Seminars in Zoophysiology at Aarhus University

The Salt Life of Sea Snakes

Prof Harvey B. Lillywhite
Department of Biology
University of Florida, USA

Dehydration and lack of fresh water are key problems for secondarily marine vertebrates. Recent investigations indicate that sea snakes do not drink seawater, as previously thought, but will drink fresh water at variable thresholds of dehydration, which these snakes tolerate well during seasonal tropical drought. The abundance and diversity of sea snakes correlate with access to fresh water, and both global distributions and evolutionary origins are related to low and variable oceanic salinity. Current studies suggest that digestion of food exacerbates dehydration and that thirst is suppressed or even absent in various lineages of marine snakes.

Thursday August 18th 2016 at 11.15
Room 127 (zoofys kaffestue), building 1131