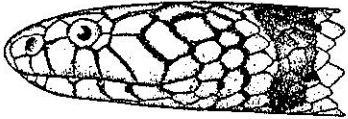




founded 1957



EDITORIAL : Journal HAA 30. It's here. It is not as fat as HAA 29, and my pen contributes more than half of the text. I made a plea in NL 2 for contributions from members. It has not been very successful. At the rate articles are currently being submitted HAA 31 can be expected sometime in 1986 ! Subscriptions. The cost of printing, xerox copying and postage are outstripping HAA fund. Fee increases can only be avoided if there is an increase in membership. Spread the word. Advertise the HAA to your friends, in schools, at work, etc.

oOo

NEW MEMBERS :

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P.O. Box 266,
BLOEMFONTEIN
9300

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PaternosterVagen 5 Nb
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Sweden.

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3652.

oOo

BOY BITES ATTACKING PYTHON TO DEATH

A report on this incident occurred in HAA 28, Dec. 1982. The following details have been revealed by Barry Porter, Game Valley Estates, Richmond, Natal.

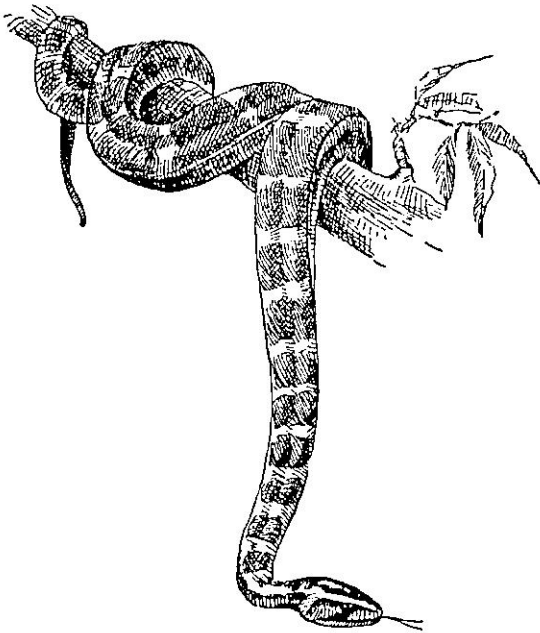
I used to own the land on which this incident occurred and I still live within 2km of the spot. I have made enquiries about the incident and after much probing the following story has come to light through the "bush telegraph".

Firstly, Petrus Mthembu was not herding goats but with his 3 or 4 dogs was enjoying an illegal hunting expedition.

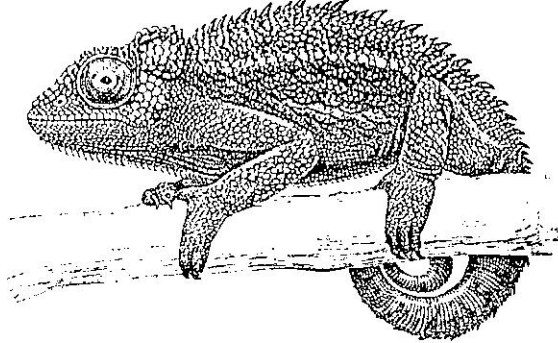
He apparently came upon the python and decided to kill it. He dispatched the snake, and as it was a large specimen and fairly heavy, he gripped it by the neck and hoisted it over his shoulder and proceeded to drag it home. It was necessary for him to cross the Ngudwini River to get to his home. The water at the crossing place is about 10m wide with a maximum depth of about 750mm. The sudden stimulus of the icy cold water on the body of the python induced a revival of its reflexes and coils slithered around the boy and began constricting him.

It was at this stage, in desperation, that he began biting the reptile. His screams were heard by people in a nearby hut who rushed to his aid and managed to release him.

This is as close to the true story as I can get and I believe that the stories to the press are both inaccurate and highly dramatised.



Python



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Applications are invited for a research fellowship in systematic herpetology. The applicant must have received the doctoral degree. The normal duration for a fellowship is one year. The stipend is \$17,000 plus \$1,000 for expenses. The expected starting date is on or about 1 July 1984.

Applicants should provide:

- A resume, including list of publications,
- A description of the research to be undertaken during the fellowship period, including the desirability of working at the Academy,
- Graduate transcripts, if the PhD was received within the past 5 years,
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of three references

Closing date for applications: 30 APRIL 1984

Submit applications to:

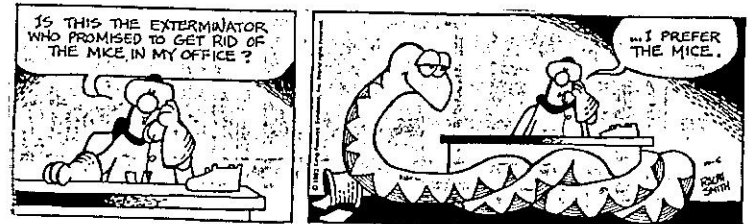
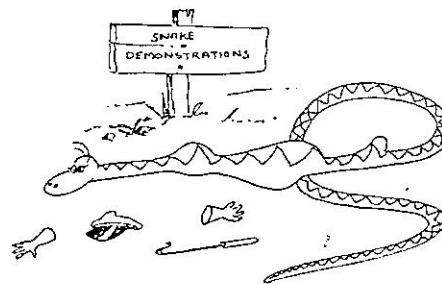
Director of Administration
California Academy of Sciences
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, California 94118

Phone inquiries may be directed to:
Robert C. Drewes or Alan E. Leviton (415) 221-510

WORKSHOP ON AMPHIBIAN LARVAL BIOLOGY

A teaching workshop on Amphibian Larval Biology will be held at the 1983 joint meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the Herpetologists' League, and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, University of Oklahoma, Norman, July 30, 1984. The workshop is designed as a minicourse for the non-expert on these organisms; no prior experience in herpetology or systematics is presumed. Among the people who may be interested in this workshop are general biologists, graduate students in herpetology outside of amphibian biologists, freshwater ecologists, developmental biologists and amateur herpetologists. The workshop will include the examination of museum specimens. A syllabus with annotated bibliography will be provided for all those who register. For more information contact:

RICHARD WASSERSUG
DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY
TUPPER MEDICAL BUILDING
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
B3H 4H7 CANADA



EUROPEAN HERPETOLOGICAL MEETING

PRAGUE 1985
August 19-23

Joint meeting of Societas Europaea Herpetologica with herpetologists from Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and USSR

PURPOSE - The aim of this meeting is to give scientific herpetologists from all parts of Europe and from overseas an opportunity to exchange their views, as well as for personal contacts, both resulting in deepening of scientific intercourse and cooperation in the study of amphibians and reptiles.

PROGRAM - The meeting program will consist of platform sessions where oral contributions will be given, poster exhibitions, general meeting of SEH, social gatherings, and one-day field trip. Special guest program for family members may be arranged by travel agency ČEDOK.

TOPICS - Contributions on paleontology, evolution, phylogeny, systematics, ecology, physiology, embryology, morphology etc. of amphibians and reptiles are welcome. Besides, a special mini-symposium will be organized, focusing on current questions concerning the influence of ice age on European herpetofauna.

LANGUAGE - To avoid communication difficulties, all contributions should be presented in English.

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT - Two parallel diaprojectors will be available for oral presentations. Posters up to 1 x 1.5 m can easily be exposed.

PUBLICATION - All contributions to the Meeting will be published in the form of a book, including a list of the participants, addresses of the contributors, and an index of the major subjects. Posters and oral contributions will be treated equally in the book.

ACCOMMODATION - To avoid high prices of accommodation in hotels, accommodation in the college of Charles University is proposed instead. The organizers of the Meeting unfortunately are not able to pay accommodation expenses. The prices (for one day) are as follows: single occupancy 127,- Kčs /approx. DM 28/, double occupancy 216,- Kčs /approx. DM 48/. All usual facilities /shower etc./ are available.

REGISTRATION FEE - Printing abstracts, mailing expenses etc. force the organizer to impose a fee of 250,- Kčs on the participants.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences, Charles University, Prague, will be the host of the European Herpetological Meeting. A detailed program and Call for Papers will be delivered during September 1984 only to those who return the Preliminary Application Form or write Dr. Zbyněk Roček, Department of Paleontology, Charles University, Albertov 6, 128 43 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia, before the end of August 1984.

ANIMAL CRACKERS by Roger Bollen



EUROPEAN HERPETOLOGICAL MEETING PRAGUE 19-23 AUGUST 1985

PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FORM

to return BEFORE 31 August 1984 to:

Dr Zbyněk Roček
Department of Paleontology
Charles University
Albertov 6
128 43 Praha 2
Czechoslovakia

Please fill out this application form in capital letters

NAME: Mrs., Miss, Mr. FIRST NAME

PROFESSION:

ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS: N° Street

Postal Code City

Country Telephone

PROBABLE NUMBER OF ACCOMPANYING MEMBERS:

MY ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING IS +/-: very probable probable

I SHALL DELIVER +/-: oral contribution poster

I WISH TO BE ACCOMMODATED IN +/-: single room double room

I WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN ONE-DAY TRIP +/-: yes no

+/- Please circle the selected option.

Signature

Please cut off

Sea snakes threatened by trade

Sea snake populations (Hydrophiidae) off Queensland could decrease if the State Government agrees to licence a sea snake factory. It has already given interim approval for the export of sea snake skins taken incidentally by prawn trawlers. Sea snakes are now 'prohibited exports' in Australia but Queensland's internal trade in skins would have a significant effect. Conservationists are opposing the factory and urging that methods be devised to reduce the incidental take of sea snakes by prawn trawlers.

Fund for Animals and Total Environment Centre, February 1983

Caiman goes and piranas are a problem

The South American alligator *Caiman yacare* has been exterminated from the Pantanal region of Brazil and as a result pirana populations have drastically expanded, posing an increasing threat to wildlife and cattle.

IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter, January 1983

Orinoco crocodile: a new population

A new population of 79 Orinoco crocodile *Crocodylus intermedius*, nearing extinction throughout its range, has been discovered in the Rio Caura in Venezuela by a team headed by Richard Franz of the Florida State Museum. But the region is threatened by a proposed hydroelectric scheme which would flood the nesting sites and open the area to humans. Richard Franz plans to continue the study and help develop a management plan.

IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter, January 1983

Leatherback hatchery in French Guiana

A hatchery for leatherbacks *Dermochelys coriacea*, established in 1981 at Les Halles-Ya: lima:po in French Guiana, has achieved a hatching rate of almost 65 per cent using polystyrene boxes to incubate eggs collected from nests dug too near the sea or by females with injured back flippers. In 1979 only 4.3 per cent of the eggs in 4410 leatherback nestings produced hatchlings because of erosion of the beaches by the sea and infiltration of water from coastal marshes. The 7000-egg-capacity hatchery is expected to improve its success rate when temperature control is introduced, but humidity, which rots some eggs, is more difficult to control. The hatchlings are released at night on the beach under guard against predators.

Marine Turtle Newsletter, December 1982

Tortoise gets help

The Bolson tortoise *Gopherus flavo-marginatus*, the largest tortoise in North America, is now confined to the Bolson de Mapimi in the Chihuahuan Desert in north-east Mexico. Hunted for its meat and eggs it is also having difficulty surviving in the badly overgrazed ecosystem—a few dry years would be disastrous for hatchlings. Ralston Purina, a pet food manufacturer is creating a special food to help hatchlings survive, and a WWF-US project is attempting to re-introduce the tortoise to its former range on suitably protected land.

Focus WWF-US, 5, 1

Cane turtle in Kerala

A cane turtle *Heosemys silvatica* collected in Kerala in October 1982 has laid two eggs, the first in captivity for this recently rediscovered species (see page 130 in this *Oryx*).

Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust, 8, 1

Captive-bred pythons released

Four, two-and-a-half-year-old captive-bred Indian pythons *Python molurus* were released into the wild last November in Mudumalai Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, SW India. This is the first time in India, and possibly in the world, that an endangered species of snake has been captive-bred and released.

Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust, 8, 1

Lizard skins in Bangladesh

More than two million pieces of lizard skin, valued at approximately US\$3.27 million, have been declared since the Bangladesh Government's decree last September ordering that all lizard skins were to become government property and should be declared to the Chief Conservator of Forests. Any person contravening the Order is liable to imprisonment of up to two years, a fine, or both. In 1978-79, before becoming a Party to CITES, Bangladesh exported 1,890,559 skins.

Traffic Bulletin, IV, 6

Live Reptile Trade in Japan

Tom Milliken of TRAFFIC (Japan) reports that the trade in live reptiles is increasing there; four large pet shops deal solely in reptiles. Although the pet turtle trade has been declining in most developed countries, its expansion in Japan may reverse the trend. Japan also imports, mostly from Thailand, terrapins *Cuora amboinensis* and *Cyclemys dentata* along with the tortoise *Geochelone elongata* for use in a variety of medicines as a source of calcium.

Freshwater Chelonian Group Newsletter, September 1982

Land Iguanas Released on Isabela Island

Land iguanas *Conolophus subcristatus* have been returned to their ancestral home near Cartago Bay on Isabela Island in the Galapagos. In 1976, when extinction threatened them there and on Santa Cruz, adults were rescued from both islands for captive-breeding at the Darwin Station. The feral dogs responsible for the decline have now been eliminated from Cartago Bay and many of the 37 juvenile iguanas released there last year have taken up residence in old iguana burrows. If the dog eradication programme for Santa Cruz proves as successful as the Isabela effort, iguanas will be released there in 1983.

Noticias de Galapagos, No. 36, 1982

Eleven endangered turtles

A review of South American freshwater turtles and terrapins by Anders Rhodin and Russell Mittermeier indicates that there are at least 28 species of which 11 are endangered or extremely rare. Some species are known from only a few specimens and others, like the extremely rare Dahl's toad-headed turtle *Phrynops dahlia* from the Sincelejo region of Colombia, may be on the verge of extinction due to severe habitat destruction.

Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust, 8, 1

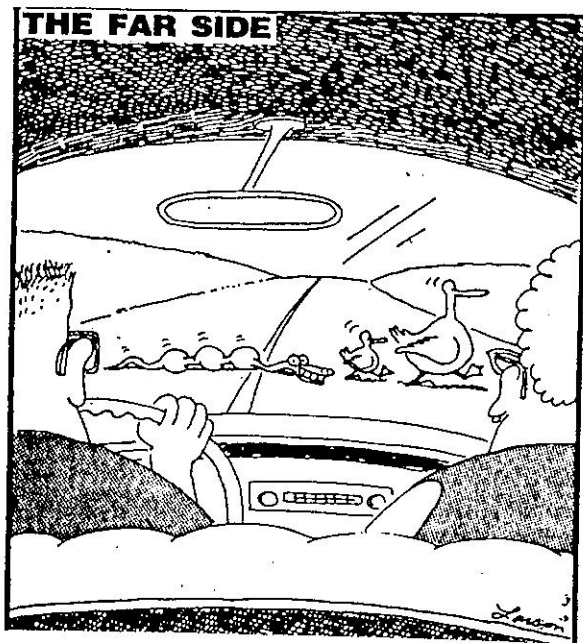
Alligator-hunt in Florida

Commercial hunting may seriously jeopardise the survival of Florida's alligators, according to Dr Archie Carr of the University of Florida. Since 1978, 1800 alligators have been killed yearly under the Nuisance Alligator Control Program directed by Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. Then the Commission arranged hunts in 1981 and 1982, when 350 and 379 alligators were killed for commercial gain. Dr Carr believes the hunt will increase the demand for alligator products and thus cause an increase in illegal poaching.

The Florida Naturalist, 56, 1

Snake eats boy

MANILA. — A boy, 15, was swallowed by a python he disturbed while searching a mountainside cave for bats. Members of the Mangayan tribal settlement killed and sliced open the snake but the youth was dead.



She sues over snake

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A woman has sued the owners of a 6-foot boa constrictor, claiming she fainted when she saw the snake being carried outside a state fair exhibit and then needed medical treatment costing \$3,500.

Katy Potter, 60, of Franklin, recently filed suit against The Pet Ark, a pet store in Lincoln.

According to the action in Lan-

caster County Court, Mrs. Potter fainted when she saw the snake in the crowd at the fair in September and as a result suffered acute pulmonary edema, emotional stress and congestive heart failure.

The suit, alleges the owners of The Pet Ark, Gary and Pam Foster, were negligent because they did not tell their employees to keep the snake in a confined area.

Rats! No more snakes on menu

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Restaurants soon will be banned from serving snake, dog meat or earthworm soups in downtown Seoul or near tourist hotels, the city government said Tuesday.

City officials said the measure will take effect Sept. 20 following hearings. It is aimed at sparing tourists from sights such as curled-up, hissing snakes in shop windows along downtown streets. Shop owners not complying with the ban might have water and electricity cut off.

Garner snakes studied in kidney stone research

Washington, D.C. —UPI— A University of Arizona scientist is studying kidneys from garter snakes in an effort to find a way to help human beings reduce their chances of developing painful kidney stones, the National Science Foundation said Monday.

The government agency said a snake's kidney

could excrete large amounts of uric acid without forming those hard mineral deposits that could block the urinary tract. Kidney stones are formed from uric acid and other substances.

William H. Dantzer is examining nephrons from snake kidneys. The nephron is the filtering unit of a kidney.

Pythons at \$50 per

INFLATION is no problem for endangered species in Malaysia, a survey by Friends of the Earth, Alam Malaysia (SAM), shows. Although black market prices for exotics are rising, sales are still booming. Many pet shops, according to SAM, not only openly sell protected birds and animals, but also provide restaurants with prestige exotic food. "Monkey brains and meat, snake soup, tortoise and turtle soup, monitor lizard meat or the meats of

SAM's exotic food menu

	Price	
	1979	1982
Monkey	\$25 & up	\$35 & up
Flying squirrel	\$13	\$20
Python	\$11/m	\$50/m
Owl	\$15	\$15
Porcupine	\$7	\$10
Malayan squirrel	\$10	\$10
Egret	\$4	\$5
Quail	\$3	\$5
Heron	\$4	\$7

flying foxes, flying squirrels, bats and deer can be obtained on request," says SAM.

All species have been hit by inflation. In 1979 python cost \$11 per metre; today a metre of python will set you back at least \$50. Owls have held steady at about \$15 apiece, but herons, although still a bargain at \$7 each, have gone up from \$4 in 1979. Nonetheless, says SAM, "trade in wildlife is as active as ever".

The destruction of rain forests is the biggest threat to Malaysian wildlife. Malaysia has forest reserves, but between 1971 and 1978 these so-called protected areas accounted for more than a quarter of all deforestation. More than 20 Malaysian animals, as well as a number of birds, are, says the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in danger of extinction. Top of the list is the Sumatran rhinoceros. Only 40 are left. There are also fewer than 500 tigers left in peninsular Malaysia.

Records for snakebite

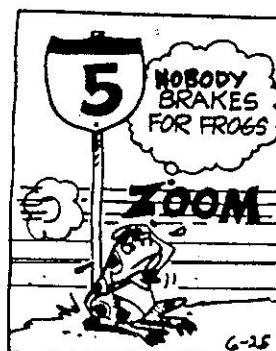
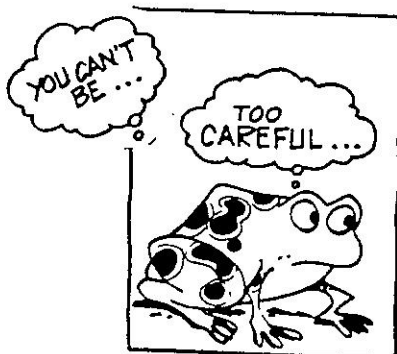
The use of pulverised 78 rpm gramophone records against snakebite as described by W. Wilson Mayne (23 June, p 867) seems to be perfectly logical.

The old records are made of Bakelite, a phenol/formaldehyde resin which releases small amounts of formaldehyde, especially when pulverised and thus having a large active surface.

Formaldehyde is known to deactivate proteins and peptides, and the snake venoms contain active components of peptidic character (both toxins and enzymes).

It would probably be quite easy to develop an efficient antidote against snakebite using a substance that releases formaldehyde in a controlled way. Such an antidote would probably be generally as effective as snakebite antisera, though not specific.

A piece of cloth soaked with a diluted formaldehyde solution and applied to the (cut-up) snakebite wound might probably help as well, as a first measure. Svante Z. M. Travenius Perstorp, Sweden



A Field Guide to the Snakes of South Vietnam

Cited in REVIEWS AND COMMENTS - COPEIA, 1971, No.2

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SNAKES OF SOUTH VIETNAM. By Simon M. Campden-Main. "1969" [1970]. Publ. by Div. Reptiles and Amphibians, U. S. Nat. Mus., Smithsonian Inst., Wash., D. C., v + 114 pp., 1 pl., many text figs.—Until the publication of this work, a layman desiring to identify a snake encountered in Southeast Asia would have been hard put to do so except with some of the more conspicuous, well-known species. Indeed, even herpetologists had only one up-to-date list of the snake fauna of the region, Taylor's work on Thailand. No generally available, recent field guides to snakes of this region have existed until now.

Following a brief introduction and the acknowledgments is a list of cited South Vietnamese localities with their latitudes and longitudes. Species accounts are arranged alphabetically below the family level, one or two pages per species; the opisthoglyphs are considered together after the other colubrids. Scientific name, author, date, family, and (if applicable) English vernacular name are included as a heading for each account; subspecies are not considered. Below this is an outline sketch of the head and a small outline map of South Vietnam with dots showing general localities of occurrence. The remainder of each account is divided into six headings: Recognition, Description, Color, Habits and Habitat, Locality Records, and Venom and Toxicity. For venomous species, surprisingly little information is presented under Venom and Toxicity, the only mention of treatment being the statement for *Trimeresurus albolabris* that "several antivenins are available" (p. 99).

The head diagrams are from various sources (some original) and their quality varies greatly. One wonders how useful some of these might be to the non-herpetologist, who may find occasional disagreement between text and figures. For example, the figure of *Bungarus flaviceps* (p. 89) appears to show a loreal scale present, yet the recognition statement below it states (in capitals) "Loreal scale absent." Under *Naja naja* (p.

nor is the term "cuneate" defined elsewhere. Scale row formulae given in the standard "23-21-19" fashion, unexplained, may confuse a layman. *Typhlops* spp., *Lycodon paucifasciatus*, *Oligodon macrurus*, and *Enhydris innominata* are not illustrated, nor is there a map for *Typhlops*.

In the field, a key is the first aid to identification, yet the key begins on p. 105, following the species accounts; while a plate with six figures illustrating many of the terms encountered in the key is placed before the species accounts. The first couplet of the key asks the user to determine the presence or absence of loreal pits on his snake, but the explanation plate shows only a loreal scale and no pit. The pit, however, is illustrated for the viperids, and in several cases is indicated by an arrow; one of these figures faces the first page of the key. Anal plates are labeled as divided and undivided on the plate, but elsewhere "anal plate entire" is used for the latter. Anal spurs are not illustrated.

This booklet is nicely executed within its limits, with but few typographical errors (*Dendralaphis*, p. 26). The sections on "Recognition" are valuable inclusions. Drawings showing midbody pattern would have been a valuable addition, as would some indication of the geographic distribution of each snake throughout (and perhaps beyond) South Vietnam. Some mention of approximate maximum length would have been helpful. Vietnamese vernacular names, if known, likewise would have been useful, especially in a field guide. In spite of these shortcomings, the booklet is a worthwhile endeavor, and will generally fulfill its stated purposes: to "prove useful to those in the field and particularly to members of the medical corps who might be faced with the task of judging the seriousness of a case of snake bite," to "... stimulate an interest in the ophidian fauna of Vietnam, . . . and encourage those in the field to collect specimens for American museums" (p. ii). It is gratifying to see something of value result

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92) one finds the statement, "cuneate present
between third and fourth lower labials (see
arrow)," yet there is no arrow on the figure.

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from the Vietnam war.—RICHARD S. FUNK,
*Faculty of Biological Sciences, Southern Illi-
nois University, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025.*

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