

OCCURRENCE OF THE RINGED SNAKE OF PECULIAR SHAPE AND DESIGNS ALONG THE UPPER TISZA

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On 20 April 1966, I caught a 44 cm long young male ringed snake (*Natrix natrix* L.) at Tiszahát, on the confines of the village Lónya, in a clearing of a young deciduous forest.

The shape, colour, and designs of that snake are showing a considerable difference from those of ringed snake individuals living in large numbers in this country and at Tiszahát, as well. It reminds us somewhat of the common viper (*Vipera berus* L.) living similarly in this region.

Its dark, steel-bluish dorsal side is decorated along the spine with a black band full of windings and turnings, and its side with a black spot series arranged in a changing order. The throat and the cervical zone are bone-white. The ventralia and subcaudalia are dark bluish-black ones and their edge is not decorated with similar clear inlaid pieces. The abdominal side of this individual does not show, therefore, the "piano-row of keys" design characteristic of a ringed snake. The subcaudalia are black.

Its face nose (nasal, resp. prefrontal area) is strikingly shorter than that of a typical ringed snake, the palpebral apertures are larger, too, and its brownish-yellow iris is broken through by a round pupil. Its dentition is characteristic of *natrix*. For a time, I held the animal captive and fed it with young *Ranae esculentae*. It ate on 10 September 1966 three, on 30 September three, on 5 October three, young edible frogs on 7 October and on 23 October one of them, each.

On 13 September 1966 it cast a 58 cm long normal skin and on 3 November a 16 cm one. It could be established that, in the time of its captivity, its colour and design did not change. After six years, moistening a little the skin cast and preserved in a dried state, the zigzagged darkish design of the dorsal line came again to sight, at any rate, being of very pale colour.

On 7 January 1967, after having hibernated, at a supervision of its container it was found dead.