



Thank you, Martin Baker of *Multicorn.info* in the UK for such beautiful Mandarin Rat Snakes. Members of this species are Natural masters of disguising their eyes (a crucial feature in evading detection by their prey *and predators*). In Nature, many animals blend into their surroundings, but prey and predator alike are quickly alerted once they detect the eyes of other animals. Note how the eye of this one is virtually invisible against the black face-mask marking, but observe also how the facial bands lined up with two of its body markings in this photograph, rendering the partial illusion of not having a head. This likely results is the perception of not being a predatory threat (or potential meal for predators). *Crypsis* is essential for the survival of many species, but in the wild, animals focus their attention on the eyes of other animals to positively identify them as potential food, friend, or foe. And btw, crypsis involves more than just appearance. It's entirely possible that this snake struck an instinctive pose that facilitated enhanced execution of ocular camouflage, in the way black bands lined up. Perhaps it feels most comfortable in repose when the eye is next to a black band of its body? Maybe they stop "*winding*" when light stops reflecting into their eye off their body? If they stop "*winding*" when their eye is next to a black band, they have maximim visual acuity-in the absence of light reflection-so that may make them stop coiling? I've had great success in photographing wildlife by approaching the animals with my eyes covered by the camera. They're curious, nervous, and suspicious, but until I lower the camera from my face, many of them will pose for photographs. Moreso than if I approached them with my eyes uncovered.