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NOTES ON REPRODUCTION IN CAPTIVE *MENETIA GREYII* (LACERTILIA: SCINCIDAE)

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Menetia greyii Gray is a common, litter-foraging lizard with a distribution over much of Australia. Even so, very few published data are available concerning its reproductive biology. Although the incubation periods recorded here were obtained under laboratory conditions and may not be consistent with those in the field, all other measurements should be typical. Measurements of weight were achieved using balance-scales calibrated in 0.1 grain (= .0065 gram).

On 14 December 1982 a gravid female (SVL = 32mm; weight immediately following laying = .487gm) was collected at Lort River, W.A. (33°45'S, 121°15'E) and retained until oviposition was observed on 23 December. The clutch consisted of 3 eggs of varied size and weight (see Table 1). I have recorded two clutches of 2 eggs, and a field deposition site containing 4 eggs; Jenkins and Bartell (1980) recorded four clutches of 3 eggs in the A.C.T. Therefore, 2 or 3 eggs probably constitute a typical clutch for this species. The 4 eggs uncovered in the field may be the result of two females utilizing the one site.

To avoid desiccation, the eggs were placed in a plastic container on dampened vermiculite immediately after weighing and measuring. To allow observation with minimum disturbance, 'cling wrap' was pulled tight over the top of the container. This complete unit was then placed inside an aquarium with a 60 watt incandescent lamp where temperature was monitored with a thermometer and regulated with a room-airconditioner thermostat at 28° C ± 4°.

On 24 December it was evident by their increase in breadth that all 3 eggs had absorbed moisture and were therefore fertile (my previous experience at laboratory incubation showed that infertile eggs are subject to desiccation immediately after laying). On 27 January Egg B appeared badly desiccated but was not removed. It hatched after 46 days' incubation followed five hours later by Egg C. Egg A hatched after 49 days' incubation.

Hatchlings were weighed and measured as soon as they cleared the egg-case (see Table 1). Their colour and pattern was the same as in adults.

	EGG			HATCHLING		
	Size (mm)	Weight (gms)	Date Hatched	S.V.L. (mm)	Total Length	Weight (gms)
A	8 x 4	.065	10-2-83	15	31	.049
B	7 x 4	.056	7-2-83	13	28	.033
C	7 x 5	.078	7-2-83	16	36	.072

Table 1. Egg and hatchling data for captive *Menetia greyii.*

In 1981/82 two eggs from this species were successfully incubated without an artificial heat source; these took 104 days to hatch (24/11/81 - 7/3/82). The estimated full-term mean temperature during this period was 19.6° C (range = 12° - 39°) compared to 28° (range = 24° - 32°) for the present study. Between 5 and 12 February 1983 I observed in the field many small *Menetia greyii* similar in size to the hatchlings recorded here, suggesting that there is a uniform oviposition time throughout the population in this area, and that the deposition sites selected by gravid females have similar temperature conditions to those used in the present study.

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REFERENCE

JENKINS, R. and BARTELL, R. 1980. *Reptiles of the Australian High Country.* Inkarta Press, Melbourne.