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CLUTCH SIZE AND INCUBATION PERIOD OF *ATRACTUS PANTOSTICTUS* (FERNANDES & PUERTO, 1993) (SERPENTES : DIPSADIDAE)

Silvia Regina Travaglia Cardoso¹
Danusa Camanduchy Maia¹

ABSTRACT

Number of eggs in a clutch, incubation period and hatchlings of *Atractus pantostictus* are presented.

Keywords: snakes, *Atractus pantostictus*, eggs, incubation period, hatching.

RESUMO

São apresentados o número de ovos de uma postura, período de incubação e recém-nascidos de *Atractus pantostictus*.

Palavras-chave: serpentes, *Atractus pantostictus*, ovos, incubação, eclosão.

INTRODUCTION

Atractus pantostictus is a snake that occurs in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Goiás and Tocantins. Possibly because of its fossorial habits, information on reproductive parameters of this species is meager. In order to contribute to the knowledge on the biology of fossorial snakes we present data on clutch size, incubation period and hatchlings of *A. pantostictus*.

THE DATA

On December 1, 2011, an adult female *A. pantostictus* (SVL= 470 mm; tail length = 40 mm) collected in the city of São Paulo was brought to the Instituto Butantan. The snake was housed in terrarium and 12 days later the specimen laid 5 elongated eggs (Figure 1-A). Fernandes & Puerto (1993) and Cassimiro *et al.* (2002) reported, respectively, clutches with four and three eggs for *A. pantostictus*.

For this Butantan specimen of 2011 the clutch mass was 9.8 g and after oviposition the female weighted 19.6 g. Relative clutch mass (total clutch mass/mass after the snake oviposition) was 0.5. Egg length was 29.6 ± 1.07 mm and egg width was 9.4 ± 0.17 mm.

On May 30, 170 days after of the oviposition, two eggs hatched (males: SVL 140.0 mm, tail length 20.0 mm, weight 1.8 g and SVL 120.0, tail length 15.0, weight 1.5 g) (Figure 1-B,C,D) and four days later another egg hatched (female: SVL 130.0 mm, tail length 20.0 mm, weight 1.9 g).

The incubation period was considered long. Previous study with 11 different species of oviparous snakes (Colubridae and Dipsadidae), with eggs submitted to the same laboratory conditions at the Instituto Butantan (temperature, humidity, substrate) showed an incubation period ranging from 68-124 days

¹Laboratório de Herpetologia, Instituto Butantan, Av. Dr. Vital Brazil, 1500, CEP 05503-900, São Paulo, SP silviacardoso@butantan.gov.br

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(Maia *et al.*, 2011). As for the fecundity of *Atractus*, considered low, this may be related to the small body size of females and to the fossorial habits of this snake (Shine, 1984).

The *A. pantostictus* hatchlings reported here were kept in a terrarium containing soil and the moss *Sphagnum* as substrate. Soon after birth the newborns buried themselves and remained under the substrate. The snakes have been fed on earthworms (Figure 1-E).

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FIGURES



A



B



C



D



E

Figure 1. *Atractus pantostictus*: eggs and hatchlings (A-D) and newborn eating earthworm (E).