

The Snake-of-the-Day headliner of this web site features photographs that we believe will interest our web site visitors. Each daily photograph will be posted at 11:00 am. central (GMT - 5) and replaced in 24 hours. Feel free to make **suggestions** regarding what snake photographs you would like to see in this daily feature. The animals pictured here are not for sale, unless otherwise noted, but you can find available surplus snakes for sale on the **Surplus Page** of this web site. We appreciate your patronage and welcome any **suggestions** you may have.



The disproportionate size of the eyes of these Hypo Pewters demonstrates an optical illusion seen in some pale and/or weakly-patterned corn snakes (the most extreme being Palmetto mutants). The eyes appear to be overly large because their dark pigmentation exaggerates the contrast against their pale face (in other words, the eyes don't color phase into the surrounding face). The usual color and pattern on the faces of dark corns somewhat "hides/disguises" their eyes, which have similar color. Therefore, the eyes of corns appear larger to us on many corn snake color and pattern mutants. After measuring the eyes of these snakes (and those of their cousin, Palmettos). relative to the length of the heads I find their eyes to have the exact size and proportion of average dark-colored corn snakes. The eyes of Blizzard mutants also appear to be over-sized, but because they lack melanin (in both eyes and face) the proportionate size of the eyes is less dramatic. For both eyes and face pale or both eyes and face dark, the result is normal to our perception. Since the iris of the eyes of dark corns matches the ground color-shade of their body, the dark pupil is the most obvious ocular feature, facilitating the illusion of a smaller eye. Some serpent species take disguise of their eyes one step further by having a lateral stripe in their eye that connects a facial stripe from the front of their face, tailward beyond their head (i.e. *Boa constrictor*). Obviously, the color and pattern of wild corn snakes facilitates **crypsis** in their natural habitat of leaf litter. Such crypsis is more complete if prey and predators do not detect their eyes. Naturally, we need eyes to see, but in Nature, eye contact between prey and predator (or lack thereof) is often crucial to survival. I've been able to get very close to birds and other animals in the wild if I approach them with my eyes hidden by a camera. We're left to imagine that evolution may someDAY completely disguise the eyes of serpents, rendering them even more efficient predators.