

Hardy (Biotropica 26:198-213, 1994) when dealing with the bites of *Bothrops asper*. Hardy also recommends intramuscular injection of antivenin if four conditions are fulfilled, "the bite is inflicted by a *B. asper* over 1m in length; there are signs and symptoms of envenomation (pain, swelling, vomiting, hypotension); evacuation time is more than 4 hr; and there is no known allergy to horse dander or serum."

Neither Boos nor Hardy seems to be aware of the reports indicating that vitamin C is a good treatment (Irwin Stone, *The Healing Factor*; vitamin C against Disease. Perigee Books, New York, 1972). A Dr. J. H. Perdomo in Colombia in 1947 claimed a "very favorable response" in three victims to 2g of ascorbic acid injected intravenously every three hours. Also, Dr. F. K. Klenner "not only successfully treated snake bite in man megascorbically, but also in dogs..." These statements deserve to be checked. If verified, ascorbic acid taken by mouth could become the easiest first-aid treatment for snake bite.

Two short appendices, a glossary of technical terms, 28 pages of references and an index of names complete the book. There are a few typographical errors, all but one of which should not trouble the reader. The exception is a reference-(Hall *et al.* 2000) that occurs at the bottom of page 33. Boos has told me that this should read (Lall *et al.* 2000) instead.

All in all, this is a worthy addition to the growing list of books on the flora and fauna of our two islands. I hope that the author succeeds in his stated aims of stimulating those already interested in snakes and drawing into this fold those on the fringes who still respond to them with fear or aversion. He has promised us two more books, one on lizards and one on amphibians. We look forward to these.

**Victor C. Quesnel**

---

### **Reptiles and Amphibians of the Eastern Caribbean.**

Anita Malhotra and Roger Thorpe  
Macmillan Education, London and Oxford. 1999.

This booklet (134 pages) is a welcome addition to the Macmillan Caribbean Pocket Natural History Series of books covering different aspects of the natural history of the Eastern Caribbean.

From the island of Sombbrero in the north to Grenada in the south, the Amphibians consisting of the frogs and toads, and the Reptiles, consisting of the marine turtles, terrapins, tortoises, crocodylians, lizards and snakes, are described. There are many beautiful colour photos to illustrate typical members of each group, with some habitat photos thrown in to enliven the text for those who may be a little off-put by the pictures of animals that are not usually at the top of the like-lists of readers.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, which include a good bibliography and a comprehensive index to both the common and scientific names. What is even more useful to the user is an island checklist where one can tell, at a glance, which species are found on every individual island.

The island of Dominica is singled out in a special chapter to illustrate a natural reptile and amphibian community, with less space being given to the other islands in the area covered.

The photos, mostly of the *Anolis* lizards, which are the most conspicuous reptiles on most islands, are so well composed and colourful that it leaves the reader wishing that every species of reptile on this fascinating chain of islands could have been illustrated in a similar manner.

In these days with the degradation of so much habitat, worldwide, the chapter on conservation is a welcome plea for islands that have lost so much of their fauna already.

A glossary leads the uninitiated through the more technical terms of study of the herpetofauna, and the book as a whole has a nice heft to it, as it can slip easily into a pocket or back pack.

To many a visitor and resident of the islands, the shrill cries in the night of the teeming tree frogs will not seem so mysterious, as we can accurately identify the hidden little singers with a quick reference to this wonderful little book.

**Hans E. A. Boos**