

Hatching neonates of *Sibon annulatus* (Günther, 1872) in a *Manicaria* swamp forest, Costa Rica

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The genus *Sibon* is one of four groups of neotropical snake specialized for foraging on snails, slugs, and other soft bodies invertebrates (Savage, 2002). *Sibon annulatus* is a small nocturnal and arboreal species found in Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. In Costa Rica *S. annulatus* inhabits undisturbed Atlantic lowland wet and moist forests, premontane wet forest, and rainforests. Although locally common in some patches of forest, *S. annulatus* is a seldom seen snake that inhabits deep forest (Leenders, 2001; Savage, 2002).

On 10/03/2004 we found two eggs on the forest floor of a small volcanic uplift inside a *Manicaria* swamp forest at Caño Palma Biological Station, Tortuguero, Limón Province (Lewis et al., 2010). We took the eggs back to a terrarium at the biological station to later determine their identity. Egg #1 was 23.1 mm and egg #2 was 26.7 mm in length. Both eggs hatched on 13/03/2004. The hatchlings were identified as *Sibon annulatus*. The details of each hatchling were as follows:

Hatchling #1: SVL: 135 mm, tail: 68 mm, body height: 2.3 mm, body width: 1.8 mm, weight: 0.9 g. Dull in colour, dorsal and lateral bands narrower than in hatchling #2 and paler. Dorsal bands occasionally joining lateral bands.

Hatchling #2: SVL: 120 mm, tail: 60 mm, body height: 2.7 mm, body width: 1.6 mm, weight: 0.7 g. Dorsal bands occasionally joining lateral bands. Dorsal and lateral bands wider and darker than hatchling #2. Dorsal bands joining lateral bands almost for entire length of body.

Although Guyer and Donnelly (2005) presumed *S. annulatus* to be an egg-layer, to the best of our knowledge this is the first reported case of eggs and hatchlings for *S. annulatus*. Egg-laying has been reported for only a handful of *Sibon* species (Kofron, 1987; Campbell, 1998; McCoy, 1990; Lewis, 2009). All reported clutch sizes of *Sibon* spp. range from 2–9 eggs. Solórzano

(2005) reported that *S. annulatus* is oviparous with eggs being laid in May and neonates occurring in July and August, although the author does not specify records or references. It is interesting that egg-laying by *Sibon* spp. in the region is conclusively recorded from both drier and wetter seasons (see also Lewis, 2009), as March is a drier period for the Tortuguero region, and Caño Palma Biological Station receives most of its rainfall around November to February. Snake activity in the region is higher during the rainy season (Lewis and Grant, pers. obs.). This may indicate that mating by *Sibon* spp. takes place throughout the year, although more information on gestation and reproduction in the genus would be needed to reveal this.

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