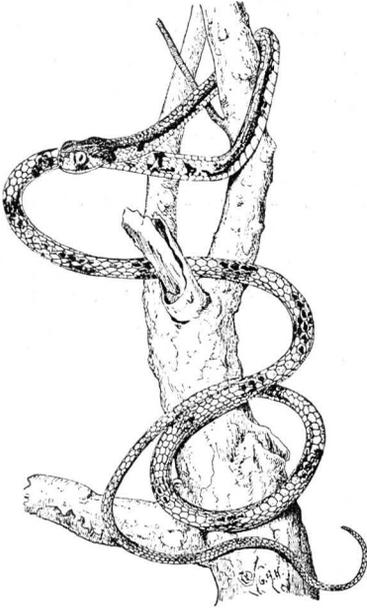


SOME NOTES ON *HAPLOPELTURA BOA* (BOIE)

(Ophidia, Colubridae)

door

A. M. R. Wegner



Haplopetlura boa (Boie)

× ½. Vrij naar de Rooy (1917)

In "De Tropische Natuur" XXVI July 1937, p. 101, C. P. J. de Haas gives a good description of this remarkable snake. As I had ample opportunity to observe this species in the wild state as well as in captivity I should like to bring some facts about this snake to the attention of herpetologists.

When living in the Tengger Mountains at Nongkodjadjar I frequently caught *Haplopetlura* at an altitude of 1200 — 1500 m where it was living amongst the branches of shrubs. Being absolutely harmless it never tries to bite but it is not shy either if one comes near to it, in fact it remains very calm when taken off the branch on which it is resting.

I kept several of them during a long period in my terrarium where I could observe its extra-

ordinary habits. Generally tree snakes are rather lively but this species is so slow in its movements that I cannot remember having ever seen anything like this. For hours it would remain motionless without stirring in the least, sometimes even hanging down limply from the branch for one third of its length creating the impression of a dead snake. At first I did not know what these animals were feeding on until one day I came upon one specimen as it just was devouring a slug. From now on it was easy to feed my animals in the terrarium. This kind of slug is abundant in the Tengger Mountains and all I had to do to find some was to look at the base of banana-leaves where I could be almost sure to find them between the stem and the leaf-base. When I put one or more slugs into the terrarium the snakes did not give any sign that they recognized the slugs as a prey unless I placed them rather near to the bulging eyes of the snakes. More often than not it would take one to several minutes before the snake would show some interest in the slug by

lifting up its head a little. After a minute's pause the snake would creep very slowly, without any haste or visible emotion, towards the slug until the snake's head was only at a distance of half an inch from the slug. There the snake stopped and remained motionless for another minute, whereupon the snake approached half an inch more, and, with a thrust of its head caught the slug. That is the only move which I could term with some exaggeration as "Hasty". In the same slow manner, typical for this species, it began to chew on the slug until the prey vanished into the oral cavity of the snake. It was interesting to observe how a few moments later the dorsal shield of the slug appeared at the edge of the snake's mouth, where it was pushed out. So far as I know this is the only snake which does not swallow its prey entirely.

Though generally considered to be nocturnal, *Haplopeltura* was often seen feeding at daytime. I never saw this snake feeding on anything else than slugs and in view of its slow movements it would be very unlikely that it would be able to catch animals other than slugs and often I was tempted to assume that the slug is the quicker one of the two.

BOEKBESPREKING

"GLORIA MARIS" Schelpen; in 1951 uitgebracht door het Uitgeversbedrijf "De Spieghel" te Amsterdam, 4to. 16 pag. text, 64 platen.

"Dit boek is gewijd aan de schoonheid van de schelpen uit de Maleische Archipel", zo staat er in de verantwoording op pag. 5 van dit schitterende plaatwerk, waarvoor Mevr. W.S.S. van Benthem Jutting de text schreef in het Nederlands. Paul Bessem maakte de bijzonder goede foto's die elk een plaat opleverden voor dit werk. Elke plaat geeft een afbeelding van een schelp die in de zeeën van dit eilandenrijk leeft. Vijf röntgenfoto's tonen ons de fraaie lijnen van het inwendige van enkele schelpen waardoor een duidelijk constructiebeeld gegeven wordt.

In de text vindt men van elke afgebeelde schelp enkele wetenswaardigheden en tevens de afmetingen van de gefotografeerde voorwerpen die alle deel uitmaken van de collectie van het Zoölogisch Museum te Amsterdam.

Behalve de wetenschappelijke namen zijn in de tekst zoveel mogelijk de namen genoemd die de grote Natuuronderzoeker Rumphius, die op Ambon leefde, werkte en stierf, in zijn "Amboinsche Rariteitenkamer" gebruikte. Deze namen zijn meestal vertalingen van de maleise namen waarmee Ambonse vissers deze dieren aanduiden.

Een keurig verzorgd plaatwerk waarvan een Indonesische uitgave nog verwacht wordt. Wij vonden een prijs vermeld van f 14.25 (Ned. Crt).

L. Butot.