

August ②
1987

J A X H E R P N E W S

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

Editor: John Berger

CRITTER OF THE MONTH: ROUGH GREEN SNAKE (*Opheodrys aestivus*)

Contributed by John Rossi

The Rough Scaled green snake is a very common snake. They are usually found in bushes overhanging bodies of water. Many herpetologists consider this snake a "junk" snake and the literature that is available suggest that it is difficult to maintain in captivity. However, this gentle natured serpent is in fact one of our most beautiful native snakes, and is actually quite easy to maintain in captivity.

They are voracious predators of insects and spiders in the wild and once they adapt to captivity will happily feed on grasshoppers, crickets, moths, and caterpillars. Some will eat mealworms but a word of warning is in need here: the hard shells may cause an obstruction in the intestinal tract which could possibly harm the snake. Some of the literature available suggests that they will eat small frogs and lizards but none of my species has shown any interest in these animals.

The green snake will do quite well in an aquarium (preferably a high tank over a long tank) with numerous branches, plastic plants, and indoor/outdoor carpet for the bottom material. The top should be fine screen with heavy weight. The green snake is probably the best escape artists of all snakes. Unfiltered light or a vitalite is sufficient for these little guys and a bottom heat source seems unnecessary. The green snake can achieve lengths of 5 feet. Young will measure approximately 36 inches at birth.

Tip of the month

Light cycles and type of light are very important in successfully maintaining reptiles in captivity. The quantity of light each species should receive can be looked up or calculated based on the area of the world the particular species you may have is from. For the latter you would need to find the latitude and longitude of the area that your snake is originally from.

The quality needs to approach the natural spectrum of sunlight. Vitalites approximate the quality of natural sunlight. This is especially important for long term maintenance.

Meetings Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 19th. Please bear with us on the fluctuations in the meeting schedule. Right now we are experimenting with different dates based on feedback we get from members. We will try to please everybody to the best of our ability but that is a hard task. Please keep giving constructive feedback on the meeting dates. We can guarantee your pleas will not fall on deaf ears. Meeting time 7:30 pm.

Last meeting Mr. Jim Hartman gave a very informative talk on garter snakes, and the poisonous cottonmouth snakes. He brought a beautiful live "leucystic" specimen of garter snake. On that note: Please bring any non-poisonous species of snakes, or any other reptiles to our meetings to show off. A lot of good information can be put out by having a particular species present for display. Remember, poisonous species on display require a special permit.

Next meeting Mr. Bill Mceller will discuss the ecology and husbandry of the Fox snakes (*Elaphe vulpiva*).

Mr. John Berger will discuss the ecology and husbandry of the Indian Python (*p. molurus molurus*, *p. molurus bivittatus*).

Ms. Carolyn Shilane (Museum curator) will give us a guided tour of their "marsh" room, which is absolutely beautiful.

Wanted Water dragons, wholesale or a reasonable retail price. Contact Mr. Don Smith at 737-9513

Volunteers to write articles for the newsletter. Contact John Berger at 778-3341 or 772-5305.

Volunteers to relocate turtles. Jim Hartman and Gary Grantham are concerned that there will soon be some development over a large tract of gopher tortoise habitat. We need to get a group of volunteers together to trap and relocate tortoises. If you can help please contact Jim Hartman at 389-4389. Please leave your name and number if no one is in. We need as many 5 gallon buckets as possible.

Miscellaneous Rumor has it that there are numerous "lizard" and "turtle" people out there. They better show up soon or the organization will be overrun with snake people. But you know how these types are..... turtle people are hard to get out of their shells and lizard people are usually climbing the walls.

But on the serious side folks, please feel welcome to come on down, we are not limited to snakes.

Some informative books on reptiles and amphibians:

Audobon Society Field Guide to North American Reptiles & Amphibians
 Authors: John L. Behler & F. Wayne King
 Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf, New York
 Publishing Date: Feb. 1985

Snakes: Giant Snakes and Non-venomous Snakes in the Terrarium
 Author: Klaus Griebel
 Publisher: Barron's, New York/London/Toronto/Sydney
 Publishing Date: 1982

cont'd

Boas: Boas & Other Non-venomous Snakes
 Author: Prof. Dr. Werner Frank
 Publisher: T.F.H. Publications, Inc.
 Publishing Date: 1979

Snakes of the World: Their Ways and Means of Living
 Author: Hampton Wildman Parker
 Publisher: Dover Publications, New York
 Publishing Date: 1963

Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians
 Author: John F. Breen
 Publisher: T.F.H. Publications, Inc.
 Publishing Date: 1974

Snakes as Pets
 Author: Dr. Hobart M. Smith
 Publisher: T.F.H. Publications, Inc.
 Publishing Date: 1980

There are many other books out there, so please don't feel limited to these, but I would stay away from older books unless you could get a legitimate stamp of approval on the accuracy of the information. Things change and there is no reason to be caught practicing an old out-dated technique on your animal that could be potentially harmful, or just following advice that is no longer applicable.

Anyone wanting the sex of their snake determined accurately please feel free to contact John Berger or John Rossi and we will be glad to assist you and also show you how to do it yourself. Smaller snakes could be a problem, so don't feel rejected if we can't do it, but we will try, and we are safe.

I will be putting out a list of numbers in the next issue which will serve the purpose of supplying phone numbers for those people who wish to be contacted concerning society functions, or personal interest needs. Please fill out the form with all the appropriate information if you wish your name to be listed and bring it to the upcoming meeting. All information is safe and will not be used for any other purpose.

If anyone is interested in contributing an article please send the article to:

John Berger
 6054-A Seahorse Ct.
 NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212

All material is subject to change and/or modification by myself. Submission does not guarantee publication, this will be gauged by the volume of information I receive, so don't get upset if your article is not published in a specific newsletter. Chances are it would be in the next one. Please do not send copywrited or patented work unless you can give me the author's name, the publisher, and the date it was published. I don't want to get arrested for plagiarism.