



WASAH



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY of AMATEUR HERPETOLOGISTS (Inc)
(Member of the Australasian Affiliation of Herpetological Societies)

NEWSLETTER

30 November, 1996
(9)

WASAH at the ANIMAL EXPO

WASAH had another successful snake display at this year's *Talk to the Animals Expo* at Ascot Racecourse during August 15-18. These displays are a great opportunity for WASAH to promote itself and recruit new members. On top of this everyone involved has a real 'knees up' of a time and plenty of laughs.

One thing that does not go unnoticed at this type of promotion is the lack of native animals displayed for people to appreciate. From what I could see, apart from our snake display there was only two other groups with Australian animals. What a

shame. Wouldn't it be great if, rather than a rabbit association there was a bandicoot association or bettong club. Of course it comes back to the legislation and its administration in the respective states. We all know what the problem is, unfortunately ignorance appears to be a virtue and I am afraid we are paying dearly in terms of wildlife education and conservation. Look at what we have done to this country in only 200 years - not good!

Anyway, it was all good fun, and thanks to the following WASAH members for their valued help - Robert Browne-Cooper, Bruce George, Paul Orange, Brian Bush, Glen Gaikhorst, Tom Fronek and Russell Traher.

BM

WASAH DISPLAY at the ROYAL PERTH SHOW

A big thankyou to members Robert & Helen Mount, Jay Houston, Pam Hutchins, Eric Kidd, Bruce George and Tom Fronek for providing their time to staff our display at the 1996 Royal Perth Show. Especial thanks to the little "Bobtail" Brad Maryan, who as usual went further than the extra mile with all the preparations - and there were lots. For all involved, your work looking after the snakes and talking to the public was great and very important, particularly given some of the recent negative publicity in

local papers concerning snakes. The more we can balance this the better.

In spite of the long days behind the display I think all involved would agree that it was very successful, well received and good fun. Hey! It was herp-related and therefore must be fun. The display earned WASAH \$500, a bonus considering the interest in WASAH shown by the public.

We had a few minor hassles to begin with though. This was due to the much smaller space allocated to us in the Land Care Pavilion compared to last year. When setting up we had to reduce the number of display cases, taking a couple back home with us. I had a chuckle when the Pavilion Supervisor (definitely not herp-orientated) commented on one of our posters Brad had been hand-written. She thought it looked a bit rough! Rough it may have been - to me it looked like it had been written with a pair of undies dipped in mud! Hey! Only Bobtail's mates are allowed to rubbish him like that and, when it is all said and done, something a bit rough in the display adds Brad's personal touch. He took the comment like a true bobtail though - humbly, or was he just biting his blue tongue? The supervisor came back the next day with a replacement calligraphy copy. I can only guess that the original ended up in the Sulo. You have to laugh.

RBC

The Futility of Education

The futility of snake education was illustrated to me recently when the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), supported by the NSW state government, awarded a dog a medal for killing a snake. The reason for presenting this award was the false inference postulated by the RSPCA that the snake was going to attack some children. The RSPCA officers responsible for this award themselves need educating, along with the dog, a long-haired terrier. It would have reacted the same way if the snake was a koala or numbat. I do believe the RSPCA would be reluctant to award a medal then!

The correct course of action for this type of behaviour in dogs is a swift kick in the backside at least, or a trip to the rubbish tip and a bullet behind the ear at most. In this day and age when domestic dogs are known to be far more dangerous than any Australian native animal (snakes and crocodiles included), it strikes me as stupid to give one a medal for anything!

Regarding this ridiculous response by both the RSPCA and NSW government, an anonymous observer was heard to remark, 'you can't educate wankers!'

BB

Do you want WASAH to change its name?

There has been much recent discussion concerning the removal of the word *amateur* from our society's name. The main arguments in favour are the negative connotations surrounding this word, it may exclude professionals from joining and only one other herp society in Australia includes this word in their name.

Arguments for retention were initiated by Greg Burford at our last meeting. He raised the point that a name change now, before we have achieved the objectives of the society, would be paramount to an admission of failure in being capable of attaining those objectives. I agree, a name change at this point in time suggests that our objectives are a *fait accompli* when nothing could be further from the truth! Remember also, WA is the only state in Australia where amateur keeping for the love of it is outlawed under current CALM policy (not legislation). We have a unique situation in WA and thus reason for its retention. Following is an extract from correspondence I received from Eric Kidd on this matter

after it was raised at our last meeting.

*Dear Brian,
I am sorry I had to intervene at the last meeting (6 Sept. '96) but I viewed in horror your carefree suggestion that we might change the name of the Society before we went home!*

No properly constituted organisation can change its rules without notice and it needs to be at an annual general meeting or a special meeting convened for that purpose

When you set up WASAH you prepared a set of rules and you are now bound by them.

However, apart from the legal technicalities, I consider that hasty actions seldom provide satisfactory results. Some changes of rules may be easily dealt with but a change of name involves more than changing the WASAH abbreviation. It requires careful thought and full discussion with all members having the opportunity to express their views before a vote is taken. If you are going to ask for views to be published in the newsletter I hope that members will respond. To change the name only two years after formation will need some very good reasons!

Yours sincerely

*Eric Kidd
Eric rightly castigated me for my apparent rash behaviour. This was in part a result of the shock I experienced when*

confronted by such a large number of members present on the night wanting to change the name. I do not mind admitting now that I feared for my life at that meeting. Greg Burford's comments of support are all that got me through the evening. Thank heavens for the amber nectar I was able to partake of at the meeting's end.

Anyway, let us get some discussion going. If you have any views for or against the deletion of the word *amateur* from the society's name could you please send them to the Editor, 9 Birch Place, Stoneville WA 6081.

BB

Herp-related Pen-friend Wanted

The following letter was received from a European herp chasing some Australians of similar interest to correspond with. How about showing him how friendly we are in WA by having an avalanche of letters from here turning up in his letterbox.

*Dear Chairman,
My name is Toomas Pranstibel and I live in Estonia. I keep several reptiles in captivity - lizards and snakes. In Estonia there are no herpetological societies because reptile keepers are not so many. I am interested in finding penfriends who are reptile keepers. I am also interested in information on WASAH. Are there any WASAH members from outside*

Australia? How many AUS dollars for membership for non-Australians?

I am thirty years old and keep three snakes and three lizards.

Yours sincerely

Toomas Pranstibel (24 Oct '96)

Toomas' address is
**Valve 4-3
Tallinn EE0009
Estonia, Europe**

To save members dragging out their atlas to locate Estonia, it is a Soviet Republic on the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea (Collins Concise Dictionary, Aust. Edition., 1988).

**Good luck to
Robert & Helen
Mount on their
return to the USA.
It has been great
knowing you and
catching up with
your Dad!**

Any members fortunate to meet the Mounts will agree, they were great people and tremendous ambassadors for the USA. Let's hope we get the opportunity to share a few amber antivenoms again. Robert developed a taste for it after cuddling my king browns and tiger snakes. Best wishes back in the States and *keep wriggling.*
WASAHhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**AMERICAN
FEDERATION OF
HERPETOLOGISTS:**

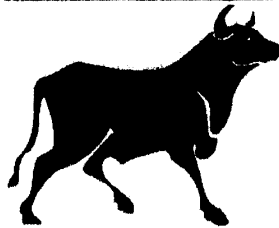
A non-profit national membership organisation of herpetoculturists, veterinarians, academicians and zoo personnel involved in the captive husbandry and propagation of amphibians and reptiles. Membership includes the highly acclaimed *Vivarium* magazine, dedicated to the dissemination of information on herpetocultural accomplishments, herpetological medicine, breeding & maintenance, field studies and adventures, enclosure design and much more. Membership in the AFH is \$28.00 US and \$53.00 Canada & all other foreign countries. Send information requests to, AFH-News, PO Box 300067, Escondido, CA 92030-0067, ph (619) 747-4948, fax (619) 747-5224.

**WASAH
goes on the
Internet!**

WASAH should well and truly be listed on the internet when you read this. Initiated by Dave Robinson and carried out by Dr Arthur Georges of the Applied Ecology Research Group, University of Canberra, we should be internationally available to all interested people and organisations world-wide. You will find WASAH on the *Herp Page*. When I have the address I will include it so all you

computer people with access to the internet can check it out.

HERPTALES



In this section we include all the information about particular people and goings on that most of us would prefer no one knew. Also, if you wish to submit something to be included here go ahead. It's 'tongue in cheek' and all in good fun.

BROWNE D OFF

Who was the bloke from the Northern Hemisphere that could not attend a North American herp slide show at WASAH Headquarters presented by Professor Robert Mount of Auburn University, Alabama, USA during a recent visit to Australia? He told Brad he had to go to bed early due to being inflicted with sunstroke. Likely story!

**LOOKING
THROUGH
ORANGE-
COLOURED
GLASSES**

Someone needs glasses. Several members headed off

all excited to check some spinifex habitat near Toodyay. This was because a member (also ex-Northern Hemisphere) advised his mates that there was a good patch of this vegetation on Salt Valley Road just south of the town. "It might be good woma country" he was heard to comment. We had a good day out but not a skerrick of spinney was sighted. Hey Paul, have you bought those glasses yet?

**BEERBOTTLES
RUNNING!**

*I would like to see
that!*

One of our founding members, Dave (Beerbottle) Robinson has apparently taken up jogging. He recently moved to Karratha, or *herpetologists' heaven*. What's he doing wasting his time jogging when there is herping to be done. It has sure got everyone astounded down Perth way.

Hey Dave, beerbottles roll not run! Get out there amongst the herp for your mates' sake and roll with the reptiles. It will keep you fit enough!

**Ya!
Hoo!**

WASAH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 14 December
7.30pm

Perth Zoo Ed Centre
Entry off Labouchere Road

SPECIAL Guest Speaker:

Andre *The Great*

(At tremendous expense to WASAH we are having an international herp
from Switzerland present a talk & slide show)

On Keeping in Europe

Mr Stehlin Andre has a large collection of snakes including saw-scaled
vipers, puff adders, cobras, numerous colubrids and boids. He is successfully
breeding most of the species in his care. For a perspective on herp husbandry
in Europe make sure you attend what should be a fascinating, albeit
frustrating for us WA people, evening!

From the President

Another year has come and gone in a rush. WASAH ended it on a good note: in the black financially. 1996 saw several members become licensed to keep reptiles for private study. We have all but finalised the *Application criteria and keepers' package* to be submitted to CALM for, hopefully, their endorsement. We have undertaken several successful displays both in the

bush and in Perth with hardly a hitch. We have had some great guest speakers at our meetings followed by equally as great fellowship. We have commenced discussing the pros and cons of a name change for the society. We have got a talented resident artist working on logos for our WASAH tee shirt. Check out Shane's frilly.

We are a force to be reckoned with, we are a society, we are WASAH!

Best wishes all and seasons greetings. Make sure you attend the meeting on the 14 December for Andre the Great's presentation. See you there.

Brian Bush



**WASAH Inc.
Income &
Expenditure to
Dec 1996**

INCOME

Subscriptions.....1,335.00
 Donations.....8.75
 Hooks, bags &
 jiggers.....730.00
 Book/poster
 sales.....1,143.45
 Displays.....850.00
Total Income..... \$4,066.45

EXPENDITURE

Herpetofauna.....647.50
 Newsletters (inc of
 postage).....176.09
 Barker's book.....300.00
 Perth Reptiles &
 Frogs.....538.38
 Weigel's book.....218.00
 Advertising.....50.10
 Stationary.....80.00
 Hooks, Bags &
 Jiggers.....665.00
 Beverages.....120.00
 Postage
 (*Herpetofauna*).....56.55
 Membership (EDO).....35.00
 WASAH display
 cases.....585.00
Total Expend.....\$3471.62

1996 Profit.....\$594.83
 1995 Profit.....\$1900.53
 1995 adjustment.....\$469.84
**BANK BALANCE at
 26 Nov 1996.....\$2025.52**

**WASAH EXECUTIVE
 COMMITTEE**

President/Editor: Brian Bush
 (09) 295 3007
Vice-President: Brad Maryan
 (09) 444 6412
Secretary: Robert Browne-Cooper
 (09) 445 2409
Treasurer: Russell Brown
 (09) 390 8091
 Address all correspondence related to
 this newsletter to:

**The Editor
 9 Birch Place
 STONEVILLE 6081**

**Journals
&
Bulletins**

HERPETOFAUNA

A worthwhile publication recommended by us for all the readers of this Newsletter. Send a cheque for \$15/one year or \$40/three years to:

The Editor
 PO Box R307
 Royal Exchange
 SYDNEY 2000

MONITOR

The journal/newsletter and bulletin of the Victorian Herpetological Society. The VHS is the largest herp society in Australia and *Monitor* reflects that. Send \$25 for 3 issues/year to:

The Secretary
 VHS Inc
 16 Suspension St
 ARDEER, VIC 3022

**Hawkesbury
 Herpetological
 Society**

The Secretary
 PO Box 2
 WHALAN, NSW 2770

**Cape York
 Herpetological
 Society**

The Secretary
 PO Box 114
 PALMCOVE, QLD 4879

**Orana Herpetological
 Society**

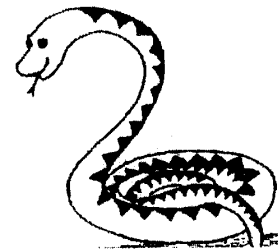
841 Ridge Road, COOKS GAP
 (via MUDGEE) NSW 2850

**Victorian Association
 of Amateur
 Herpetologists**

222 Flinders Avenue, LARA
 VICTORIA 3212
 Membership: \$20 per year.

WASAH is an informal group of people with similar interests - all wishing to keep for private study and "love", frogs, turtles, lizards or snakes!

WASAH joined the Affiliation of Australasian Herpetological Societies in 1994.



Snakes are Great!

FAMILY FROG NIGHT IN KUNUNURRA

By Jo Vandermark, GPO Box 240, DARWIN, Northern Territory 0801

Kununurra does not have any natural history or conservation groups, so while I was there I thought it would be a good idea to organise a natural history workshop along the lines of those I ran in Canberra, in an attempt to raise public awareness of the surrounding natural paradise. I also had in mind using such an event to initiate a field naturalists' group, a herpetological association being rather too specialised in a town of four thousand people.

Frogs seemed as good a place as any to start, as they are a conspicuous element of the immediate environment, and considered simply a nuisance by most people, who spray them with harpic, or like the conservation ranger whose house I minded, hurl them over the back fence with considerable malevolence.

The first step was to scout around to find some people who might be interested in taking on such a project so I approached CALM, the research station, local schools, churches, the Aboriginal resource agency and likely individuals. To my delight there was considerable enthusiasm for the idea and a small committee was formed to toss around ideas and establish a small kitty to fund forward costs.

Critical to the success of the project at this stage was the enthusiastic support of Professor Michael Tyler, who not only agreed to fly up from Adelaide to be the guest speaker, but offered to cover his own expenses, a generous gesture gave the committee the confidence to forge ahead. Ideas poured forth.

We booked the Anglican Church. Located in the centre of town, it offered a double space separated by a glass wall. The church itself was ideal for Mike's talk with provision for the screening of coloured slides, while the adjoining hall, with a kitchen and servery for selling refreshments, was an ideal space for setting up the interactive displays. To maximise the opportunities for families to participate, Saturday night was selected, with the displays to operate from six pm, the speaker at seven pm, while for those who couldn't make the displays before the talk the displays would operate for a short time afterwards too.

So what happened? Well, the Family Frog Night was a fantastic success - two hundred and fifty people turned up, unheard of in Kununurra, in fact people were still talking about it several months later. And it really was a family night, with lots of the kind of parents who care enough about their

children to take them to such an event. The committee, Mike Tyler and I were elated.

One of the keys to success was the multimedia frog art competition for school children, sponsored and organised by the three keen teachers on the committee. The posters, paintings, collages, models and even geoboard depictions were absolutely fantastic, and made a magnificent display at the workshop as well as contributing to consciousness raising in the community. Furthermore the children and their parents came along to participate in the prize giving on the night. High school students made posters on the life cycle of frogs and the threats they currently face. These posters were not only displayed at the workshop but used for advance publicity in the community library.

For the children who participated in the workshop there was badge making - *Be friends with frogs, It isn't easy being green*, etc. A worksheet based on the high school posters had been prepared and all children who completed the quiz received a free chocolate Freddo. There was the opportunity to *Feel a Frog* and learn how to hold frogs, plus instruction in the successful raising of tadpoles.

Every available book on frogs from the schools' and community library was on display in the reading corner, while in another corner, also equipped with a mat and chairs, was a continuous video screening of frog films. On sale were several books on frogs, including Mike's latest edition of *Frogs of Western Australia*. There were free leaflets and pamphlets on frogs, including the excellent ANPWS brochure. A *Frogabilia* table had attracted an extraordinary array of *objects d'art* (?) while every spare inch of wall space was given over to frog posters, some contributed by the *Frog and Tadpole Study Group* in Sydney.

Central to the display and pride of the workshop were three magnificent specimens of *Litoria splendida*, the Kimberley's own very special tree frog.

Tea, coffee, cordial and a wonderful array of home made cakes were available for purchase at a modest fifty cents apiece throughout the evening, the green tree frog cakes being the scene stealers! The money raised from the sale of refreshments and an attractive raffle more than covered the costs of the evening.

All this was happening between six and seven, when, with some difficulty, everyone squeezed into the church for the presentation of prizes for the art competition which had been judged very sensitively and thoughtfully by Kununurra's leading artist. Then it was time for the talk.

It was not an easy audience! On the floor at the front were two or

three rows of small children, restless and overexcited. The adult audience, many of whom were standing around the walls or peering above the heads of the people standing in the doorway in the hope of finding a way in, ranged from the sceptical to the hostile as far as frogs were concerned. Only Mike could handle an audience like that, and sure enough, despite this impossible range of ages and interests and the absence a microphone, Mike had them all in the palm of his hand within minutes, with his idiosyncratic blend of humour, hard hitting information and excellent slides. At the conclusion, Mike drew the raffle prizes, and the displays and refreshments resumed for a while, but had to be curtailed as the whole display had to be dismantled ready for Church and Sunday School at eight am.

One of my regrets was that the reporter from the *Kimberley Echo* who had promised to come, did not show, and my camera was not working, so some fantastic photo opportunities were missed. The other complication was that I had to leave to take up an appointment in an Aboriginal community near Katherine a couple of weeks before the workshop. Although I negotiated with my new employer to have the Friday preceding the workshop off so that I could drive across from Katherine to Kununurra and be available to help set up, being so far away prevented me from actualising some of my original ideas. For example I had planned to have all the frog species of the area on display in separate tanks with appropriate distribution maps and labelling.

The Aboriginal component, which was to feature the role of frogs in Aboriginal mythology, art and daily life (such as using the water holding frog for survival in the desert) and Aboriginal story telling, did not eventuate. Silk-screening our own special frog design did not happen either, and we did not have any tadpoles for the *how to raise tadpoles demonstration!* Nevertheless, we did seem to have sufficient happening to keep people interested.

CALM's participation, or more accurately, lack of participation, was a disappointment. Although the ecologist and the wildlife officer were enthusiastic and supportive of the idea and were kept fully informed of developments, no-one had time to attend any planning meet. We had suggested it would be a good opportunity for CALM to present a public face, with a display of *CALM out there managing the frog's environment*, with a representative to answer questions about wildlife regulations, but the invitation was declined. However the Kimberley manager, Chris Done attended and expressed his appreciation of the evening.

Although names of people interested were collected at the meeting, my relocation meant there was not anyone prepared to take on the responsibility of getting a field naturalists' group off the ground, but I still think it was worthwhile to hold the frog night. The wet season frog choruses along Packsaddle Road must be one of the greatest natural sounds in Australia. Hopefully there may now be a few more people who are aware of them.

THE HERPETOFAUNA OF QUINNS ROCKS URBAN BUSHLAND

By Sandy Griffin, PO Box 152, NORTH PERTH WA 6006

The following is an account of fauna species recorded in Quinns Rocks urban bushland. This information was recorded as part of a conservation proposal to the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation, entitled, "Ecology and Conservation of Quinns Rocks Bushland". Fauna surveys were carried out in November 1995 (Spring/Summer) and March 1996 (Autumn), at three locations within Quinns Rocks township. These locations were Wattle Park (1.3 ha of *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland on

limestone ridges and Quindalup dunes), Gumblossom Reserve (6 ha of Banksia woodland, limestone and Quindalup heathlands) and the Coastal Foreshore (8 ha of sand dunes, limestone heathlands and coastal cliff fronts). We used all the standard methods for fauna surveys - pit-trapping with a drift fence, Elliott traps, hand searching during the day and spotlight searching at night, as well as recording any opportunistic sightings. So what did we see? Well we were presently surprised by the

diversity of species recorded. Despite the number of cats (domestic pets - not feral) roaming through each of the reserves surveyed, Quinns Rocks bushland seems to have a relatively intact herpetofauna. We suspect that this may be due to the township having been surrounded by bushland, until more recently, when new suburbs were created. It will be interesting to see whether the loss of surrounding bushland is going to contribute to a decline in herpetofauna diversity in the future.

Skinks

Snake-eyed Skink
West Coast Ctenotus
Western Limestone Ctenotus
Two-toed Earless Skink
West Coast Four-toed Lerista
West Coast Line-spotted Lerista
Western Worm Lerista
Common Dwarf Skink
Western Bluetongue
Shingleback

Dragons

Western Bearded Dragon

Geckos

Marbled Gecko
South-western Spiny-tailed Gecko

Legless Lizards

Fraser's Legless Lizard
Gray's Legless Lizard
Burton's Legless lizard
Common Scaly Foot

Blind Snakes

Southern Blind Snake

Elapids

Scincidae

Cryptoblepharus plagiocephalus
Ctenotus fallens
Ctenotus lesueurii
Hemiergis quadrilineata
Lerista elegans
Lerista lineopunctulata
Lerista praepedita
Menettia grayii
Tiliqua occipitalis
Tiliqua rugosa

Agamidae

Pogona minor minor

Gekkonidae

Phyllodactylus marmoratus
Strophurus spinigerus

Pygopodidae

Delma fraseri
Delma grayii
Lialis burtonis
Pygopus lepidopodus

Typhlopidae

Ramphotyphlops australis

Elapidae

Bardick
Black-naped Snake
Dugite
Jan's Banded Snake
Western Banjo Frog

Echiopsis curta
Neelaps bimaculatus
Pseudonaja affinis
Simoselaps bertholdi
Limnodynastes dorsalis

QREG would like to thank those WASAH members who volunteered their time and effort to help make this survey a success (you know who you are - I can't find my list!). If anyone is at a loose end and would like to contribute to QREG activities in any capacity at all, or become a member, please contact David Wake (305 1591) for further information.

THE HERPETOLOGISTS' No. 1 ENEMY

By Brad Maryan, 169 Egina Street, MT HAWTHORN WA 6016

If there is one thing that strikes fear into a person with a collection of reptiles (particularly snakes) is the little external blood-sucking parasite, snake mite (*Ophionyssus natricus*). There are over 250 different mite species that can parasitise reptiles, but the main types that can cause medical problems are the snake mite, lizard mite (*Hirstiella trombidiformis*) and the chigger mite. Although small, they are monstrous in terms of the hassles they can cause in a reptile collection.

It is a fact that parasites cause and contribute to disease in reptiles. Despite this, many herpetologists feel that if they are not seeing problems, then why look? (Klingenberg 1993). Out in the wild a healthy balance of parasite and host is maintained, ie, the host's

exposure to a particular parasite is interrupted by various stages of that parasite's life cycle. Also, this life cycle is extended over a longer time period than is the case in captivity. In captivity this scenario is completely different tipping the balance towards a negative outcome resulting from a massive unnatural parasite load that can dramatically effect the health of reptiles in a captive environment. As there are many different kinds of parasites and treatments, I will concentrate here on the snake mite. In heavy infestations it can consume large quantities of blood and potentially cause life-threatening anaemia. Did you know that in some extreme cases blood transfusions have had to be performed on captive reptiles because their blood had become so intoxicated by mites? Scary stuff eh!

The snake mite. I can tell you, you don't want it. I believe it is quite healthy to be paranoid and if causes you to be meticulous concerning your husbandry practices. Because I work at the zoo I am always worried that I might be bringing home some nasty stowaway to my collection on my clothes, under my fingernails or some other place. I am not saying that the zoo has a mite problem, just applying commonsense. I never go near any of my snakes without a shower, and I may require any other person visiting to do the same if they work with animals. One of the most effective ways in firstly avoiding and also controlling mite is hygiene. The cleaner you are with yourself and your collection the better. Fortunately in WA mite appear to be a minor problem. This is

either due to very few people maintaining reptile collections, or our relatively dry weather - our hot summers would definitely sort them out as long as your charges are kept under hygienic conditions. The best thing is to avoid them altogether and remember, be paranoid about them, don't be blasé.

AVOIDING MITES and LOOKING FOR THEM

A) The entire life cycle of mites can occur in a cage, especially if not kept clean and you are providing a relatively moist and dark environment. Try to avoid using too much sand and keep things simple and convenient. Mites are commonly associated with unsanitary cage conditions, improper husbandry and recently acquired animals.

B) Snake mite can be present on wild-caught snakes, so to be on the safe side have a mini-quarantine period. Do not place it immediately with others in your care. Inspect its entire body for mites and ticks.

C) Snake mites are generally black or tan and tend to accumulate in protected areas on a reptile's body eg, under scales and around the eyes and cloaca. In animals that are heavily parasitised you may have mites visibly crawling over the body. Little white flecks may indicate mite faeces. You should always pay close attention to the behaviour of your charges.

D) A snake with mites will behave like it has an itch and rub itself on cage walls and furnishings. Sometimes they will soak in their water container. This will drown the mites. This is

a good way of detecting mites if they are present in the water.

Remember that some snakes will normally soak before sloughing or on a hot day.

MITE EXTERMINATION

There are several recommended treatments for the eradication of mites. The smaller your collection the easier it will be. None of the following will work if you do not completely clean cages and provide frequent substrate changes. The most commonly used treatments are the **soaking** of infested snakes in tepid water to drown the mites. The drawbacks to this treatment is the snake can develop skin problems and if you do not clean all your cages the mites will be a recurring problem. The best treatment is the use of **pest strips**. This involves cutting a small piece (about 1/8th of a strip) and placing it in a small well-ventilated jar or container and then into the cage for 2-3 hours at a time on a fortnightly basis until all mites are terminated. You can suspend the piece of strip if you like, as long as snake cannot come in to contact with it. It is best to remove the water dish while treating the snake. The cage and furnishings are fumigated by the pest strip simultaneously. Be warned though, there are potentially life-threatening side-effects if snakes are exposed to the pest strip for too long.

It is fairly obvious from what I have written that avoiding mites is easier than treating them. If you detect mites consider them the enemy in a war and show no mercy. Be fair dinkum about

total extermination as they will definitely show no mercy with your snakes. Finally, if you are interested in finding out more about parasites and their effects on reptiles, I fully recommend the book: *Understanding Reptile Parasites* by Roger J. Klingenberg (1993) published by Advanced Vivarium Systems in USA Available from the Victorian Herpetological Society Herp Shop, 16 Suspension Street, Ardeer Victoria 3022 at \$13.90 (postage not included).

Book Review

Review by Russel L. Traher

Frogs as Pets: A Guide to Keeping the Australian Green Tree Frog.

Text by Michael J. Tyler. 1996. Graphic Print Group, Graphic House, 10-14 Kingston Avenue, Richmond, South Australia 5033 Australia. 25 colour photographs, 3 range maps. 28 pages. ISBN: 0-646-28608-0. \$13.95

Throughout the world many species of amphibians have declined considerably in numbers and some species have become extinct. In many instances, local human influences are attributable to adverse declines in many ways, such as draining of wetlands, deforestation, widespread pollution, disease, acid rain, and UVB radiation.

The majority of the world is ignorant to the decline of amphibians and what a better way to open their minds than by introducing them to a new field of interest, frogs as pets.

I would like to introduce you to a very comprehensive hand guide to keeping Tree Frogs in captivity, "*Frogs as Pets*", by Michael Tyler. This booklet is an excellent reference book for amateur herpetologists and people who want to expand their knowledge on these amazing amphibians. Tyler manages to include a variety of aspects of this species, from its life in the wild to information on captive care.

The booklet is broken up into 22 easy to follow chapters: Introduction, History of Discovery, Latin Name, Closest Relatives, Geographic Distribution, Habitat, Sexing, Breeding Season, Colour Variation, Selecting Your First Frogs, Housing, Food and Feeding Habits, Water, Including Breeding, Care of Tadpoles, Homing Behaviour, Stowaways, Diseases and their Treatment, Conservation, Learning More, References, and Acknowledgments.

Tyler includes visual information to accompany the text, such as, diagrams, maps and photographic references. This provides easy to read information that people of all ages can understand.

Tyler has captured the majestic nature of these beautiful frogs in a simple style that beginners can comprehend yet still providing interesting information for the expert. The frog enthusiast should not be without this book.

STOP PRESS

Congratulations Robert

A "Minor" Breakthrough

I was beginning to wonder whether I had bitten off more than I could chew having more or less committed myself to catching a pair of elusive big-eyed sedge snakes (*Elapognathus minor*). After at least eight trips down south, and not so much as a sniff of one!

Well my luck changed on 20 November when I caught and bagged a fine adult male south of Rocky Gully. He is only about 35 cm long, but it's the biggest news for me this year. That afternoon was one of those herp-moments that couldn't be any better!!!!

Now all I have to do is locate a female, which may prove more

challenging than finding the male since female snakes are often more secretive. At the end of the day it is all good fun and I'm looking forward to more field trips down south.

Thanks to Paul Orange, Gary Davies and Brad Maryan for help in the field.

RBC

Membership Form

1997

(Western Australian Society of Amateur Herpetologists Inc)
Address to: The Secretary, WASAH, 169 Egina Street, Mount Hawthorn 6016

I wish to become a member of WASAH and in so doing agree to abide by the rules and constitution of the Society. Membership entitles me to an annual subscription to the journal of the Australasian Affiliation of Herpetological Societies, *Herpetofauna* and the Society's newsletter.

Surname (Ms Miss Mrs Mr).....

Given names.....

Postal address.....

Telephone number (H)..... (W).....

Remittance enclosed (\$15/year to a maximum of 5 years).....

Constitution & rules will be forwarded to you upon joining

Date.....

Signature.....