

## BOOK REVIEWS

**STUDIES IN UROPELTID SNAKES** by M. V. Rajendran. 1985. Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu, Madurai. v + 132 pp. Available from: Publications Division, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai 625 021, India. Price: Indian Rupees 20.

For many years the uropeltids have been a family of snakes that have suffered greatly from neglect, undoubtedly due in part to the claim of many that these snakes are secretive and difficult to obtain, in comparison to the more obvious families of snakes. The bulk of my own library on the matter of uropeltids is two titles, Smith (1943) and Gans (1966), so it was with great interest that I picked up this book, sat down and entered its pages.

The book covers twenty species, those found in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, southern India and the text is, per the contents table, in two parts. The first is the usual Introduction, Materials and Methods. Also included here are notes on ecology, the tunnel systems of the animals, food and feeding habits and reproduction. The previous information on these latter sections has been sparse, but that presented in this book goes some way to correcting the balance. It proved interesting reading especially the problem of temperature, those collected and maintained by the author back at the laboratory soon succumbing to temperatures around 30° C. The second section of the book is looked at as two by myself: the species descriptions and, after the references, 20 pages of tables listing the scale counts for all the specimens collected by the author. The species descriptions are presented as full as possible, noting any taxonomic problems where they exist. Embryo counts for many species are also included.

**FROGS OF SABAH** by Robert F. Inger and Robert B. Steubing. 1989. Sabah Parks Publication No. 10, Kota Kinabalu. 132 pp. Available from: Lun Hing Trading Company, A 928, 9th Floor, Wisma Merdeka, 88000, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, East Malaysia. Malaysian Ringgit (M\$) 16.50.

For over forty years, Dr. Robert F. Inger stalked the tropical forests of the Far East, collecting and describing about 60 species of

Overall this little book goes some way to plugging a large gap in our knowledge on a fascinating snake family with just a few reservations on the final product. The book with an editor and a series of quality colour photos to illustrate the species would have been worthy of consideration by a publisher outside the subcontinent, thus making the title and its information more readily known and available. Maybe in the not too distant future after the undoubtedly to come taxonomic revision of Uropeltidae, the information could be represented with colour plates. Until then, this is an adequate title and should be on the book shelf of all those interested in these fascinating snakes.

### LITERATURE CITED

GANS, C. 1966. Liste der rezenten Amphibien und Reptilien. Uropeltidae. *Das Tierreich* 84: 1-29.

SMITH, M. A. 1943. The fauna of British India, Ceylon and Burma, including the whole of the Indo-Chinese sub-region. Reptilia and Amphibia Vol. III. Serpentes. Taylor and Francis, London. xii + 568 pp.

---

K. R. G. Welch, 3, Highfield Villas,  
Newlands Hill, Portishead, Avon BS20  
9AU, England.

---

snakes, lizards and his speciality, frogs and toads. During this period he also collaborated with P. K. Chin, formerly of the Sabah Fisheries