

in experimentation as almost recommended by this book?

What meaning a vivarium has, what it is good for, and what a vivarium is in the opinion of the authors, how to manage it properly, remains unknown to the reader even after the final page - unless he already had a distinct idea before.

The image that a reader, unexperienced in terraristic and plant-cultivation, receives a very efficient overkill-manual for both by this book, terrifies me. And, I also get a faint appreciation why officials have enormous problems to differentiate serious-minded terrarium-keepers and botanists from those who write books like this. It is hoped that the publishers are aware of their indirect responsibilities when they distribute this »Masterpiece of the Cabinet of Horrors«.

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Source: ULBER, E. (1991): Buchbesprechung: MEUSEL & HÜBL — SAURIA, Berlin, 13 (4): 18 - 19

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Bookreview

LIM, F.L.K. & T.-M. LEE (1989): Fascinating Snakes of Southeast Asia - An Introduction — Kuala Lumpur (Tropical Press), 124 pp., more than 100 colour illustr., numerous drawings, sketches, and cartoons; plastic back; ISBN 967-73-0045-8, about US\$ 35,00

The book in front of me represents the first generously illustrated popular-scientific work on the snake-fauna of Southeast Asia. It contains the following chapters: Introduction, Snakes in Religions and Folklore, Snake Encounters, Snakes and Snakebites, Some Fantastic Facts about Snakes, a specific chapter introducing snake species, Appendix 1 (List of Snakes found in Peninsula Malaysia), and Appendix 2 (Distribution Chart and List of Common Names of Snakes of Southeast Asia).

The first thing I realize in this book is its ample illustration. Altogether 74 species are presented by one or more pictures whereby the focus is clearly on the fauna of Malaysia; only seven of the described species are not present there. The photographs are generally of a high quality. Especially interesting is the fact that many snake species are shown in colour for the very first time, e.g. *Dryophis rubescens*, *Sibynophis melanocephalus*, *Calamaria schlegeli*, and many others. In addition, some

species almost unknown to European herpetoculturists are introduced, e.g. the easily kept Water snakes of the subfamily Homalopsinae. I was excited about the two colour-varieties of *Chrysopelea paradisi* and *Trimeresurus purpureomaculatus* which are surely unique! A portion of the photographs of the introductory chapter, however, is identical with those of the special part, but this one can tolerate.

The general chapter gives clear evidence that the authors are snake-fans. With much love they try to bring these animals closer to the layman. The chapter »Snake Encounters« especially explains how to catch snakes; this chapter obviously is addressed to the Malayan snake-fans and, in my opinion, could have been omitted. In contrary, the chapter »Snakes and Snake-bites« is very well done and very clearly arranged. It is up to date scientifically and furnished with tables accentuated with colours. It covers the well-arranged paragraphs »Some Tips on the Prevention of Snakesbites«, »Out in the Field«, »What to do when bitten by a Snake«, »Immediate Treatment - First Aid« and »In the Hospital«.

On the next two pages, the reader is informed about general facts regarding snakes. Misunderstandings are cleared. This part is accentuated with colour and provided with quite funny cartoons! I would like to judge it as very well done.

Analyzing the specific part it becomes obvious that the taxonomy is exceptionally exact for an Asian book. The only mistakes I realized were made in the determination of *Trimeresurus*-species. Thus, two pictures captioned *T. popeorum* ("*T. popeiorum*") refers to a typing error in the species-description) in fact show *T. macrops* (on page 104) and most likely *T. albolabris* (on page 105). At least, the authors should have realized that these two photographs show two different species. The picture on page 107 does not show a juvenile *T. purpureomaculatus*, but a new species whose description is just being in preparation (VOGEL in preparation¹). Otherwise I must say that even the determination of the often mistaken species of *Dendrelaphis* is correct. Unfortunately no subspecies are mentioned in the specific part; an omission which may easily contribute to a confusion of the reader especially in species like *Lycodon aulicus capucinus* (page 54) and *Elaphe taeniura ridleyi*, named »Cave racer« too (page 40).

I would consider the text relating to the individual species as quite informative. However, occasionally unknown facts are presented as known without mentioning any source. For example, nobody knows of what the real food of *Boiga drapiezii* consists, but here it is indicated "Birds, eggs, and other small prey forms its usual diet". This is a deficit because, as a result, all information must be treated carefully.

In Appendix 2 one must criticize that "Thailand" means »North-Thailand« only without the Malayan Peninsular, but this is not indicated anywhere. For example,

Naja n. sputatrix, *Boiga dendrophila melanota*, *Boiga jaspidea*, and some others are well known from South-Thailand.

The literature-index is unfortunately somewhat too concentrated.

However, these minor deficits should not detract from the total value of this book. In contrary, it would be advantageous if this work received broad acceptance. The text is made up very simply and is even understandable with little knowledge of the English language. It can be warmly recommended for every herpetoculturist.

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Source: VOGEL, G. (1990): Buchbesprechung: LIM & LEE — SAURIA, Berlin, 12 (2): 22 - 24

¹ — **Remark of the Editors:** meanwhile this species was described as *Trimeresurus venustus* VOGEL 1991 (SAURIA, Berlin, 13 (1): 23 - 28)

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