cheap flight from London to Cape Town. There are also flights from Australia to Johannesburg.

TRANSPORT FROM WINDHOEK AIRPORT TO THE MEETING

The organizers will provide transport between the airport and the Waterberg Park.

ROAD TRAVEL TO NAMIBIA

Tarred roads link South Africa and Namibia. Driving through Botswana during the rainy season is not recommended, unless you have a four-wheel drive.

TENTATIVE DATE

The meeting is tentatively being planned for the second week in January 1994, to take place a day or two after the 2nd World Herpetological Meeting in Australia. Hopefully this will reduce the cost of flying from Europe and North America by taking in two meetings. The meeting will be held during the first week in January if participants are not attending the meeting in Australia.
SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

If you plan to attend, please notify Alan Channing by September 1992, when the second announcement and more details will be mailed.

Please mail or FAX the following information to Alan Channing: Your name, address, number in your party, are you attending the 2nd World Herp meeting in Australia, will you require transport from the airport, what is a suitable meeting date for you.

Dr A. Channing, Biochemistry Department, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535, South Africa.
FAX: (+27)-21-959 2266

Second World Congress of Herpetology

29 December 1993 – 6 January 1994

For information please contact:
Michael J. Tyler, Department of Zoology,
University of Adelaide, Box 498,
GPO Adelaide S.A. 5001, Australia.
FAX: 61-8-223-5817

The President
Herpetological Association of Africa
National Museum
P.O. Box 366
Bloemfontein

9th April 1992

Dear Sir/Madam,

On 29th March 1992, Singapore Airlines' first direct flight from Singapore arrived in Johannesburg. They now operate a twice weekly service in each direction.

Being one of the major sponsors for the 2nd World Congress of Herpetology, we herewith enclose a congress brochure for your perusal.

At present Singapore Airlines offer a special return economy airfare from Johannesburg to Adelaide for R5750.00 per person (subject to change without prior notice), with an optional stop-over in Singapore, where we have very favourable hotel rates. As this is a highly competitive airfare, early booking is strongly recommended.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact your local travel agent or Singapore Airlines office.

Yours sincerely

JENNY KEARNEY
NATIONAL SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER

SINGAPORE AIRLINES LIMITED

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Kentrons 979400, 979407

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HERP-INFO

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Non members: R7.50 per 50 words or part thereof. Over 50 words R4.00 per 15 words or part thereof.

Advertisements with payments made payable the H.A.A. should be sent to: Rod Douglas, H.A.A. Herp-Info, National Museum, P.O. Box 266, 9300 Bloemfontein.

The Editor retains the right to exclude any advertisement from publication. The Editor will presume that any persons placing advertisements and/or responding to advertisements shall be fully aware of any regulations and laws governing the sale of reptiles and amphibians in his/her area, and no correspondence will be entered into as regards these matters. Neither the Editor nor the H.A.A. shall be held responsible for any legalities or claims arising from advertisements.

FOR SALE - SNAKES

Asian Rat Snakes (Elaphe taeniura fressii). Very healthy March 1992 hatchlings. Only a few left at R180.00 each. Rod Douglas, P.O. Box 266, 9300 Bloemfontein. Tel. H (051) 365852; B (051) 479669.

Black X Yellow Rat Snakes (F2) (Elaphe obscura obscura X E. o. quadri-ventra). Handsome 16 month old young (1991 hatchings), approx. 70 cm, only R100.00 each. Rod Douglas, P.O. Box 266, 9300 Bloemfontein. Tel. H (051) 365852; B (051) 479669.

FOR SALE - BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Amphibia Zambeziana In One Volume. Amphibia Zambeziana by J.C. Poynton and D. G. Broadley. This momentous work is now available as a single paperbound volume and comprises Amphibia Zambeziana parts 1-5, which were original published separately in Annals of the Natal Museum 1985-1991. Price R80.00, including postage + VAT for South Africa; Overseas postage for overseas customers. Orders to: The Librarian, Natal Museum, Private Bag 9078, 3200 Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Tel. (0331) 451464.

English Publication Of Sauria. Herprint International is now publishing an English edition of the traditional German herpetological/herpetoculturist journal Sauria. Volume 1 contains 176 pages (4 issues of Sauria plus supplement) and includes contributions on Varanus flaveolus, Gonocephalus grandis, Trachynys decorata, Sphenomorphus aquaticus, Calloselasma rhodostoma, Eublepharis macularius, plus many colour photographs. Price for South African subscribers only R45.00 per volume. Orders and enquiries for

Sauria (E) to: Herprint International, P.O. Box 14117, 1623 Bredell, South Africa.

Books For Sale. The following books are offered for sale.


FOR SALE - MISCELLANEOUS

Live food for lizards and amphibians. For the first time in South Africa. Live crickets, wax worms, giant mealworms, mealworms and cockroaches are available for your lizards, amphibians, fish, birds and reptiles. Permanent supply by subscription possible. Enquiries to: Mr. Cricket, P.O. Box 14161, 1623 Bredell.

WANTED

Elapid Information. Anyone with information regarding the husbandry of African elapids, particularly Aspiderelaps, Dendroaspis and Pseudohaje, please contact: W. Huges, 420-601 Lakebridge Plaza Drive, Ormond Beach, Florida 32741, U.S.A.

Female Horned Adder (Bitis caudalis) over 30 cm, eating mice. Willing to pay R60.00 (but price could be negotiable). Must be on permit. Contact Niel Pama, 12 Riverside road, Newlands 7700, South Africa. Tel. 021-643222.

Gekkonid Information. Anyone with information on the genera Chododactylus, Holodactylus and Hemitheconyx, please contact: Terry Gentry, 903 Bradley Court, Mount Laurel, N.J. 80854, U.S.A.

Amphibian Information. Is anyone interested in exchanging information and literature on the captive care of all 17 species of amphibian occurring in Portugal, as well as other European countries? Also interested in exchanging general information on South African amphibians. Please contact: Noemio Sousa, Apartado 382, 2904 Setubal Codex, Portugal.

SERVICES

Translations Of Herpetological Papers. Open up the information contained in foreign papers and increase your personal success in keeping and breeding your herps. A reliable translation service is offered at very reasonable rates for translations from German, Dutch and French, into English. Send xerox copies of the papers you are interested in having translated for a free quotation. Contact: Herpprint International, Translation Service, P.O. Box 14117, 1623 Bredell, South Africa.
BIGGEST PREDATOR FOUND

Sunday Times, 24 November 1991, page 17

Sunday Times Reporter: London

Scientists have found the bones of an alligator that lived eight million years ago and which is possibly the biggest flesh-eating animal to walk the earth. The creature which outgrew Tyrannosaurus Rex, the largest predatory dinosaur, has dethroned it as the world's largest predator. Scientists said this week that they found the skull of the alligator on the banks of the Amazon River in South America. The creature would have been 2.4 m tall and 12 m long, nearly three times longer than the average car. Said Professor Carl Frailley, of Kansas: "It lived on rodents that were the size of cattle. Judging by the length of the skull, which was 1.37 m, we estimate its weight at about 12 tons. This would make it about a ton heavier than Tyrannosaurus rex, 'the king tyrant lizard' and the mightiest of dinosaur predators, which lived 60-million years earlier."
Professor Frailley added: "This giant animal with its 10 cm teeth preyed on birds, turtles and giant rodents."
He said even larger specimens might have existed. A museum in Brazil had an alligator jawbone 15 cm longer than that of the animal he and his team found.
The Guinness Book of Records said that, in view of the discovery, its entry for "the largest predator" would probably have to be rewritten in time for next year's edition.

DEADLY CHOPSTICKS

Sunday Star, 7 June 1992, page 8

Hong Kong – Local mongooses and frogs have hopefully escaped the chopsticks of gourmets after being classified as endangered species. Now the Hong Kong newt, cascade frog, Romer's tree frog, water monitor and mongoose cannot be owned or traded without a permit. Hong Kong gourmets are known for their exotic tastes - from monkey brains to bear paws and lizards.
CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION OF THE NILE CROCODILE IN SOUTH AFRICA - A HANDBOOK ON CROCODILE FARMING

This publication, consisting of close on 200 pages, is presently being printed and will be available within a month.

It contains chapters on CITES listing of the Nile crocodile in South Africa (Dr. P.F.S. Mulder); Control of International Trade in Crocodile Products (Dr. Richard Luxmoore); The Conservation Status of the Nile crocodile in South Africa (Dave Blake and Dr. N. Jacobsen); Crocodiles and the Law in South Africa (Dr. N. Jacobsen & Dave Blake); The Status of Crocodile Farming in the R.S.A. (Johan Marais & Prof. Gerrie Smith); Crocodiles - A tourist attraction (Quinton Coetzee); A Financial Model for Crocodile Farming as an Investment (Prof. L. Brummer); Facilities and Technology for the Commercial Production of Crocodylus niloticus (Prof. Gerrie Smith, J. Kuhlmann & Johan Marais); Crocodile Husbandry - The Care of Broodstock, Eggs and Hatchlings (Johan Marais and Prof. Gerrie Smith); Nutrition of Crocodylus niloticus (Prof. Gerrie Smith and Dr. R. Coulson); Diseases of Farmed Crocodiles (Dr. Chris Foggia); The Proper Collection of Laboratory Specimens (Dr. Mark Vermeput); Skinning Crocodiles for the Skin Trade (Johan Marais and Prof. Gerrie Smith); The Skin Trade - Past, Present and Future (K. van Jaarsveld); The Marketing of Crocodile Skins - Principles, Strategies and Challenges (Prof. Gerrie Smith and Johan Marais) and an Update on the Literature on Crocodiles and Crocodile Husbandry (Tony Pooley).

The publication is edited by Prof. Gerrie Smith and Johan Marais and is published by the Crocoddilian Study Group of Southern Africa.

Order forms for this publication can be obtained by writing to:

Johan Marais
P.O. Box 3
Bohrmannsdrift
2867

In preparation

MEDICAL VALUE OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

by Steve Grenard
Orig. Ed. 1992
ISBN 0-89464-564-1

This book will chronicle the history, and recent and current research being done with amphibians and reptiles that has or will advance the cause of humanity. The overall purpose is to reveal to herpetologists, naturalists, zoologists, and the general reader, that amphibians and reptiles have an amazing amount of benefit to offer human medicine. The inherent value to mankind of animals such as amphibians and reptiles is not only interesting from a scientific point of view to naturalists, but it gives them the ammunition on which to base pleas for conservation, habitat preservation and biodiversity maintenance. As will be pointed out by examples, captive husbandry and breeding is not always the answer either. An example is a genus of small Brazilian frogs which produce potent medical alkaloids currently being researched. Captive born specimens do not have this substance since their diet is altered in captivity. In their native habitat they feed on a specific genus of ant which produces the alkaloid being studied. The index provides a taxonomic cross reference to the systematically arranged text. The entries are alphabetical within each genus if there are more than one. The genera are listed alphabetically within each family or subfamily. The reader will be able to cross reference pharmaceutical substances found in herps and also other substances and uses, such as alligators as surgical models.

Coming in 1992!!

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HERPETOCULTURE

by Steve Grenard: Orig. ed. 1992

Krieger Publishing Company
P.O. Box 9542, Melbourne; Fl.32902-9542
(407)724-9542, Direct Order Line (407)727-7720
FAX (407)951-3671
Prepublication Announcement

A REVISED CHECKLIST WITH DISTRIBUTION MAPS OF THE TURTLES OF THE WORLD

by John B. Iverson

Publication date: April 1992

This is a substantial revision of Iverson's 1986 Turtle Checklist. At approximately 370 pages, it is 33% longer than the earlier version, and is now the most comprehensive guide available to the scientific nomenclature of the turtles of the world. The Checklist includes updated distribution dot maps (nearly 270 total) for all species, and information on the original citations, type specimens, type localities, distribution, and pertinent literature for all recognized species AND subspecies. Dichotomous keys modified from the scientific literature are also included for identification down to the species level. Phylogenetic relationships are also illustrated for most taxa. This edition is currently available only in soft cover. Cost is $25.00 prepaid (including surface shipping; foreign airmail shipping is $10.00 extra). All payments must be in U.S. dollars, drawn on U.S. banks, or on an international money order.

ADDRESS ORDER TO:

John B. Iverson
Dept. of Biology
Earlham College
Richmond IN 47374 USA

Enclosed is my check for $_____

Please send me _______ copies of the Checklist.

Name:________________________________________
Address:______________________________________
____________________________________________
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PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO SNAKES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA by Johan Marais (Published by Southern Books) will be available in August 1992.

This 240 page publication contains 210 colour photographs, species accounts of the snakes of southern Africa including Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, a section on snakes in captivity complete with a drug chart for veterinarians, first aid measures and a chapter on classification and relationships.

H.A.A. members can order this book now from the author, and 10% of the proceedings of book sales to H.A.A. members will be donated to the H.A.A.

Full price inclusive of packaging and mailing:
Soft cover R69.95*
Hard cover R79.95*

Please post your cheque or money order to:

Johan Marais
P.O. Box 3
Bohmannsdriif
2867

* For overseas orders please add R10.00 per book.
RECENT BOOKS ON HUSBANDRY AND CAPTIVE CARE

Part 2

All books reviewed by BILL BRANCH

Port Elizabeth Museum, P.O. Box 13147, Humewood, 6013, South Africa

HANDBOOK ON THE MAINTENANCE OF REPTILES IN CAPTIVITY

This really is a good opportunity - missed! Like Welch's (1982) earlier book on the Herpetology of Africa (which, despite the grandiose title, covered only squamates), this offering, with its grossly-misleading title, promises more than it delivers. The first section is an extended essay on the 'Maintenance of Reptiles in Captivity' by Welch. It is a reasonable summary of the topic, but by no means an in-depth review and numerous subjects are superficially skipped over or ignored completely. For instance, nowhere is there any discussion of temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD), a topic of fundamental importance to any crocodile farmer or reptile keeper. After this follows a series of seven 'supplementary notes' on captive care, and another 11 'specific notes on a variety of reptile species'. This pot puri of husbandry items, written by various friends and colleagues of Welch, comprises 45 pages (i.e. less than 2.5 pages per note). Their quality ranges from reasonable to exceptionally poor. As an example of the latter, the article by D. Wright on 'European species of the genus Vipera (V. ammodytes, V. aspis, V. berus)' is only 12 lines long, a quarter of which is the following:

"Vipera ammodytes: This species is well suited for laboratory work as it will thrive in a very small vivarium. It requires a high temperature, at which it usually feeds well. As a species, it is not as sensitive as V. berus." There is it, everything you ever wanted to know about V. ammodytes. At least I hope it is, because that's all you get!

ISSN 1017 - 6187
The majority of the book is given over to a bibliography of 46 pages (approximately 1100 references) that includes articles covering various aspects of reptile husbandry or ecology. It is preceded by a 17 page species reference list and together they are the most useful part of the book. But even this section is not comprehensive and numerous articles are missing. One of the most serious omissions is that of Frank Slaven's 'Inventories of live reptiles and amphibians in captivity.' (see below).

Three appendices follow. The first, on Venomous colubrids, is again both incomplete and somewhat pointless. It purports to be a 'list of snakes known or believed to be capable of causing varying degrees of envenomation in man,' but there are glaring omissions. Although four species of Atractaspis - are listed, A. bitroniti is omitted, even though there are more documented cases of envenomation by this species than any other species in the genus (indeed Welch even lists a paper by Corkhill et al, 1959, in which a number of bites by the southern burrowing asp are listed). Case histories from bites by other burrowing asps also exist (eg. A. aterrima, Spawls 1982) and yet are overlooked, as is a case of serious envenomation from Rhabdophis subminiatus (Mather et al., 1978). Welch (1982) follows Broadley's revision of Thelotornis, and he should therefore be aware that early bites by T. kirtlandi capensis must have their taxonomy updated. The poor old skapstekers (Psammophis spp.) continue to bear the stigma of F. W. FitzSimons' early and unscientific experiments (1919), even though no serious symptoms from their bites have ever been published. More seriously, however, no Psammophis species are listed even though potentially dangerous symptoms have been reported from a number of species (eg. P. biseriatus, Spawls, 1979; P. elibrans, FitzSimons, 1962). Similarly, the serious case histories of Malpolon bites have been overlooked (Gonzales, 1979).

If this list is to be of any sort of use, some form of analysis or conclusions are necessary. However, no indication of the severity or possible treatment of bites by the different species are listed, and it is all really useless. In theory it could be of some use in warning snake keepers of related, and thus potentially, dangerous species. However, the species are listed alphabetically, thus completely obscuring their systematic relationships.

The remaining appendices include a five page table of 'Incubation of reptile eggs: temperature and length of incubation in days', and a 10 page list of herpetological societies. The latter adds little to the regular up-dated list of regional herpetological societies published in the Herpetological Review. The former is just too superficial. It lists no incubation periods for crocodilian eggs, those for only three tortoise species, and completely ignores TSD. Incubation times for only four pythons are given, even though Ross' (1978) review is listed in the bibliography and includes data on an additional 12 species.

Overall, the book is poorly proofed (eg. "animals", p. 3) and poorly edited (eg. van Woerkom's sentence (p. 48) "The snakes of this genus feel different in the hand; for example, Conopsis conicus feels very hard and stiff, whilst Eny johnii johnii feels like soft rubber."). Perhaps my lasting impression of the book is its superficiality, and it is probably best ignored.

References


INVENTORY, LONGEVITY, AND BREEDING NOTES. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS IN CAPTIVITY


This annual reference work has been privately published since 1980 and is delightfully illustrated with whimsical herpies by Gary Larsen of Far Side fame. It has become the 'bible' for reptile keepers. It contains a wealth of information. The latest issue gives details on 54 180 specimens housed in 400 collections (148 public, 252 private) from 33 countries. It includes location, sex and longevity notes for individual specimens. Breeding information varies from a simple note to a paragraph or two on the care and breeding of a species. Names, addresses and phone numbers of all collections are listed at the end of the book. For Frank Slaven these inventories are a labour of love; for serious reptile keepers, particularly those interested in breeding, they are a must.
EXOTIC PETS

This well-written, handsome book is a personal view of pets and the author's experiences with them. As he was first 'hooked' by a turtle it has a strong herpetological flavour, but it also includes sections on parrots and tropical fish. The style is refreshing, as in this example when the author relates an embarrassing episode when he was bitten by a Tokay gecko during a public lecture: "Redder of face and far redder of finger, I tried to instil some sense of propriety into the beast." This whimsical tone is enhanced by a delightful misprint that occurs in the discussion of colour phases in the California king snake; which may "...come into the world with either stripes or hands!"

Each section (snakes, lizards, turtles, parrots, etc.) starts with discussions on general biology of the group, and their housing, feeding, handling and acquisition. Then follows summaries of 'recommended' species, based on the author's personal experience. Most are well-informed, and the accounts are flavoured with anecdotes as well as numerous examples of good old-fashioned common sense, eg. "Prepare the cage THEN purchase the beast. This is a rule I cannot state too often." (p. 235). Under housing lizards he notes that "The word vivarium implies a place for the lizard to really live, not just exist", although he did have a blue-tongued skink that "...liked life Zen-bare and simple".

Despite my enjoyment of this book, I have a major objection. It is the author's relaxed attitude to conservation and legislation. Under "Acquiring a Turtle" he pleads for the reader to "Research things a bit" and "Go through a guide briefly before you go out", so as to avoid having to "...toss it out of the back door when it turns out not to be the kind you want." Nowhere is there any word of caution to check legislation or awareness of the plight of endangered species. The simple morality and attendant responsibilities of keeping wild animals are ignored. It is the attitude of the post-war years, when the western perception was of unlimited natural resources to fuel growth and productivity. Those days are gone. Keeping pets and zoological specimens is still valid, but not at the expense of wild populations.

A-Z OF SNAKE-KEEPING
Chris Mattison, 1991. 143 pp, Merehurst, London (local distributors THR, P.O. Box 6836, Roggebaai 8012). R37.95 (+ VAT) (20% discount to HAA members), hardcover.

Another book with a misleading title! The true scope of the book is exemplified by the photography. All of Mattison's recent books have been very well-illustrated, and this one is no exception. However, Chris obviously knows where his market lies, and the photographs are heavily biased towards the popular, particularly American, snakes. Of 131 photographs in the book, 31 are of kingsnakes (Lampropeltis spp.), 19 of rat snakes (Elaphe spp.), 26 of pythons or boa, and 26 of other American snakes. There are a number of shots (22) of cages and husbandry techniques, but only seven shots of snakes from other regions. For Africa, these include a poor shot of a brown house snake (Lampropeltis fuliginosus) and a better shot of the bush viper Atheris hispidus. A half-column discussion of house snakes (Lampropeltis), and brief accounts of the royal python (P. regius) and African rock python (P. sebae), completes the African coverage of the book. Europe, Asia and Australia fare little better.

The text, which is laid out in dictionary format, discusses topics from albino to water snakes, but there is no discussion of Xenocalamus (the quill-nosed snakes), yamakagashi (the venomous Japanese natricine Rhadophis tigrinus) or Zaocys (an Asian coburid snake). My comment is rather tongue-in-cheek, as none of these snakes could be considered popular or well-known. However, it does highlight the rather limited coverage of the book. It should rather be called the 'A'-W of Snake Keeping! There are a few mistakes and deficiencies. In the account of Madagascan boa, Acrantophis dumerelli (sic + dumerelli) is reported to have 2-6 large young (up to 70 cm). Reproduction has been confused with that of the larger species A. madagascariensis; A. dumerelli, in fact, has larger litters (3-13) but smaller babies (44-53 cm). The lack of a bibliography means that it is difficult to chase up further details on interesting topics. One example is the comment that care should be taken when feeding water snakes to use only fish of "...a type which does not contain the enzyme thiaminase, which will destroy the thiamine (Vitamin B1) in the snake's body, leading to loss of muscle control and, eventually, death." The reader is then left with the obvious question "What types of fish contain thiaminase and should therefore be avoided?" Unfortunately this is not given, and there is no reference for the interested reader to chase up the details.

Despite my few negative comments, however, and with the proviso that the book is very much aimed at the American market, I would still recommend it to anyone interested in the husbandry of snakes. In addition, the book has been offered at an exceptionally cheap local price, and it is worth the money simply for the colour photographs.

KEEPING AND BREEDING TORTOISES IN CAPTIVITY

Despite their popularity, there are very few books designed specifically to aid the captive care of tortoises. Now, when stricter legislation has drastically curtailed the exploitative trade in tortoises as pets in Western Europe, there comes a book that should drastically improve the lot of the captive tortoise. What a pity it wasn't available earlier, when hundreds of thousands of tortoises died each year in Europe. It should be compulsory reading for anyone owning a tortoise.

For an African audience, unfortunately, the book is a bit disappointing. It is very surprising that so little mention is made of southern African species. The genera Chersina and Pseudemys are mentioned only as one-line inclusions in a table on egg clutch size and frequency, whilst Homopus is ignored completely. Perhaps this is an indirect compliment to our conservation laws. They seem to have completely prevented
the circulation, and thus knowledge of, southern African tortoises in western Europe or North America!

The author lists Boycott and Bourquin’s excellent review of our local tortoises in the discussion on Kinixys, and also lists it in the bibliography to Geoelone. However, he inexplicably ignores it under other headings, such as Kinixys or “Miscellaneous”, and does not draw on its contents to discuss, even in passing, the existence of over 25% of the world’s land tortoises! Nonetheless, the care of some African species, eg, the leopard tortoise (Geoelone pardalis), hingeback tortoise (Kinixys sp.), and the pancake tortoise (Malacocheirus tornieri) is given in more detail.

Some of the author’s taxonomic decisions, especially with respect to Mediterranean Testudo, may be queried. I’m not sure how many researchers would support the description of Testudo flavomarginata or Furculiaheyys whitei and F. nabeulensis (all described in ‘in house’ publications of the Tortoise Trust). But then taxonomy is often a personal preference, and its choice is an author’s prerogative (one of the advantages of writing your own books!).

The book is very well proofed, with a nice layout, attractive font selection, and excellent printing. One difficulty appears to be Highfield’s personal use of grammar. He may be a ‘splitter’ taxonomically, but he is an ultra-conservative where commas are concerned! They are almost extinct in this book, which often makes reading long sentences confusing! There are few typographical mistakes. Examples include a capitalized specific name (Carbonaria, p. 78), and use of italics for a higher taxonomic category (Cheropodidae). One interesting typo is “... differences in the rate (= rate) of embryonic development...” (p. 26). However, given the context of the section, which discusses differential incubation times within the same clutch of eggs, this has become almost an improvement; it is certainly a more picturesque phrase!

Despite the regional neglect, the book is still very worthwhile. The text on tortoise husbandry is very comprehensive and draws heavily on Highfield’s long experience with the Tortoise Trust and Tortoise Survival Project. The early husbandry chapters (eg, Eggs and Incubation, Designing and constructing an incubator, Hatching and the Juvenile terrarium, Diet and nutritional disorders, and Parasitic and bacterial diseases) are particularly useful. A useful appendix lists nutritional values for dietary constituents and additives. All-in-all, a very nice book. Pity the exchange rate makes it relatively expensive.

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INTERNATIONAL CHAMELEON WORKING GROUP

Any persons interested in joining an International Chameleon Working Group should contact: Mr Lynn Raw, P.O. Box 208, Merrivale, 3291 South Africa.
REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS

HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

We have examined the annual financial statements set out on pages 2 and 3. Other than as explained in the following paragraph, our examination included such audit procedures as we considered necessary.

In common with similar organisations, it is not feasible for the association to institute accounting controls over collections from subscriptions and fund-raising projects prior to the initial entry of collection in the accounting records. Accordingly, it was impracticable for us to extend or examination beyond the receipts actually recorded.

Subject to the effect of any adjustment which may have been necessary had it been possible for us to extend our examination of receipts, in our opinion, the Financial Statements fairly present the financial position of the organisation at 29 February 1992 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

SELVAN PILLAY
Chartered Accountants (S.A.)
INTEGRATING D'ABBADIE & PARTNERS

DURBAN
7 May 1992
OVERSEAS MEMBERS: AIR MAIL POSTAGE

The Secretary/Treasurer of the H.A.A. invites all overseas members to write to him with regard to the possibility of having H.A.A. journals and newsletters sent via Air Mail. This would mean that publications will reach such members much earlier than if sent by regular mail, as is the current practice. Overseas members wishing to have their publications sent by Air Mail will be required to add $5.00 (subject to change) to their annual subscription fee. If you are interested, please write to:

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