Diamond Python Care

Basic diamond python care and information.

By Stan Chiras

Maligned by some, misunderstood by even more, Australia's most stunning python makes not only a great pet snake but a wonderful breeder as well. The diamond python is just plain misunderstood, and if not for the breeding efforts of a dozen or so dedicated individuals, to this day we would be shying away from keeping them. I say this because almost half of the phone calls I get about diamond pythons start out the same way: "Isn't it true that they don't live very long, and that they die from bone deficiencies?"
Diamond pythons are cold-weather pythons — as evidenced by their dark coloration an adaptation of animals in colder climates, enabling them to absorb heat from the sun quickly and efficiently.
Photography by Stan Chiras

Obviously, if some of us have great success with diamond pythons, then it can be done-and believe me, it's not difficult. The problem is in overcoming basic flaws in what used to be common husbandry practices. I've said this a hundred times if I've said it once: Diamond pythons are not carpet pythons or reticulated pythons, and you can't keep them the same as most other pythons (more on this later).

Diamond pythons are cold-weather pythons, as evidenced by their dark coloration-an adaptation of animals in colder climates, enabling them to absorb heat from the sun quickly and efficiently. That doesn't mean you have to freeze their tails off, though. Found exclusively in southeast Australia, the weather gets downright cold during the winter months (our Northern Hemisphere summer months) and these snakes are accustomed to hibernating. The colder the winter, the more complete their hibernation. During periods of mild winter weather, diamond pythons are frequently seen basking on rock ledges, apparently attempting to gain whatever solar radiation they can. Messing with partial hibernation is a bit risky in captivity.

Studies of radio telemetry-equipped diamond pythons by University of Sydney's David Slip and Richard Shine have revealed interesting behavior, primarily that of extensive summer/ winter ranging. Males were found to follow females extensively during the winter months and typically a "ready" female had several males nearby. Oddly, and unlike their close relative the carpet python, male diamonds do not seem to engage in male combat during the mating season. Perhaps nature programmed these cold-weather serpents to save their limited winter energy for breeding, and survival of the fittest is defined as those with the energy to find females more than males who are capable of winning battles. Reports of diamond pythons combating in the wild, and in captivity, simply do not exist. (This isn't to imply that one needs only one male for a successful captive breeding program, because wild and captive observations prove that females take more than one mate at a time, and while one waits his turn nearby, another may actively copulate with the female.)

Diamond pythons are medium-sized when compared to carpet pythons. While exceptions do exist, adult females generally attain an adult length of 6 1/2 to 7 feet, while most males average about a foot shorter. One of my best ever breeding males never got an inch over 4 1/2 feet his entire life.

Their color and pattern are somewhat variable, ranging from black and white to black and gold. The latter variation is highly sought by collectors for its obvious beauty. To breeders, a diamond python's pattern is its true mark of excellence. The spots, or rosettes, ideally should be small, measured in scales and not interconnected. Ideally, rosettes should be between three to seven scales across. The perfect diamond has evenly spaced, small rosettes. Those with connected rosettes, or large blotches instead of small rosettes, are considered to be less attractive by diamond python aficionados. Those with significant variations from this theme are often referred to as intergrades-which occur naturally where the diamond python range extends north and west into the carpet python's range. Commercially offered diamond pythons are sometimes suspect because of the common practice of cross breeding the very beautiful, but mongrel, diamond x carpet hybrid.

Let's have a look into the care, feeding and breeding of the fantastic diamond python. I first started working with them in the mid-70s, when information was sadly lacking. By implementing care techniques congruent with the animals' natural habitat, I was able to successfully breed them by the late 70s, and it has become easier with each passing year. When the profiteer breeders got involved and began introducing speed-raising techniques into the picture, the diamond python started getting its bum rap. If you like diamond pythons for what they are-a true cold-weather python-you'll have absolutely no trouble keeping, and even breeding them successfully.

Basic Facts

Cold-weather animals adapt to their environment specifically. Expecting them to survive if kept in captivity differently is a chancy endeavor at best. While you might be able to keep them alive, keeping them healthy is another story altogether.

Here is the problem. Diamond pythons migrate from low, warm environments to higher, cooler winter quarters-usually along the sun-exposed faces of rocky hillsides and cliffs. Diamonds evolved into this behavioral adaptation to the environment over millions of years. Taking a captive-bred animal and changing its evolutionary needs is a sure-fire prescription for trouble. This is a fancy way of saying that you can't keep a polar bear in a South American rain forest any more than a tapir could be expected to survive in the Yukon Territory. Even our own species, humankind, if it weren't for our expertise at adaptation, would survive only briefly without technological innovations (like clothing) in places like the desert or the far north. Expecting diamond pythons to do well when kept like carpet pythons, boa constrictors or Burmese pythons is sheer lunacy. Long ago we learned that even tricolor kingsnakes fare better if hibernated each year.

Diamonds have evolved and adapted to the conditions of southeast Australia, and as keepers we must adhere to the rules established by nature for these pythons. While many snakes have been kept in conditions differing from their natural environment, this is one that requires certain adherence to the rules of nature.

Caging

Diamond pythons are quite arboreal, especially as youngsters. Typically, they are raised in flat-bottomed cages with virtually no limbs. This isn't best for the snakes, and to this day some of my breeders almost never leave their limbs for the bottom of the cage. One male in particular almost never leaves his branches, except to defecate. Others, especially the large females, spend more time on the cage floor, in hide boxes. Nevertheless, providing diamonds with limbs and shelves for basking is a good idea. They will use them a lot, and especially the young, which seem to feel more secure in the elevated areas.

I prefer to keep my diamond pythons in fairly large cages, usually 6 to 8 feet long by 28 inches wide by 24 to 42 inches tall. They are very active, and if given enough room will exercise on a regular basis. One common syndrome of diamonds is obesity and resultant flaccid muscular development. An active snake by nature, it stands to reason that this activity (exercise) should be provided in captivity.

Since nobody makes a hide box of adequate size for diamond pythons, I usually provide them with cork bark hiding places. While they love to hide, typically they'll pose as sentries, ready just inside the hide box entrance for any passing food item. It seems an obvious read that diamonds are opportunistic feeders, as my careless hands can attest. Picking up cage litter or the water bowl in the vicinity of the hide box opening often results in a feeding stab-by no means an act of aggression toward the keeper, but merely an opportunistic snake's response to a warm body within striking range!

This aggressive, ever-ready feeding response has lead many keepers to overfeed their diamond pythons. Thinking they always want to and (mistakenly) need to feed, the well meaning but somewhat ignorant keeper obliges and ends up overfeeding the poor snake, leading to obesity and unavoidable deleterious health hazards. I can't say it any other way, or ever enough: Do not feed diamonds at the same rate as most other pythons. Mine get fed about six months out of the year, and oftentimes less than 10 regular-sized meals during that time. They always seem hungry, but that's the nature of an opportunistic feeder. Believe me, they don't need a lot of food! A diamond python, whether young or old, should be a lean, muscular, highly alert animal that is always wishing it had more to eat. Since nature rarely provides too much food, wild diamonds simply spend their lives hungry. Of all the snakes I've caught in the wild, from rattlesnakes to tricolors, to boas, pythons and anacondas, I've never caught or even seen a fat snake. So why should we overfeed them in captivity?

The somewhat ingrained adage that you have to get your diamond pythons, especially females, fat for breeding does not apply to this particular species. It has been my experience that most herps don't need to be fat, but merely healthy and not skinny to successfully reproduce.

Temperature

Temperature has been a fairly controversial topic among diamond python keepers. I first bred diamonds back in the mid-1970s when it had never been done before anywhere, to the best of my knowledge. After communicating with people in Australia, it became evident that this black snake lived in a place where basking and heat retention were fairly important to its health. While it gets hot as Hades during summer, diamonds manage to keep themselves within reasonable temperature limits throughout the year, save the winter hibernation period.

Diamond pythons do well if kept in the low-to-mid-80s (Fahrenheit) (day) to high 70s (night) during 3/4 of the year. The key

to not only breeding, but to successfully maintaining healthy diamonds is to give them time off each year to duplicate the natural seasonal cycles these wonderful snakes have evolved to biologically expect from nature.

Cooling theories vary considerably. After experimenting for many years and experiencing too many snakes with respiratory problems after gradual entry and emergence from artificial hibernation, I resorted to a sudden plunge into and out of this critical time period to (1) properly and safely hibernate my animals, and (2) create the conditions necessary for successful reproduction. Since reproduction depends on actual breeding behavior (courting and copulation) and viable sperm and eggs (spermatogenesis and oogenesis), just getting your snakes into and out of hibernation isn't necessarily enough. Achieving the proper temperature and humidity parameters is also necessary.

Nature operates under relatively loose guidelines in regard to the diamond pythons' winter. She might throw an extremely harsh winter, or conversely a wonderfully mild winter at her charges, at the whim of El Nino or whatever contrivance she elects to utilize. Likewise, she might impose severe drought on southeastern Australia and make conditions for growth or reproductive cycling difficult on the local herpetofauna.

We can improve these conditions in captivity. We can always, with a little care, make sure our animals are adequately fed and sufficiently thermoregulated and conditioned. While nature might throw a particularly cold period of days at the snakes, we can't necessarily afford the same carelessness. A wild diamond might simply retreat farther underground, or even come out to bask in the warm sun during such a time, but nature has designed into her babies ways of dealing with such extremes. It is far more difficult to do so in captivity, or at least more difficult to understand all the variables at work during such a time.

What I'm leading up to is the actual procedure I'd recommend during the diamond python's captive maintained cold period-a time, as previously indicated which is vitally important to the animal's health and well being. Many keepers have s-l-o-w-l-y dropped their animals into the cold period. In a similar fashion, some other keepers offer their pythons a spot to get warm during the day, with nighttime lows still imposed on the animals. This has proven to be a dangerous procedure in my personal experience, one that oftentimes leads to respiratory complications. Here's how it goes: the python, and its ever-present, noncolonized, potentially non-pathogenic bacteria normally get along just fine-much the same way as you and I live with bacteria in our systems everyday-until we become highly stressed and our immune systems compromised.

The daily passage through high and low temperatures (when often a captive python's inner body temperature may not achieve the cage's high temp) will stress the immune system and its ability to ward off normal bacterial fauna from proliferating to pathogenic levels. The result is often respiratory infection that goes unnoticed until the spring warming period, at which time the snake is often so infected that swift death results.

The problem is simple enough to avoid by taking another route. I generally feed my snakes their last meal by November 1, and by Thanksgiving, while I'm consuming my last turkey of the year, their gastrointestinal tracts are cleaned out completely. This way, they have a clean bill of health heading into the cooling chamber and a long winter's rest, which they need so much. They really do.

During November, lower the temperatures a little, perhaps to the middle 70s at night and low 80s during the day. In nature, we've all seen snakes in North America basking during that mild Indian summer respite from fall's oncoming siege into winter, but we can dispense with that foolishness in captivity. Quite simply, the party is over when we say it is. No breaks, no mini vacations. Quit feeding, cool a little (enough to keep the snake's metabolism going well enough to empty the gut and ward off the bacteria), and Pow! It' s time to hibernate.

And I do mean hibernate. My diamond pythons spend the next three months in Styrofoam boxes in the cold garage, which ranges between 50 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit all winter long. Thermostatically controlled heaters keep it from getting too cold, and for the next few months my snakes lay coiled, in total darkness, undisturbed in silent, peaceful slumber. Their bacteria too are dormant, and together they ignore each other. It might sound crazy, but it makes sense. Think about it. Both snake, its metabolism and its potential pathogens, lie in a suspended state, neither having any effect on the other. Spring comes, I move the snakes back into their cages during the dark of night, and the next morning they are greeted by the rising sun through a room window and warm temperatures-just as though they had crawled from a burrow back into the warmer, lengthening days of spring. The snake quickly warms, and with that warming comes a full-strength immune system and a competent ability to resist bacterial infections. It is very rare that a diamond python, hibernated in this manner, becomes ill. After a week of enjoying the warmth and getting its body ready for action, feeding can resume.

If hibernated at a cold enough temperature, weight loss is very minimal because the diamond python's metabolism wasn't using up any of its reserves at the low temperature! A common mistake is to hibernate them too warm, where their metabolism uses up reserves. Wild pythons might be able to deal with those variables, but in captivity it's best to avoid the

situation. My diamonds typically come out of hibernation just like they went in: muscular and healthy. A meal or two and they're ready to breed.

Photoperiod
Light cycling, or photoperiod, is a major emphasis of many diamond python breeders. For the most part, the theory is of little use. Early failures with diamonds lead many herpers to believe they had special light-quality requirements. Actually, what they need are light periods that follow our four seasons, with short days of winter and long summer days. Special lights they do not need, although there's nothing wrong with using them. I use Vitalites or plant grow lights to help keep my cage plants thriving, but no cage light at all works just fine. Ambient light cycled to our North American seasonal day-night fluctuations are all the diamond python needs. It is highly unlikely that they absorb any ultraviolet radiation from the sun, as keepers sometimes hypothesize. Surely, though, in the wild they do need to get heat from the sun, a commodity that can easily be supplied in captivity through various artificial heat sources.

Give a diamond python a hot basking source and you'll have one happy snake. Keep its cage hot and you will do the poor animal a disservice. Like most herps, it's best to provide a temperature gradient in the cage, where the animal can select its own, preferred temperatures. That's why I like long, tall cages. It's easy to provide a hot basking site, with places for the snake to retreat to hold its warmth (like a cozy hide box, well insulated with bedding) or a spot where the snake can go to cool off if it so desires. Generally they prefer to simply coil tightly to retain their warmth close to the level achieved while basking.

Humidity
So much for temperature and light. Humidity and feeding are all that's left, so let's tackle humidity first. Diamond pythons don't come from particularly humid environs, but nevertheless keeping most pythons on the dry side can be hard on their respiratory systems. Living in Colorado, where the air is pretty dry, I've resorted to keeping live plants with wet pots and retaining pans in the cages, to provide the snakes with a wet spot if they so desire. Often I find my diamonds wound through pothos plants, enough evidence for me to think they like it. For most parts of the country, where humidity levels are naturally higher, this isn't a major concern. But remember: It's awful easy to apply artificial heat sources to a cage and end up making the internal cage environment a little too dry. Just adding a water bowl isn't necessarily the best way to humidify a cage or hydrate the snake. A nice wet spot oftentimes is just what the doctor ordered. Wet bedding increases the surface area many times over, and hence increases the humidity (evaporation) enough to benefit the animals.

A cat litter pan, filled with mulch or shavings kept very damp, works wonders. Occasionally, you'll find the snake burrowing through the wet medium. Sometimes they'll even bury themselves in it. If that's what they want, within limits, then that's fine with this keeper. For the most part, though, if the cage humidity is sufficient (40 to 70 percent), diamonds won't seek higher humidity sources.

Feeding
Overfeeding diamond pythons is one of my pet peeves. As noted earlier, overfeeding leads to health complications-not might lead to health complications-it leads to health complications (like dead snakes through the many risks of obesity). Rapid growth is not something diamond pythons experience in the wild, and in captivity, with a general reduction in exercise, it turns into a health detriment.

Diamond pythons take four to five years to reach maturity. Sure, it can be done in two, but you'll most likely have a pin headed snake with an obscenely obese, unhealthy body. It will have poor bone density, over taxed internal organs and a very limited potential for breeding or a long lifespan.

In the urgent rush to quickly reproduce the diamond python, usually to gain eagerly sought revenues (the wrong reason to keep any snake, if you ask me) many a snake keeper has rushed their diamond python to an early grave. Once again, you can do it with tri colors and some pythons, like Burmese, but you can't do it with the highly specialized, temperate diamond python. I'm currently raising some retics for a calico/albino/supertiger project and can't get over the almost supersonic growth rate of these animals. They grow in six months to sizes a diamond couldn't attain in three years! And they do it comfortably, with nothing but healthy, proportional development. So remember, diamond pythons are a horse of a different color when it comes to growth rates.

If your goal is to make a lot of money in a hurry, work with another animal. Diamond pythons are not your snake. But if you want to enjoy these fantastic snakes for what they are-beautiful serpents-and you're willing to take time and grow them slowly, then diamonds are a wonderful addition to any collection. They're active, alert, and quite friendly animals that will often grace you with the sight of themselves perched on the branches of their cages, instead of always hiding out of sight. That alone makes me love this snake above most others.

Breeding
Breeding diamond pythons is very simple. As mentioned earlier, I think I was the first person to breed them successfully in captivity, almost 23 years ago. After frustrating myself for a few years, I decided to study their environment a lot more, and came up with the outlines for feeding, temperature, humidity and photocycling indicated throughout this article. They are the rules of the road for diamond python breeding. Follow them and you should get fertile eggs. Violate them and you'll most likely get nothing. It's that simple.

In order to make it very simple, I'll outline what I do to breed diamond pythons. I'm sure these schedules can vary somewhat and still result in fertile breedings, as evidenced by breeders other than myself that usually have eggs up to two months earlier than me! But I do what works for me, and as long as my eggs are fertile, I stick with it.

Diamond pythons probably lay eggs every third year in the wild. It's most likely related to a female's ability to build body mass. Captive diamonds have done well for me by giving the female, no matter how good she looks, a year off between breedings. Those who have bred diamonds repeatedly, without time off, often lose their animals or go through years of non productivity-stark testament that the animal needs time off. Breed your female every year and you're asking for trouble.

So, my females get every other year off. If they look a little skinny, I'd gladly give them two years off, which I have only had to do once. Normally, with a regular feeding schedule, they're firm and healthy in 18 months, including a hibernation time in-between. As with most snakes, hibernation temperatures are necessary for production of the viable sperm in the male and ovum in the female.

Assume you have two perfectly healthy diamond pythons. The male should be at least four years old and 4 to 5 feet long. The female should be 5 years old and 6 to 7 feet long. Feed them sparingly, as discussed elsewhere in this article. Quit feeding them on November 1. Begin cooling their room on November 15. Allow the nighttime lows to reach the low 70s and the daytime highs to reach the low 80s. Then, just after Thanksgiving or by December 1, put the snakes into hibernation-cold turkey.

I use Styrofoam boxes filled with lots of aspen bedding and maintain the snakes in a room that is kept between 50 and 60 degrees. They're kept dark, quiet and cold for at least three months, with a few checks to make sure they're doing okay. At those temperatures they simply coil up and hibernate. They have no water (although each box has a litter-filled wet bowl to keep humidity at a moderate level), and their cages never need cleaning because their gastrointestinal tracts are empty and their metabolisms are in a suspended state. As mentioned earlier, while their immune systems are likewise shut down, so are the bacteria that might cause problems for animals kept at moderately higher temperatures. My personal experiences with "half temperature hibernations" have been that the snakes metabolize their reserves too rapidly, while susceptibility to disease rises dramatically. Those who are afraid to fully hibernate diamonds often will end up exposing their snakes to additional health risks, and ultimately end up taking more chances with the snakes' health than if they had hibernated them at colder temperatures. Hibernating pythons is a foreign concept to most keepers. In the case of this particular snake, common theory doesn't apply.

Remove the snakes from the hibernation boxes by early to mid March. I take my animals out at night, place them in the darkness of their cages, and leave them alone. The snakes will be between 50 to 60 degrees (Fahrenheit), and the room should be around 75 degrees, with a basking light coming on the next morning, which allows them to get as warm as they want. Red 250-watt heat lamps warm the basking area to around 100 degrees. At this temperature the snakes will bask for an hour or so and retreat to the hide box. After a week of this pattern, It's all right to raise the temperatures to the high 70s to low 80s at night, and the middle 80s during the day, with the basking area still available. As mentioned, it's important to make sure the snake can cool off if it wants, and to that end I always provide large cages with thermal gradients available for the animals. Typically, they can find places in their cages where the temperature is near 70 degrees, which they seem to prefer at certain times. Large, long cages with hot and cold ends are the best way to achieve these gradients.

Within a week to a month, after the female has had a small meal or two and shed, it's usually time for breeding. Quite often the male will begin pacing his cage, assumedly because he smells the pheromones of the female, who should be reproductively ready. I ultrasound my females at this time and usually their follicles are lined out and approximately just over 1 centimeter in diameter. Introduce the male to the female at this time. Introducing the female to the male oftentimes results in a female exploring the new cage while the male is frantically trying to breed. Introduce him to her, and he won't be very concerned with the new cage, believe me! Many of my cages have trap doors between the pairs, and I simply open it and the male quickly scoots over to the female.

Carpet pythons often exhibit combat behavior, which led many early diamond breeders to assume the same would be true of diamonds. To the best of my knowledge combating has never been observed in wild or captive diamonds. This isn't to

say that having two males in the cage is a good thing, for I have noticed more frequent breedings when two males are present. But actual combat simply doesn't seem to occur in this species. They're lovers, not fighters.

Breeding usually lasts four to six weeks, when the males lose interest in the females they should be separated. Shortly afterwards the males usually resume feeding, making their feeding year generally a May through October affair, one meal every few weeks. Keep them slim and a little hungry and you'll have healthy, active, virile breeder males. Fatten them if you prefer duds.

Females oftentimes feed right up to egg laying. I will let them feed, but reduce the meal size and frequency. If she's healthy she shouldn't need any food, but limited feeding doesn't hurt the egg production/fertility and it does seem to help the females recover after laying if they have been fed beforehand.

Approximately two months after breeding, and 21 to 28 days after shedding, the female will grace you with 15 to 30 eggs, although larger clutches have been recorded. My experience with many diamond breedings has been a maximum clutch size of 21, and the smallest being 11. I'd have to carefully inspect diamonds laying larger clutches, suspecting hybridization with the more prolific carpet python. Not being a fan of cross breeding, consider it fair warning that integration with carpet pythons makes anything but the most perfect specimens of diamond python suspect. Look for pure colors of gold, white, black and no browns, banding, patches, or striping. Perfect little rosettes with black and white, or black and gold colors usually assure you've got the real thing. It also helps to get your animals from a reputable breeder.

Their eggs will hatch like any python egg-high humidity and a temperature somewhere around 89 degrees Fahrenheit. Although I've never allowed a female to incubate the eggs herself, this year I have two females with which I intend to let nature take its course. It's fun to weigh eggs weekly and record their growth, but somehow I've come to feel it is the female's right to hatch her own eggs. We'll see how it goes.

Don't expect hatchlings to be beautiful. They're dirty and pale looking at birth, but within a few months their colors really emerge. And because they are programmed to know the cold season isn't far away, the neonates are voracious feeders. Unlike carpets, which can be finicky, diamonds usually accept small fuzzy mice eagerly. They grow very fast, and once again remember that it isn't in their best interest to let them do so. Feed the little buggers once a week, keeping them warm with a nice, moist place in the cage. Give them branches to climb on and you'll think they're tree snakes. When winter approaches, cool them for a couple months to the very low 70s at night and the middle 70s during the day. Don't feed them during this period.

When you resume normal feeding remember not to overfeed. They'll grow into healthy, normal snakes that will mature in four to five years and turn into fantastic pets or breeders. Commence normal hibernation with yearlings, and they'll be so perfectly cycled by the time they're adults that you'd have to run them over with a truck not to breed them.

Just remember, fat is dead to diamond pythons. Keep them muscular, active, and hungry and you'll end up with perfect specimens of this fantastic species.

Summary
Diamonds are beautiful and wonderful snakes. They must be kept in a specific manner, which isn't particularly difficult to accomplish unless you sweater box your animals and you can't subject individual species to appropriate environmental cycling. But even the babies do best if fed only eight or nine months of the year for the first year, and then put into the same total care regime as adults. The young are usually voracious feeders, and if kept just a little cool and off feed their first winter, they become even more voracious the following spring. After that, they slowly grow and mature into magnificent, healthy specimens in the hands of competent herpers.

Breeders have been lamenting about the decline of herp prices for a couple years now, and the diamond python is no exception. We've seen them dip from $2,500 each for hatchlings to sometimes as low as $1,000. If you're a hobby-oriented herper, like myself, it shouldn't matter. I'd work with diamonds if they were a $25 snake. Keep in mind that in the future, only the best animals will command respectable prices, so keep your stock pure. Avoid hybrids at all costs. And if the price gets too low for the commercial breeders to consider it worthwhile, prices will eventually swing in the opposite direction as less diamonds are supplied to the market. Regardless, it is a fantastic, medium-sized python that fits well into just about any collection. Just having beautiful diamonds in your collection is worth the price of admission, if you really like snakes.

The misinformation regarding this species has been a tragic product of irresponsible keepers who didn't bother to find out how to maintain them successfully. I and many others have proven them ever-so-wrong in their almost universal condemnation of the diamond python. If you're willing to play by the diamond's rules, you can assure their health and

reproductive viability in any collection. Few snakes stir me the way a solid, slim, mature adult diamond python does.

They are beautiful and interesting snakes. With a little common sense and a healthy dose of restraint, they will reward you with two decades of fascination, and if you want, lots of nice, ivory-colored eggs.