

AN AGGREGATION OF EASTERN BROWN SNAKES (*PSEUDONAJA TEXTILIS*)

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Aggregations in the wild have been documented for a number of species of Australian snake. A number of cases and earlier literature references are documented by Hoser (1980). Other documented cases of aggregation in Australian snakes include:

Vandermark (1989), Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota*)

Worrell (1970), Arafura File Snake (*Acrochordus arafuræ*)

Fyfe and Booth (1984), Little Whip Snake (*Unechis flagellum*)

Specific cases of "pairing behaviour" in wild specimens of 12 species of Australian snake are described by Hoser (1990), who also provides a (then) up to date bibliography of documented aggregation cases in Australian snakes.

Described here is a previously unrecorded aggregation of Eastern Brown Snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) in southern Victoria.

During the last week of July 1991, (mid winter) Mr Reeve of Melton was working during the day at Melton Airport about 40km west of Melbourne city (GPO). The weather at the time was dry, windy and overcast. He was moving dirt to dig a trench as a water channel along the fence line. The area in question was a grassy paddock with recently cut grass and a few scattered trees. The site in question was adjacent to a water channel. A backhoe was being used at the time.

When digging up dirt beneath long dead grass a "nest" of 6 adult (between 1.2 and 2 metres) Eastern Brown Snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) were disturbed. All were described as being fairly torpid and as resting in a hollowed out area in a cluster. No passage to the surface was noticed.

The six snakes were all killed when discovered. Eastern Brown Snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) are common in the area.

REFERENCES

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- Vandermark, J. (1989), Communal mating of Diamond Pythons, *ACT Herpetological Association Newsletter*, March, pp.10-12.
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