

CENTER FOR REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN PROPAGATION
8166 EAST SHAW AVENUE
CLOVIS, CA 93612
(209) 298-2882

To Axolotl Newsletter Readers:

During a six-month period last year, we had a situation with our axolotls where five of our 450 animals metamorphosed. They made a complete transformation with loss of gills, change of skin color and texture.

This happened soon after the animals reached adulthood--most within 120 days. Three of the animals were black males and two were white females.

The two females died, probably due to drowning. We kept the males successfully for about five months by keeping them in water about one inch deep.

Several attempts to breed the metamorphosed male with a normal female failed. The male would show no courtship behavior.

We then placed a normal male in the tank with a normal female. Courtship behavior was observed for about ten hours. The normal male was then removed from the tank and the metamorphosed male was put in the tank.

The metamorphosed male has been injected with an LRF agonist two hours prior to being placed in the tank. Although the male showed no courtship behavior, he did lay several spermatophores which the female picked up and laid about 500 fertilized eggs.

Trying the next step was not so successful. We took a normal female in breeding condition and injected her with 1 ug LRF agonist. About 12 hours later a normal male was injected with 1 ug LRF agonist. Within three hours three spermatophores were laid. We took the sperm packets from the tips of the spermatophores and broke them up with a 1 cc syringe. Looking through a microscope the sperm appeared to be dead.

The sperm was then injected well into the cloaca with a syringe. In about 3-4 hours she started laying eggs. She laid about 400 eggs. About 20% of the eggs were fertile.

We now think that the high rate of metamorphosis was caused by having the fresh water flowing at too high a rate. The rate of flow changed the water in the tank completely every two hours. We feel that this quantity of fresh water flow contributed to a skin infection that caused the death of about 200 adult animals. Juveniles were not affected by the infections.

Since changing our water system about six months ago we have not lost any animals to disease.

We have available for sale eggs, larva, and juveniles of Ambystoma mexicanum, Pleurodeles walteii, Ceretophrysornata, and from our albino Rana catesbeiana.

Sincerely,

Bob Barnes

Ron Trimper