

Session III – Connecting People and the Ecosystems That Support Them
3:40 PM

An Investigation of Production Models and Characteristics of Growth and Reproductivity of Bocourts Water Snake (*Enhydris bocourti*) in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam

Nguyen Van Thu

Department of Animal Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture and Applied Biology, Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam, Email: nvthu@ctu.edu.vn

Abstract

To evaluate the current production, characteristics of growth and reproductivity of Bocourts water snake (*Enhydris bocourti*) in the Mekong delta (MD) of Vietnam, an investigation of different production models, feeds and feeding, body size, live weight (LW) and reproduction of the snakes at different ages in Hau Giang, Dong Thap, Can Tho, Soc Trang and Vinh Long provinces was implemented.

The results received from 50 farms in the Mekong delta indicated that the production of Bocourti's water snake in the MD was mainly used for meat and breeding. There were three main models of production which were in buckets, cement containers and ponds. The production of snakes in ponds was better in economic return, but required much more financial investment. Main feed sources for snakes were cat fishes, frogs, eels, etc. The snake densities for rearing were highly variable and they were from 1 to 14 snakes/m². The male and female ratio for reproduction was from 1:1 to 1:2, and that depended on different models of production. The live weight (LW) of snakes from birth to 1 week of age was 14.4±0.16g. This was 397±11.3g from 4 to 6 months of age. From 6 months of age they were sold for meat production. The LW from 24 to 36 months of age was of 1408±11.2g. The maturity of snakes for reproduction was 12 months for males (650±0.21g LW) and 12.4 months for females (675±14.1g LW). The mating season in every year is mainly from June to September and the season for giving birth from March to July of the Lunar calendar. Their pregnant period was from 8.5 to 9 months. Litter size was from 6 to 12, 8-18 and 10-20 snakes for the first, second and third litter, respectively. The performance of snakes reared in Hau Giang and Vinh Long provinces were better than others. The snake rearing techniques in the MD were primitive following producers' experiences and application of appropriate techniques for the production was still limited. It was necessary to have programs supporting the Bocourts water snake production in this delta in terms of techniques, funds and strategies for increasing farmers' income and snake conservation.