

LIGHT FOR LIFE



The **Arcadia** **Guide** to MBD and its **elimination** in captivity

By John Courteney-Smith

www.arcadia-reptile.com



John has spent a lifetime in the UK exotic pet trade.

As a passionate keeper of Reptiles and Exotic birds John is determined to push the boundaries of captive reptile and bird science so that animals benefit from his research all over the world. John is a regular speaker at colleges and universities and is a contributor to forums and to many consumer and trade Reptile and Bird papers and magazines all over the world, John is also the author of two reptile husbandry related books and has worked with other leading authors to provide content for some of the world's best reptile books. As the Arcadia Reptile brand manager John is determined to start "A revolution in reptile care".





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FOREWORD

by David Alderton,
Editor, Practical Reptile Keeping magazine.

Back in the 1970s, when I was a veterinary student working at a practice in Sussex, we often used to have young turtles brought in as patients. They were frequently suffering from what was described back then as 'soft shell'. These poor creatures not only had an abnormally soft and rubbery shell texture, but they were often too weak to swim any more. There was sadly little that could be done to assist their recovery directly however, particularly if they came in during the winter months.

Those seen in the summer - especially a hot one like that of 1976 - did have a chance though, if their owners were prepared to place their pets in a sheltered and sunny spot outdoors each day, bringing them in at night. The turtles needed an aqua-terrarium, with shallow water and a rock where they could emerge and sunbathe, benefitting from the

sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Lacing their food with a calcium supplement also assisted their recovery too.

While the source of the problem was known, there was little else that could be done. Why? There simply weren't the sophisticated lighting systems that are now available for reptiles to protect against what has become generally known as metabolic bone disease (MBD). Nature itself provided the only realistic - and slim - hope of a cure.

What saddens me greatly is that MBD still exists today. Rather like smallpox, it is an illness that should have been consigned to history. We know the causes of MBD and have the means to prevent it without any difficulty, as part of a standard husbandry routine nowadays.

I feel so strongly about this, having seen families distraught by the loss of their pets over 35 ago when there was little that could be done, to be in a situation today where, simply through lack of knowledge, not just turtles of course, but lizards and other reptiles are still suffering and dying from MBD. It can also afflict amphibians too.

I am therefore delighted to see this highly practical guide, written with the aim of eliminating MBD. Spread the word to other reptile and amphibian keepers, particularly people new to the hobby, and let's help to banish this totally preventable and distressing condition without further delay.



David Alderton,
Author and editor of
Practical Reptile Keeping magazine
www.practicalreptilekeeping.co.uk



MBD is an all too common condition that affects captive reptile collections all over the world. In this guide we seek to explain exactly what MBD is and how to eliminate its occurrence in our own collections.

Reptile keepers should Seek to re-create as closely as possible the wild environments in which our animals have adapted to live. It is only by doing this that we can be sure that we are offering the animals the very best chance of an active and healthy life.

Using new research and technology this guide lays out a simple plan of how to get the very best from your system and how to make the right buying choices for your animals needs.

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