

An Instance of Dermatophagy in Captive Floodplain Death Adders *Acanthophis hawkei* (Wells & Wellington, 1985)

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It is well known that some species of squamates eat their own slough (Weigel, 1988) it was however mainly thought to be practised largely by the geckos (Greer, 1989). It has also been recorded in skinks (Eipper, 2006). This may represent first case of its kind recorded in snakes.

On the 16-11-2016, while tending to enclosures a thirteen month old *Acanthophis hawkei* (Wells & Wellington, 1985) was observed in the act of dermatophagy (figures 1&2). The skin had dried somewhat after being shed and was torn during the act of consumption. Once completed the snake was observed to then find and consume the remaining section of skin. The snake has not since consumed its shed skin. The instance while unusual, may be explained due to the unusually strong feeding

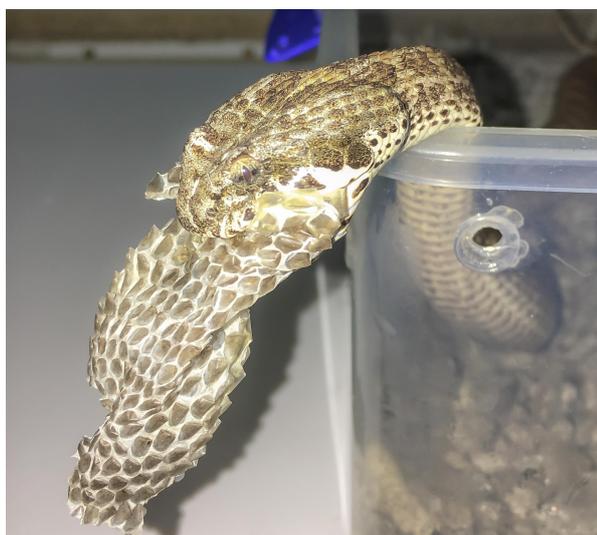


Figure 1. *Acanthophis hawkei* mid consumption of cast off shed skin, the skin was attempted to be removed with forceps and tore.

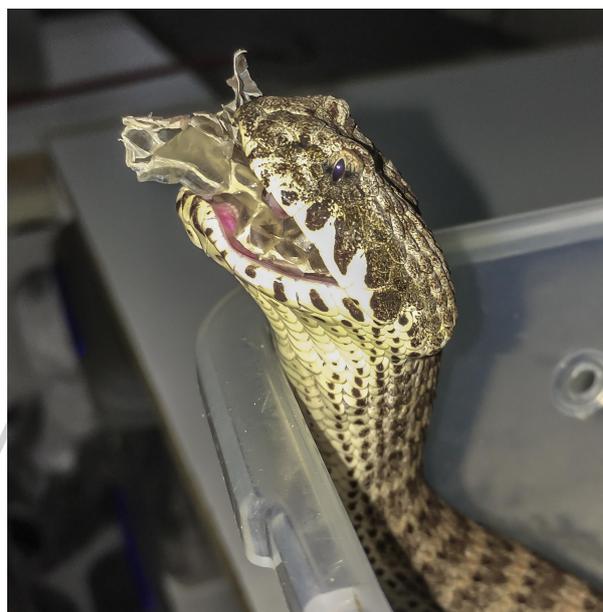


Figure 2. *Acanthophis hawkei* completing consumption of shed skin, the skin was digested and subsequent faeces was within the normal characteristics of the species.

response this individual snake has and that the act of cage maintenance in surrounding enclosures elicited the act.

Eipper, S. (2006) An unusual food item for a captive Northern Blue-tongue Skink *Tiliqua scincoides intermedia*. *Monitor -Journal of the Victorian Herpetological Society*, **15**(1), 35.

Greer, A. E., 1989. *The Biology and Evolution of Australian Lizards*. Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton; 264 pp.

Weigel, J.R., 1988. *Care of Australian Reptiles in Captivity*, Reptile Keepers Association, 144 pp.