The Indiana University Axolotl Colony—1989

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This year the colony is large (over 500 adults), fairly young (most animals are under five years old), and mostly healthy. We have plenty of larvae for those who can use them, and we also have some extra adults, although, as usual, not sufficient breeding stock to allow routine shipments to outside laboratories. Unfortunately, our success in obtaining embryos has been mixed for the past month even though we did well earlier in the season. I believe that the decrease in successful matings that we have experienced can be attributed in large part to a disruption in the lighting in the rooms in which the breeding animals are housed. Ordinarily we keep these rooms on a constant light cycle, but this season they experienced, inadvertently, a de facto decrease in "day" length. Past experience suggests to me that such a decrease tends to reduce the number of spawns that we get, and such is certainly the case this year. Currently (mid-March) I am trying to reset the axolotls by manipulation of the light cycle. If the effort is successful, we should do better in April, May, and June. Meanwhile, do not hesitate to request embryos. We are still doing matings regularly, and we will continue to try to fulfill all requests.

Communications

Most of you communicate with the axolotl colony by telephone, so please make a special note—the colony number is changing. The new phone number is (812) 855-8260. At this time, both the old number and the new number work, but sometime this summer (June or July), the old number will cease to work, and you will need to use the new number. Other means of communicating with the colony include:

Fax: (812) 855-6705
Telex: 272279 (INDIANA U BLOM)
BITNET: DUHON@IUBACS

Please address Fax and Telex messages to me, Susan Duhon.

Questionnaire

In Newsletter No. 17, I distributed a questionnaire. A number of you responded. If any more of you would like to respond, it is not too late. If you can't find the original questionnaire, we will be happy to send you a copy.

Those that responded to the first questionnaire felt that the availability of mutants was very important, or even critical. This response came both from those that used mutants in their research and from those who did not.

Some of the research interests mentioned include (in no particular order):

Neurulation and neuroepithelium-specific markers
Extracellular matrix as a regulating factor for neural crest cell migration
Pigment pattern formation
Limb regeneration

Taste and lateral line systems
Mechanisms of gastrulation
Kinematics of locomotion
Nerve regeneration
Muscle regeneration
Reinnervation of muscle
Directed cell migration and morphogenetic movements
Molecular biology
Teaching

Several people indicated that they would like to see names and addresses of researchers and topics of research published in the Axolotl Newsletter. Any of you that would like to be included in such a list should send us your name, address, phone, and a brief description of how you use axolotls in your research—limiting it to one typed page. We will compile the information and publish it next year.

As always, we appreciate your support, and we look forward to a continuing relationship with the axolotl research community.