

## Editor's Note

Readers will note- hopefully with a delighted yell- that Hamadryad will now triple as the mouthpiece of the IUCN/SSC's Snake Group. The Chairman of the Group (MSP's Director) has been desperately trying to produce an independent newsletter, but current postage rates had him scuttling to Hamadryad for help.

NOTESssssssssssss<sup>s</sup>

## Handbag farming

Alistair Grahame ("Eyelids of Morning") is going into the crocodile farming business in Australia and writes, "Well you can place your order now. The minister concerned has just given me the nod that makes me OZ's first out and out handbag rancher..."

## Chinese alligators

Myrna Watanabe is through with a preliminary survey of A. sinensis in Xuancheng Province and its environs in China. She estimates a population of 300-500 animals for Xuancheng; bottom heavy with few adults and mostly juveniles. There is apparently little habitat left: "The animals live in small (from 20m x 20m) pools on intensively farmed communes with dense human populations or, in even more marginal habitat, in reservoirs on rice farms at elevations less than 100 m above sea level". Alligators are often caught on agricultural lands and brought to a recently started alligator farm whose facilities are badly strained as the influx of eggs and animals has far exceeded their expectations.

## Breeding loan

The Reptile Breeding Foundation in Ontario, Canada, is sending its two 11 and 12 year old male gharial to the Atlanta Zoo (which has 2 females) on a breeding loan. T A Huff, Director of the RBF, writes about sexing: "These animals were sexed by manual probing with a finger. We determined them to be males by the presence of a hard rather large protrusion from the anterior wall of the cloaca, which we assumed to be a penis. In both animals, this protrusion was at least 1½ inches in length and from the data which we have indicates a male. We are under the belief that the clitoris of the female is not as rigid, more fleshy, and ½ inch or less in length".

## Diet of V. salvator

On 30-10-81 the adult male water monitor lizard Varanus salvator at the Snake Park was seen eating an average sized flap-shell turtle Lissemys p. punctata.

## Sea turtles fenced off

During his recent survey on the Kerala coast Satish Bhaskar found that over a third of that states coastline is now closed to nesting turtles because of embankments built to prevent erosion.