

- Silva Haad, J. 1982 (1980-81). Accidentes humanos por las serpientes de los géneros *Bothrops* y *Lachesis*. Mem. Inst. Butantan 44/45:403-423.
- Silveira Bueno, F. da. 1986. Vocabulário tupi-guarani Português (4a edição). São Paulo: Editora Brasiliavros.
- Soares, M. R., A. L. Oliveira-Carvalho, L. S. Wermelinger, R. B. Zingali, P. L. Ho, I. de L. M. Junqueira-de-Azevedo and M. R. V. Diniz. 2005. Identification of novel bradykinin-potentiating peptides and C-type natriuretic peptide from *Lachesis muta* venom. Toxicon 46(1):31-38.
- Souza, A. R. B., and P. F. Bührnheim. 1999. Dez casos de acidente laquético atendidos no IMT-AM, de 1986 a 1996. Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Medicina Tropical 32 (supl. I):388-389.
- Vanzolini, P. E. 1977. An annotated bibliography of the land and fresh-water reptiles of South America (1758–1975), Volume I (1758–1900).
- Villas Bôas, O., and C. Villas Bôas. 1994. A marcha para oeste: A epopéia da Expedição Roncador-Xingú. São Paulo: Editora Globo.
- Warrell, D. A. 1989. Snake bite in five continents. Pp. 106-114. In: C. Bunch, editor, Horizons in medicine. London: Bailliere Tindall.
- . 2004. Snakebites in Central and South America: Epidemiology, clinical features, and clinical management. Pp. 709-761. In: J. A. Campbell and W. W. Lamar, editors, The venomous reptiles of the Western Hemisphere, Volume II. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Weinberg, M. L. D., L. F. Felicori, C. A. Bello, H. P. B. Magalhães, A. P. Almeida, A. Magalhães and E. F. Sánchez. 2004. Biochemical properties of a bushmaster snake venom serine proteinase (LV-Ka), and its kinin releasing activity evaluated in rat mesenteric arterial rings. J. Pharmacological Sciences 96(3):333-342.
- Yarlequé, A., S. Campos, E. Escobar, F. Lazo, N. Sanchez, S. Hyslop, N. A. Marsh, P. J. Butterworth and R. G. Price. 1989. Isolation and characterization of a fibrinogen-clotting enzyme from venom of the snake *Lachesis muta muta* (Peruvian bushmaster). Toxicon 27(11):1189-1197.

*Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc.* 42(7):115-116, 2007

### Book Reviews:

***Alterna – The Gray-banded Kingsnake* by Gerold Merker and Walter Merker  
2005. 80 pp. LM Digital.**  
and  
***Zonata – The California Mountain Kingsnake* by Mitchell Mulks and Gerold Merker  
2004. 64 pp. LM Digital.**

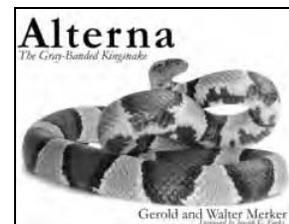
Gerry Salmon  
PO Box 823  
Millbrook, NY 12545  
gtsalmon@optonline.net

It seems fitting that I was asked to write a review on two new kingsnake picture books. Many years' worth of nights spent herping throughout the Big Bend region of West Texas involved endless hours of road-cruising. The daytime hours were for rest, relaxation, herp camaraderie, and catching up with old friends and their stories of collecting and breeding successes. Getting together over long lunches, occasionally leading well into cocktail hour, led to the development of larger and larger photo albums depicting the hard-to-believe variety of colors and patterns of gray-banded kingsnakes. The California boys would often blow us away with spectacular pictures of the western mountain kingsnakes (often attempting to teach us the nuances of regional variation). I was the compiler of one of the largest photo albums on gray-bands, which created "oohs" and "aahs" from many seasoned field herpers. Albums such as this whet the appetite for picture books that would show regional variation in polymorphic species. These two new books include informative but brief text (the text seems almost dis-

tracting from the great photos) as a narrative "to take you there," especially off-season when the fever sets in.

The two books are *Alterna – The Gray-banded Kingsnake* by Gerold and Walter Merker, and *Zonata – The California Mountain Kingsnake* by Mitchell Mulks and Gerold Merker. The Merkers are veteran field workers with both species and are excellent photographers as well. The Merkers have authored and co-authored over 60 articles for such magazines as *The Vivarium*, *Reptiles*, *Reptile and Amphibian Hobbyist* and *Ecology*.

*Alterna – The Gray-banded Kingsnake* is an 80-page, low-cost paperback, filled with wonderful images of *Lampropeltis alterna* specimens (arranged by locality), habitat shots and numerous other Big Bend and



Trans-Pecos herps.

As is the deal with locality-specific *alterna*, some of the specimens depicted in this book are less than spectacular but are representative of snakes collected in the wild. It's been said that all *alterna* are interesting and beautiful though some are better than others (this has been said of beer as well). The rating system with the typical scale of 1–10 applied to gray-bands seems to start at 4 and average 7; there are few 10s. There are some in this book that approach the top. The photography itself is excellent and well presented. I was a little less impressed by the range maps and their accuracy, but they are accurate enough to give a rough idea where the specimens originate by general region. It may be a bit misleading in mapping populations in this way as many of the areas are not “islands” but are somewhat continuous, then with expanses of no specimens collected. These areas are yielding occasional DOR (dead on road) or live snakes, thus filling in the range. The maps may indicate more the accessibility of roadways that bring collectors into the habitats. The populations sampled would be more accurately shown as linear (just a little wider than the roads themselves). Still, the shaded areas are enough to give the reader a general idea of the region specified, and simple cross-referencing with a highway map will reveal rough collection points.

The associated snakes of the region (the nine counties of far West Texas) and relationships to some of the venomous snakes that gray-bands are said to mimic (Trans-Pecos copperheads and mottled rock rattlesnakes) are shown and briefly discussed. I was planning on commenting on the rough green snake photograph as it seemed rather extraneous looking in size and placement within the other species section. I had thought it'd be a stretch to find one in west Texas. Recently Damon Salceies happened to find one in a canyon south of Sanderson and a check with Werler and Dixon's *Texas Snakes* does show range in Terrell and Val Verde County. Other than those minor points the book is accurate and a pleasure to flip through. Until someone produces a hard-cover coffee-table edition with hundreds of shots (outside the scope of this project), this book will be the one to have and is currently the only one of its type. It is quite a bargain at \$19.95.

Joseph E. Forks wrote the foreword for the *Alterna* book and I cannot think of someone more qualified to do it. He has been a fixture in the Trans-Pecos since he was teenager. Joe is an excellent field observer, naturalist and photographer. He is an understated expert on many aspects of all that is West Texas and the Chihuahuan Desert. As Joe would say, “I live too close” (to *alterna* range). He does, and I am sure it is very hard to stay at home in San Antonio when the herps are moving only several hours to the west.

*Zonata* — *The California Mountain Kingsnake* by Mitchell Mulks, with photography by Gerold Merker and Luke Mulks, provides 64 pages of fantastic images and information on these visually striking serpents. I especially liked the information on habitat and the photographic collages of snout and triad variations. There is an interesting blown-up photograph of a *zonata*'s head with the scales labeled. The species accounts all differ in form and content, but they make for interesting reading. This book costs less than the gray-banded kingsnake book (fewer pages but not a noticeable issue) and is priced at \$15.95.



Barry Sinervo wrote the foreword for the *Zonata* book. He is a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and an authority on the biology of lizards, amphibians and sea urchins.

LM Digital did a very good job in bringing both books through production and to the market at a low cost. The format works and is a welcome addition in the libraries of herpetologists and naturalists alike. I was recently pleasantly surprised to see a copy of the gray-banded kingsnake book in the local Barnes and Noble bookstore. It is nice to see good herp books distributed and readily available.

A beloved (and now missed) frequent attendee of the round-table, long lunches down in the Big Bend, Ben Dial (noted herpetologist and professor at Chapman University) would have been especially interested to see both of these books being completed and available. I would have enjoyed hearing his enthusiastic commentary on them.