

HERPETOCULTURE NOTES

SQUAMATA — LIZARDS

CTENOPHORUS MIRRITYANA (Barrier Range Dragon). LONGEVITY. *Ctenophorus mirrityana* is an endangered species of rock-dwelling agamid, currently known only from four locations in western New South Wales, Australia. It was only described in 2013, when it was split from the closely related *C. decresii* (McLean et al. 2013. Rec. Aust. Mus. 65:51–63). Although the longevity of wild *C. mirrityana* is not known, this genus is typically short-lived with the wild lifespan of three studied species recorded at 1–2 years (Cogger 1978. Aust. J. Zool. 26:653–672; Dickman et al. 1999. Oecologia 119:357–366). Despite their short lifespans in the wild, captive individuals may live much longer, with a captive specimen of this species (reported therein as *C. decresii*) previously recorded to live to over 9 years old (McFadden and Harlow 2007. Herpetofauna 37:22–26). Herein we report a captive male *C. mirrityana* that lived for 11 years, 6 months, and 5 days.

The dragon was bred at Taronga Zoo, Sydney, from specimens collected at Mutawintji National Park in 1998 and 1999. It hatched on 22 November 2003. This specimen was housed individually, excluding a period with a post-reproductive female from March 2006 to April 2008, so did not reproduce during its lifetime. It was euthanized on 27 May 2015 due to a decline in mass and body condition, despite remaining active and feeding. Post-mortem examination revealed the dragon had a liver tumor, or biliary adenoma undergoing malignant transformation.

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SQUAMATA — SNAKES

HETERODON SIMUS (Southern Hog-nosed Snake). LONGEVITY. Longevity is an important factor in any organism's biology. Even though captivity may potentially prolong an animal's "natural" lifespan, information on maximum potential longevity, particularly for species of conservation concern, can be an important consideration when conducting field studies and making management decisions.

A captive longevity record of 12 years and 42 days for *Heterodon simus* was reported by Beane and Thorp (2007. Bull. Chicago Herpetol. Soc. 42[12]:193), who further reported four additional specimens that had exceeded 11 years in captivity, as of that writing. All of those snakes are now deceased. The individual surviving the longest was a male, wild-collected as a recent hatchling in Moore County, North Carolina, USA (7.6 km WSW Pinebluff, 35.0894°N, 79.5514°W; WGS 84) on 17 October 1996 by Jeffrey C. Beane and Laura H. Terry. The snake was maintained in captivity until his death on 10 April 2015. During that period, he was fed mostly laboratory House Mice (*Mus musculus*) and neonatal laboratory Norway Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*). Initially, these were "scented" with Squirrel Treefrogs (*Hyla squirella*),

Green Treefrogs (*H. cinerea*), Pine Woods Treefrogs (*H. femoralis*), or Spring Peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*). Other food items eaten between 17 October 1996 and 1 February 1998 were *H. femoralis*, *H. squirella*, and cut pieces of chicken (*Gallus gallus*) flesh. The snake first accepted an “unscented” neonatal laboratory mouse on 18 September 1997. From 1 February 1998 until his death, he was fed exclusively laboratory mice and rats. The snake molted 33 times during his captivity (and almost certainly had undergone only one postnatal molt when first collected). During the last few years of his life, he experienced difficulty with ecdysis, developed cataracts in both eyes, and occasionally regurgitated food. During his final months, he had difficulty swallowing even small food items, and occasionally was gently “assisted” with swallowing.

On 9 April 2015, the day before his death, he attempted to feed, but was unable to swallow unassisted.

To my knowledge, this period of 18 years, 5 months and 24 days far surpasses all previously reported records for the species. Upon death, the snake measured 379 mm SVL and 485 mm total length. The specimen was maintained under permits issued by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and is deposited in the herpetological collection of the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences (NCSM 84567).

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