

Attention might at the same time be drawn to letters which appeared in the British Medical Journal of Nov. 25th. 1967, Dec. 2nd. and Dec. 16th. 1967, drawing attention to the danger of Salmonellosis in turtles and quoting cases which have affected human patients.

E. ELKAN,
62 Woodhall Gate,
Pinner, Middx.

Received 12/10/68

REFERENCE:

- ELKAN, E. and ZWART, P. (1967). The Ocular Disease of young terrapins caused by Vitamin A deficiency. *Pathologia Veterinaria* 4; 201 - 222.

BURROWING OF THE SAND LIZARD *LACERTO AGILIS*

I found Mr. H. O. Munro's note entitled 'Observations on egg deposition by a Sand Lizard (*Brit J. Herpetol.* 4, No. 1, December, 1967, pp. 20 - 21) of great interest. It is a good account of the process of digging a burrow by a gravid female of this species despite the close proximity of three observers. It does not, however, in itself imply that eggs were laid; this species often digs such retreats in which it spends much time in unfavourable conditions, including the hottest parts of summer days (Sims, 1964). It may well be that the eggs are sometimes laid in such burrows, but those I have found in Lancashire have been laid in very shallow pits dug vertically in sandy soil and covered thinly by the sand lizard with a layer of soil and plant debris. Smith (1964) states that he also found them under stones. Unless Mr. Munro examined the site for the clutch, or saw the female lizard later and was able to confirm that she had deposited her eggs the account as printed cannot be taken as a description of egg-laying.

C. SIMMS,
Curator of Natural History,
The Yorkshire Museum,
York.

Received 8/2/68

REFERENCES

- SIMMS, C. (1964). Notes on the Burrowing Habits of the Sand Lizard. *Liverpool Naturalists' Field Club Proceedings*, 1961 - 1963, pp. 22 - 25.
SMITH, M. *The British Amphibians and Reptiles*. London, Collins, 1951 (3rd Edn. 1964).

I am at present engaged on research into the ecology and conservation of the Sand Lizard in England. Accordingly I would be most obliged to any individual who could furnish me with any details of sightings of *Lacerta agilis*, since 1958.

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26/10/68.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CAECILIANS OF THE WORLD. A Taxonomic review. By Edward Harrison Taylor, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas, 1968, pp. 848. Price \$25.00. Available at the American University Publishers Group Ltd., 27 - 29 Whitfield Street, London, W.1.

If one consults the Bibliography of this book, then on pages 836 and 837 the author will be seen to have published, from 1920 onwards, either alone or in association with others, numerous scientific contributions on Caecilians — the so-called legless amphibians. Harrison Taylor is thus quite obviously an expert on his subject, which is rather a change these days when innumerable books on biological topics are written by people who are quite obviously not.

This extremely large and detailed volume is not meant to be read right through, heaven forbid, but it is to be referred to, picked up and put down whenever any information of taxonomic import on Gymnophionan Amphibia is required. The contents deal in the main, apart from a brief history of the order, with the external morphology and distribution of the various members of the group. Most detailed keys for identification are furnished for the 3 living orders of Amphibia and thence, in the Gymnophiona for the Families Ichthyophiidae, Typhlonectidae and Caeciliidae and the various genera such as *Ichthyophis*, *Typhlonectes*, *Hypogeophis* and *Dermophis*, to mention just a few of the commonly well-known ones.

The Bibliography extends through 47 pages, comprising over 600 references: 425 black and white illustrations are included, many of them not of high quality, possibly because some of them were prepared from inferior pencil sketches and photographs. The full page of 'errata' suggested slipshod proof reading, though doubtless there is some excuse here in the 1st. Edition of such a detailed volume. No zoological library will henceforth be complete without this book and no research worker, who deals with the Gymnophiona in terms of taxonomy or external morphology, will be wholly safe without it on his bookshelf.

H. FOX

THE BIOLOGY OF THE REPTILIA

A substantial work in several volumes with this title, containing contributions by different authorities on many aspects of reptilian structure and function is in preparation. It will be published by Academic Press and edited by Carl Gans, T. S. Parsons and A. d'A. Bellairs. The first volume is expected in November or December 1968, probably at a price of 80/-, and further volumes will appear over the next few years. The contents of volume 1 includes articles on the origin of reptiles, on the structure of reptilian bone, and on the dentition, and is mainly devoted to anatomical topics.

A. d'A. BELLAIRS