



OBTAINING A REPTILE

Decisions...

First thing is to decide what sort of reptile you want to keep and find out what you are letting yourself in for. Get hold of John Weigel's book *Care of Australian Reptiles in Captivity*. This sets out the housing, heating, lighting, and feeding requirements for a lot of the Australian reptiles. If you have difficulty obtaining this book contact the Herp Shop (website www.herpshop.com.au phone 03 9363 6841) There are also booklets available on keeping Blue-tongue lizards, Shingleback lizards, Bearded Dragons, Long-necked turtles, Short-necked turtles and Carpet pythons. These are available from Australian Reptile Keeper Publications (e-mail reptiles@netcom.net.au or website www.reptilepublications.com.au).

Difficulties...

It is illegal for reptiles to be sold in pet shops in NSW, or for the private sale of reptiles to be advertised. Because of this they are harder to obtain as pets than birds & mammals. The availability of animals fluctuates but is highest in summer & autumn when newly hatched animals become available.

Solutions...

1. Be patient! (this can be hard).
2. Join a herpetological society...this is where members who have successfully bred animals, make their surplus stock available.
3. At the Australian Herpetological Society we:
 - have a 'for transfer' board at meetings where members can list surplus animals or animals wanted;
 - put details from the 'for transfer' board in our quarterly newsletter;
 - run a register of excess & wanted animals...ring Greg Wassell on 0414 990 810 to be included on this... he can match buyers & sellers;
 - have members with years of experience on keeping, breeding, and treating reptiles, who are happy to share their wisdom.
4. Make sure you have all the caging and other facilities in place before you get your animal. And make sure you have your licence (from the National Parks and Wildlife Service in NSW). You cannot obtain an animal without one.
5. Talk to people who have kept the reptile you want to keep, and find out how to handle the animal and any special requirements it may have.

Cost...

How much will your reptile cost? There are no fixed prices in NSW for reptiles and it will depend on how much the breeder feels is reasonable to recover expenses and other costs, whether there is a demand or an over supply, and the age of the animal. Make enquiries from people at a herpetological society meeting to get an idea of the price range, and don't rush in and buy the first one you come across. Remember, be patient.