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INCUBATION PERIOD AND HATCHING OF THE SPIX'S WHIPTAIL LIZARD (*CNEMIDOPHORUS OCELLIFER*) IN CAPTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we report favorable conditions to hatch eggs of *Cnemidophorus ocellifer*.

Key-words : Incubation period, *Cnemidophorus ocellifer*.

RESUMO

Neste artigo descrevemos as condições favoráveis para eclosão dos ovos de *Cnemidophorus ocellifer*.

Palavras-chave : Período de incubação, *Cnemidophorus ocellifer*

INTRODUCTION

The source of the increasing variety of animals for the pet trade as well as for research, and the frequent identification of problems that must be solved in order to breed and rise new taxa, was mentioned by Chiszar (1996) as the two important ways of the fertile crescent of the herpetoculture. A number of discoveries that emerged directly or indirectly from herpetoculture, produced major effects within the scientific community (e. g., recognition of the profound effects of small variations in temperature, and recognition of the importance of hibernation in bringing about the

reproductive condition in temperature species and of rainfall cycles in bringing about reproduction in some tropical species). In addition, when the herpetoculturists succeed in reproducing new, sometimes rare, taxa, researchers invariably find features to interest to study in animals not previously available (Chiszar, 1996).

The objective of this paper is report the best conditions for the development of *C. ocellifer* eggs as we do not have reports of hatching of this species in captivity, and this might be a good contribution for future studies on the ontogeny of lizards, where we will create conditions to hatch eggs in captivity.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

On 23 March 2001, a female *Cnemidophorus ocellifer* was captured using a pit fall trap, near Piranhas River, Municipality of Piranhas in the State of Goiás, Brazil (16°35'16"S, 51°47'50"W). The collecting site is within a dense Cerrado vegetational formation. The specimen laid two eggs on 24 March 2001. One egg was lost during the trip from Piranhas to Goiânia. The other (16.64 x 8.62mm) was kept at the Laboratory of Herpetology of the Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas Biológicas (CEPB), in a small thermic box with humid vermiculite at 24.5 °C (\pm 1.0 °C).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A young specimen hatched on 21 May 2001, with SVL: 59.24mm, tail: 40.12mm (red) and body weight 0.142g (CEPB 1241).

The reproductive cycle of *C. ocellifer* was mentioned by authors in the last years (Vitt, 1983; Vitt and Breitenbach, 1993; Mesquita, 2001). However, the authors did not mention the incubation period for the eggs, although we know that natural conditions for the eggs' development are very different from the ones in a laboratory.

Our observations indicate the incubation period in laboratory of this species in 58 days, in the same conditions.

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