

## Big Brown Snakes – The Cynic Speaks.

I read the piece by John Higgins former editor of the *Maryborough Advertiser* in the last issue of *The Crocodilian* 2 (7) 2000 about large Brown Snakes from his local area in Western Victoria.

I just had to cringe as I read of the 'formal records' of two specimens measuring 11.5 and 9.5 feet.

Now at this stage I hate to call anyone a liar, but do ask, "please explain".

What exactly are these 'formal records'? and: Are these allegedly HUGE specimens lodged in a public museum so that skeptics like myself can see them?

My understanding is that the answer to the latter question is a resounding "no".

As for the first question, I'll leave that as a blank and add a third question: How accurate or reliable are these so-called 'formal records'?

Sounds to me a bit like the police claiming corruption doesn't exist!

That's the official line and we all know what to make of that!

And yes, it all sounds a bit like the 27 foot Scrub Python story or the 35 foot Retic.

At this stage there is no evidence that either exists – but yes, books still publish both statements as proven "fact" and/or 'formal records'.

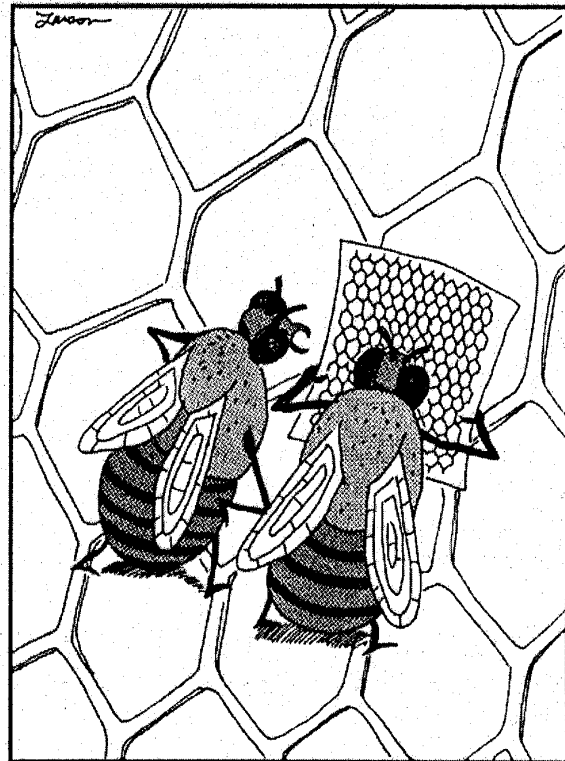
While it would be reckless to discount any possibilities within the realms of zoology, I suggest that in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary, all claims of 11.5 and 9.5 feet 'Brown Snakes' of the family Elapidae from anywhere in Victoria be discounted as mere flights of fantasy or fiction.

For that matter, I doubt that these alleged records could even be attributed to Carpet Pythons (*Morelia*) and know of none from this state ever getting anywhere near 11 feet!

However in fairness to Higgins, he does make one statement I agree with. That is that brown coloured elapids in Australasia are in desperate need of a major taxonomic review.

That one genus (*Pailsus*) and more than one species (so far only known from Australia and Islands to the north, including New Guinea, with one species described as recently as at end 2000) can be overlooked by science until the late 1990's is testament to the above assertion.

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"Face it, Fred—you're lost!"

## POLITICALLY CORRECT HUMOR

He does not have a beer gut;  
he develops a Liquid Grain Storage Facility.  
He is not quiet;  
he is a Conversational Minimalist.  
He does not get lost all the time;  
he discovers Alternative Destinations.  
You do not buy him a drink;  
you initiate an Alcohol-For-Conversation Exchange.  
He does not fart and belch;  
he is Gastronomically Expressive.  
He is not a redneck;  
he is a Genetically-Related American.  
He is not a cradle robber;  
he prefers Generationally Differential Relationships.  
He does not have a rich daddy;  
he is a Recipient Of Parental Asset Infusion.  
He does not hog the blankets;  
he is Thermally Unappreciative.  
He is not a male chauvinist pig;  
he has Swine Empathy.  
He is not afraid of commitment;  
he is Monogamously Challenged

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Author: Raymond Hoser

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There was recently an article in the journal of the Victorian Association of Amateur Herpetologists (VAAH) (*Crocodilian*) by John Higgins, former editor of the *Maryborough Advertiser*.

In that issue ( 2 (7) 1999), he spoke about large Brown Snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) from his local area in Western Victoria.

I replied with my own comments on the matter in the same publication in February 2000 (2(8):9)

Due to the obvious proximity of Maryborough to Bendigo, I thought it'd be worth my while to repeat a few of my same comments here in *Whirrakee* for the benefit of this club.

In Higgins' article he mentioned 'formal records' of two specimens measuring 11.5 and 9.5 feet.

As I read his piece I just had to cringe as I read of the 'formal records' of two specimens.

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While it would be reckless to discount any possibilities within the realms of zoology, I suggest that in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary, all claims of 11.5 and 9.5 feet 'Brown Snakes' of the family Elapidae from anywhere in Victoria (including Bendigo) be discounted as mere flights of fantasy or fiction.

For that matter, I doubt that these alleged records could even be attributed to Carpet Pythons (*Morelia*) and know of none from this state ever getting anywhere near 11 feet!

However in fairness to Higgins, he does make one statement I agree with. That is that brown coloured elapids in Australasia are in desperate need of a major taxonomic review.

That one genus (*Pailsus*) and more than one species (so far only known from Australia and Islands to the north, including New Guinea, with one species described as recently as at end 2000, namely *P. rossignolii* from Irian Jaya) can be overlooked by science until the late 1990's is testament to the above assertion.

And yes, at the present time I am still looking further into the relationships and taxonomy of the various known and possibly unknown forms of the King Brown Snake (*Cannia* (AKA *Pseudechis*) *australis*), known from most parts of Australia (excluding Victoria, although it may occur in the far north-west).

However in the event of any record-breaking or unusual "Brown Snakes" being found in the Bendigo area, the local people are fortunate in that they have immediate access to some very talented herpetologists. Including Dale Gibbons and Darren Green (both of whom are members of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club) as well as several others.

And then again, if any record-breaking Brown Snakes are actually found in the area, I'd also suggest lodging the snakes with John Coventry, who is the reptile curator at the National Museum in Melbourne.

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