OBSERVATIONS on the REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY and FAUNISTICS of SCORPIONS (SCORPIONIDA) in URBAN SETTLEMENTS in SHIRAZ, IRAN

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Scorpions are one of the major public-health problems all over the world, including the tropical southern parts of Iran, where these pests are in the fourth place of responsibility for mortality among children. The patchy dispersal of these venomous arachnids therefore contributes to the constraints placed on human activities and urban development. This study was designed to determine the scorpion fauna in Shiraz and to observe the reproductive biology of dominant species under laboratory conditions. The study was undertaken from January to November 1998. It was a descriptive study, and cluster random sampling was used. A total of 159 live scorpions were collected, and the species were identified. Only three species — *Mesobuthus eupeus* (Buthidae), *Androctonus crassicauda* (Buthidae), and *Hemiscorpius lepturus* (Scorpionidae) — were recognized. The dominant species was *M. eupeus.* Nineteen cases of parturitions occurred in the laboratory, of which two cases were from *A. crassicauda*, and the rest from the *M. eupeus* group. All these parturitions occurred following mating and fecundity in nature. Six cases of induced-fecundity following courtships were noted in the laboratory, but none of the females delivered young after 4-5 months. The young were dependent on their mothers up to their first molting, but after this period they left home. *A. crassicauda* showed a high degree of cannibalism, but this was low in *M. eupeus.*

Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Urban Pests.
Susan C. Jones, Jing Zhai, and Wm H. Robinson editors. (2002)