

July 1987 (1)

J A X H E R P N E W S

INAUGURATION ISSUE

Editor: John Berger

CRITTER OF THE MONTH: SOUTHERN RINGNECK SNAKE (*Diadophis punctatus*)

The Ringneck snake is a very common snake in Duval county, but anyone looking for one in late summer or during the fall may think otherwise. They are secretive and usually found under boards, logs, or old stumps where their numbers can be very large. Their favorite foods appear to be small salamanders and earthworms, although they are known to eat skinks, and on occasion, smaller snakes.

In captivity they are not one of your heartier species, but seem to do well if an environment such as soil for burrowing and bark for hiding under are provided. Females usually lay a clutch of 3-7 eggs during the summer and these eggs hatch in 38-50 days. The Ringneck has a very mild venom which is not harmful to man, but has been known to help paralyze a potential meal. The Ringneck snake is very mild mannered and seldom, if ever, attempts to bite.

In nature the snakes arch nemesis would probably be the Coral snake or any other snake eating snakes. The snake that any person may possibly mistake the Ringneck for is the Florida Red belly snake, which also has a ring around the neck. The easiest way to tell the two apart is to look at the belly. The Ringneck always has a single row of half moons running down the center of the belly, while the Red bellied snake has a plain orange to red belly. Both are usually grey to black on top and stay fairly small (less than 18 inches).

Great News

The Jacksonville Museum of Arts & Sciences has agreed to allow us to use one of their rooms for our monthly meetings. These meetings will be held on the second Thursday of every month. In return they are seeking volunteers to give talks and to be guides for 3-4 hrs. on Saturdays and Sundays. Any one that is interested in cleanups of the reptiles on Thursdays would be welcome. Some of the snakes at the museum are Boa constrictors, Burmese pythons, and several red rat snakes, one of which has been in captivity for 30 years.

Meetings

Monthly meetings will be on the 2nd Thursday of every month in what is known as the "church" room at the museum. The meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m..

Dues

Members present at the first meeting voted in a \$12.00 annual membership fee for regular members, and \$5.00 annually for students.

Next meeting

Mr. Jim Hartman will discuss the ecology and husbandry of one poisonous snake and one non-poisonous snake. Which non-poisonous snake will be discussed is a surprise but rumor has it that it is a very special garter snake with him. (HINT: 1 in 25,000) BE THERE!!!!!!!

Wanted

Tips for maintaining Scarlet snakes in captivity. Contact Dr. John Rossi at 771-3845 or 771-6025.

I, as the current editor of the JAX HERP NEWS would like to say that I am looking forward to what will hopefully be a rewarding and educational Herp society. I would like to take this time to welcome the current members and any new members that have joined our ranks since the first meeting. Any type of suggestions to make this newsletter better will be openly accepted, and please feel free to call me at home on any matters pertaining to the newsletter or on snakes. I am interested in exotic snakes, as well as natives, venomous or non-venomous. Once again **WELCOME ABOARD**

Sincerely

John Berger, Editor

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