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HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

FOUNDED 1965
The HAA is dedicated to the study and conservation of African reptiles and amphibians. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the African herpetofauna. Members receive the Association's journal, *African Journal of Herpetology* (which publishes review papers, research articles, short communications and book reviews - subject to peer review) and newsletter, *African Herp News* (which includes short communications, life history notes, geographical distribution notes, venom and snakebite notes, short book reviews, bibliographies, husbandry hints, announcements and news items).

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Articles will be considered for publication provided they are original and have not been published elsewhere.
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TYING AND PRODUCTION:
Dr. Angelo Lambiris.

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You will notice with this issue of the Newsletter that we have found another printer—the previous one could not produce anything acceptable. We are currently getting enough contributions to produce two issues of the Newsletter per year, but can only give value to members by producing three or four issues if you send in more articles! Our hearty thanks to those who have contributed this year, and also to the referees who commented on some of the articles. Two wish to remain anonymous, but thanks are due to Prof. John Poynton and Ms. Kate Richardson.

The last two years have eaten heavily into the Association's financial reserves, and it is clear that subscriptions will have to be increased if we are to keep going. Because no Journal was issued this year, we shall not increase the subscription in the year 2000 as originally intended, but shall have to do so in 2001. Hopefully, with increased Journal and Newsletter production members will feel that they are still getting value for money—to the best of my knowledge, our Association has the lowest subscription anywhere for a society that produces a peer-reviewed professional journal as well as a newsletter.

We had hoped to hold another symposium in September next year, but again a series of unforeseen and largely uncontrollable events have effectively demolished Geraldine Pieterre's heroic attempts to get things under way. One of the less creditable obstacles was the unbelievable tariffs charged by an organisation which seems to have changed its mission statement from conservation to fleecing tourists.

Turning to other matters, it is time for a new Committee to be elected. All but one of the present committee members have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election though of course other full Association members may be nominated as well.

The exception is Frank Farquharson, who has carried out the Herculean task of Secretary/Treasurer since 1992, with great competence and distinction. He feels that a break would be welcome, as well as giving some of our younger blood a chance to take up the reins. Frank will be a hard act to follow, and we thank him for his efficiency and his dedication to the interests of the Association. Who would like to follow in his footsteps?

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to wish you all well over the festive season and in the new year.

Angelo Lambiris
Chairman and Newsletter Editor.

COVER ILLUSTRATION:
ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF UNCOMMON PACHYDACTYLUS

A.M. BAUER1, T. LAMB2, & W.R. BRANCH3

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Geckos of the genus Pachydactylus are represented by at least 20 species in Namibia (Branch, 1998). Although many, such as P. turneri and P. punctatus, are nearly ubiquitous, most species are characterised by restricted ranges and many species are only encountered infrequently. There is little evidence that would suggest that any members of the genus are endangered in Namibia. Rather, the apparent rarity of some species may reflect the combination of low collecting effort in some areas and habitat types, and modern habitat destruction by the geckos. During recent field work in central and northern Namibia (Erongo and Kunene Regions) we collected specimens of three poorly known Pachydactylus species. In one case (P. fitzsimonsi), the new material represents a significant range extension relative to published records. In a second instance (P. fasciatus), we report a minor range extension but also confirm the occurrence of the species in central Namibia for the first time in more than 50 years. Finally, in the case of P. caraculicus, we provide additional localities to supplement the only Namibian records, published nearly 30 years ago (Haacke, 1970).

PACHYDACTYLUS FITZSIMONSI Loveridge, 1947
(FitzSimons' Thick-toed Gecko)

Namibia; Kunene Region; Khorixas District; 22.7 km N of Ugab River crossing on road from Brandberg West Mine, ca. 540 m (2014CC, 20°47'17"S, 14°06'41"E); 24 July 1998; A.M. Bauer, W.R. Branch and J.L. Wright; California Academy of Sciences, CAS 206955. Adult female, 87.2 mm SVL.

The southernmost published locality records for Pachydactylus fitzsimonsi were plotted in grid squares 2016AA and 1914DC (Visser, 1984). The new material represents an extension of 160 km west by southwest of the first record, and 120 km southwest of the latter. Considerable confusion has existed over the identity of this and other members of the Pachydactylus bibronii complex. This form was recognised as specifically distinct from both P. bibronii and P. turneri (as P. laevigatus) by Benyr (1995). In contrast to most individuals of P. fitzsimonsi, which are boldly patterned (Branch, 1998), CAS 206995 has a nearly uniform oatmeal ground colour with only very weakly developed and incomplete darker cross bands. This specimen's scalation is intermediate between that typical of P. fitzsimonsi and that characterising P. turneri, with relatively large, flattened dorsal scales forming more of a pavement than discrete rows of tubercles. Despite the morphological intermediacy of this specimen, we have referred it to P. fitzsimonsi on the basis of mitochondrial DNA sequence data. These data are nearly identical to those from typical P. fitzsimonsi from the northern Kaokoveld (1731AC), and differ significantly from sequences derived from P. turneri from northern Namibia (several localities). Because mitochondrial DNA is maternally inherited, the possibility remains, however, that CAS 206995 represents a hybrid between a male P. turneri and a female P. fitzsimonsi.

The gecko was collected in a vertical crevice in a boulder in a granite outcrop surrounded by sand in the vicinity of Gaia Spring. Other species collected in the immediate vicinity were Pachydactylus scherzi, P. punctatus and Rhoptropus bradfieldi.

PACHYDACTYLUS FASCIATUS Boulenger, 1888
(Banded Thick-toed Gecko)

Namibia: Erongo Region, Karibib District; Farm Usakos West, 10 km E of Spitzkopf turnoff on Usakos-Hentiesbaai Road (2115CD, 21°57'08"S, 15°16'48"E); 21 July 1998; R. Babb, A.M. Bauer, W.R. Branch, A.C. Lamb III, P. Moler and J.L. Wright; California Academy of Sciences, CAS 206936. Adult female, SVL 41.7 mm, TL 42.4 mm.

The nearest published locality record supported by specimens is as Karibib (2115DD), approximately 50 km to the east (Bauer and Branch, 1991). The new specimen is the first documented occurrence from central Namibia in more than 50 years. The specimen agrees in morphology with a large series from the Kamanjab area (1914CB, 1914CD), but differs in colour, having a bolider and more well-defined alternating series of medium grey cross bands on a predominantly orangy-brown dorsum. Unlike previously collected specimens of P. fasciatus from Damaraland, which have been collected under stones (Haacke, 1965; Bauer and Branch, 1991) this specimen was found under the bark of a large fallen Acacia along with Gerrhosaurus validus maltzahnii, Mabuya variegata, and Mabuya spilogaster.

PACHYDACTYLUS CARACULICVS FitzSimons, 1959
(Anongan Banded Thick-toed Gecko)

Namibia; Kunene Region; 44.3 km N of Okanguati on Epupa Falls Road (1731AC, 17°14'30"S, 13°14'00"E); 18 June 1993; A.M. Bauer, H.E. Robeck, D. King and J.V. Vindum; California Academy of Sciences, CAS 193799, SMW (catalogue number pending, ex AMB 1689); 41.9 km of Okanguati on Epupa Falls Road (1731AC, 17°15'S, 13°14'E); 30 July 1998; A.M. Bauer, H.E. Robeck, D. King and J.V. Vindum; California Academy of Sciences, CAS 193804-5, National Museum of Namibia, SMW (catalogue number pending, ex AMB 1689); 41.9 km of Okanguati on Epupa Falls Road (1731AC, 17°17'S, 13°11'E); 9 July 1998; A.M. Bauer; CAS 206980; 34.3 km S of Epupa Falls on Okanguati on Epupa Falls Road (1713AC, 17°15'S, 13°14'E); 30 July 1998; AMB 5991-5993 (to be deposited in SMW; A.M. Bauer, W.R. Branch and A.C. Lamb III.

The distribution of this species in Namibia is limited to the Kaokoveld. The only published Namibian records are those of Haacke (1970), from Swartboois Drift, the Onjamu Mountains, Enyandi, and Sanitatas. The new records, which are all within a few kilometres of each other, lie 40 km southwest of the nearest record at Enyandi on the Kunene River (1731BA). All individuals were collected from horizontal cracks within boulders or in crevices between slabs of rock. Pachydactylus fitzsimonsi was collected sympatrically at most of the sites. Other ripidolopithecus reptiles collected in at least one of the sites were Pachydactylus turneri, Rhoptropus barnardi, Hemirhagerrhis vipersina, and Bitis caudalis.

REFERENCES


Recent African Herpetological Literature: 19

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This survey covers the period 1997 to present, with a few earlier, overlooked papers. For brevity no articles in any HAA publication are included, neither are peripheral publications using Xenopus laevis (or any other African species) as a model in biochemical studies, etc. Where the distribution date is known to differ from the volume year this is included in brackets, as are notes of relevance. I thank Marius Burger (Cape Town) for early assistance in preparing this survey.


Anon, 1997. Retours au Sénégal et en Grèce. La Tortue 40: 12-17. (Repatriation to Senegal and Greece. [Return of Geochelone sulcata to Senegal]).

Anon, 1999. Sénégal; deux grands événements! La Tortue 45: 15. (Senegal; two grand events. [Developments in the ‘SOS Sulcata’ program; conservation of Geochelone sulcata]).


Southern Cape Coasts. eds. R. Lubke and I de Moor, Univ. Cape Town Press and Wildlife and Environment Society of SA, South Africa.


Kochva, E., Kurniak, D. & Haviv, Y., 1996. A snake bite by the burrowing asp, Atraco-


Luiselli, L., 1998. Food habits of the pelomedusid turtle *Pelusios castaneus castaneus* in...


Oda, R., 1996. Predation on a Chameleon by a Ring-Tailed Lemur (*Lemur catta*) in the


BOOKS, THESSES AND REPORTS
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BOOK REVIEWS


Bell's Hinged tortoise, Kinixys belliana belliana, from Zululand. Photo: A.J.L. Lambiris
GREATERT PADOLOPER

TESTUDINIDAE

and the habitat and distribution details. The shell (PEM R15530) measured: carapace length (CL) 122 mm; plastron length 108 mm; carapace width 88 mm; carapace depth (CD, CD 60 mm). Clutch sizes of 2-4 eggs have been recorded (Bourquin and Boycott, 1988, South African Reptiles and Amphibians, edn., 1998, for reptiles; and Passmore & Carruthers’ South African Frogs, 1995, for amphibians, as far as possible); KEYWORD (this should be one or two words best describing the topic of the note, e.g. Reproduction, Avian predation, etc.); the Text (in concise English with only essential references quoted and in abbreviated form); Locality (country, province or state, location, quarter-degree unit, and latitude and longitude if available; elevation above sea level; use metric units); Date (day, month, year); Collector(s); Place of deposition and museum accession number (required if specimens are preserved). Submitted by: NAME, Address (in parentheses).

REPTILIA

CHELONIA

TESTUDINIDAE

HOMOPUS FEMORALIS

Greater Padloper

Egg and Clutch Size

At 15h45 on 1 November 1993 Mr. Colin King discovered a large female Greater Padloper digging a nest hole on his farm “Fairfield” (Winterberg Mountains, Tarkastad District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa; 3226AD). Construction of the nest hole continued until 17h08 when egg laying commenced. By 17h13 three large eggs had been laid, and these were settled into place until 17h22, when the female started to fill in the nest hole. The eggs were not measured, and no further notes on egg development are available.

In 1999 Mr. King discovered the shell of another female Greater Padloper on his farm. Three large unlaid, shelled eggs were present in the empty shell. The identification of the presence of 11 marginals on each side, the pronounced ridge on the bridge marginals 4-8, and 36 x 26 mm; they were too dry to weigh.

Relatively little data are available on clutch and egg size in Homopus. Bourquin and Boycott (1988, The South African Tortoise Book, Southern Book Publishers; 148pp.) record a clutch size of 1-2 eggs measuring 29.0-35.2 x 25.0-27.3 mm. The shell of the dead female H. femoralis is not exceptionally large; Bourquin and Boycott (op. cit.) record females up to CL 160 mm and CD of 70 mm. The Common Padloper (H. areolatus) is closely related to the Greater Padloper, but does not grow as large (maximum CL 120 mm, CD 60 mm). Clutch sizes of 2-4 eggs have been recorded (Bourquin and Boycott, op. cit.).

It is thus likely that three egg clutches, and perhaps more, in the Greater Padloper are not unexpected.

Submitted by

W. R. BRANCH (Department of Herpetology, Port Elizabeth Museum, P.O. Box 13147, Humewood 6013, South Africa).

SAURIA

CHAMAELONIIDAE

CHAMAELEO TIGRIS; Seychelles Chamaeleon

Size and Breeding

On 12 October 1996, a captive adult female Seychelles Chamaeleon was obtained from a local Seychellois in the town of Victoria, Mahé, Republic of the Seychelles. The animal was transported to the nearby Cousine Island where it was housed in a large outdoor cage in which a pot-plant was placed. On 6 November it developed a swollen eye and was subsequently unable to catch its prey. On 12 November it laid five eggs on and in the soil in which the pot-plant was standing, but was too weak to dig a deep nest-hole, laying three of the eggs on the surface and two just under the surface of the soil. Because the eye showed no signs of healing the animal was killed and preserved, and is lodged in the Cousine Island collection.

There has been controversy as to whether the species is viviparous or ovoviviparous, or both (Cheke 1984, in Stoddard (ed.): Biogeography and ecology of the Seychelles Islands. W. Junk, The Hague) and Cheke (op. cit.) indicates a clutch size for the species being 3 to 4. He gave no egg measurements.

The five eggs weighed between 0.5 and 0.7 g (mean 0.62 g) and measured 15.7 x 9.0, 15.2 x 8.3, 14.3 x 8.2, 14.2 x 9.2, and 14.2 x 9.0 mm.

The freshly dead female measured 81 mm snout-vent length, and 78 mm tail length, and weighed 9.9 g. The maximum snout-vent length is recorded as 88 mm (Cheke, op. cit.).

No other specimens of this endemic Seychelles chamaeleon were seen on Mahé, and only one badly damaged road kill was seen on Praslin, even though a fair amount of walking was carried out on both islands, in habitats suitable for the species. Although Henkel and Schmidt (1995, Amphibien und reptilien Madagaskars, der Maskaren, Seychellen und Komoren. Verlag Eugen Ulmer, Stuttgart) indicate that the species is particularly common in and near the Vallee de Mai on Praslin, no chamaeleons were seen there during two walks into and through the area during 1996.

Submitted by

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GERRHOSAURIDAE

CORDYLOSAURUS SUBTESSELLATUS
Dwarf Plated Lizard

MAXIMUM SIZE

Branch (1998, Field Guide to Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa, 2nd ed., Struik Publishers, Cape Town, 399 pp.) listed average sizes of 35-45 mm SVL for this species, with a maximum of 55 mm SVL. The largest particular specimen for which a size has been published, however, is TM 19162 from Rehoboth measuring 53 mm snout vent length + 104 mm tail length (FitzSimons, V., 1943, Mem. Transvaal Mus. 1: xv + 528 pp. 24 pls., 1 map). On 25 July 1998, three specimens of Cordylosaurus subtessellatus were collected in an area of broken calcrite substratum 0.4 km northeast of the junction of the Palmwag-Sesfontein Road (3706) on the Sesfontein-Opuwo Road (3704) at 19°08'S, 13°44'E (1931BA), Opuwo District, Kunene Region, Republic of Namibia. The largest of these was CAS 206966, an adult male, measuring 57.1 mm SVL = 79.4 mm TL (of which the last 24.5 mm were regenerated). This represents an 8% increase in maximum SVL for the species. Specimens exceeding 45 mm SVL are rarely encountered, especially in the Western and Northern Cape Provinces of South Africa. Experience with this species throughout its range suggests that there may be a south to north cline in increasing body size.

Submitted by
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SERPENTES

COLUBRIDAE

PROSYMNA FRONTALIS
South-western Shovel-Snout

REPRODUCTION

On 19 January 1999 a gravid female was found moving on the ground at around 10h00 in central Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia (22°35'S, 17°05'E, elevation 1740 m a.s.l.). Total length of the specimen is 310 mm. Three eggs appeared in the holding container on 26 January, measuring 39 x 12, 37 x 10, and 39 x 11 mm. After three days the eggs were placed in an incubator, on a damp vermiculite bed where the temperature was maintained at between 28 and 32°C. Hatching occurred between 15 and 20 March, giving an incubation period of between 48 and 53 days. Total lengths of the hatchlings were 140, 140 and 145 mm, and weights were 1.27, 1.28, and 1.32 g respectively. Broadley (1980, Occ. Pap. Natl. Mus. Rhodesia, 6(7): 481-556, summarised reproduction parameters for all species in the genus, but no data were available for P. frontalis. Subsequent literature, popular as well as scientific, has not rectified this omission. The number of eggs laid in this instance is within the reported range for the genus, but the size of the eggs is the largest reported. The specimens are deposited in the National Museum of Namibia (NMWN:R 6688-6891).

Submitted by
M. GRIFFIN (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, P.B. 13306, Windhoek, Namibia) and J. HAUCH (P.O. Box 96179, Windhoek, Namibia).

Fig. 1: Prosymna frontalis with eggs. Windhoek, Namibia. (Photo: M. Griffin)
ELAPIDAE

PSEUDOHAJE GOLDII (Boulenger, 1895): Goldie’s Tree Cobra

DIET


The stomach of the specimen IRSNB 3759 (deposited on April, 18, 1946), an adult male (SVL 45.5 mm), a terrestrial and aquatic behaviour. As X. nigri is usually met close to muddy bottoms, this prey may indicate that P. goldii is likely to show an active foraging behaviour under water.

We here present a documented case of predation by P. nigro on a bufonid species. The stomach of the specimen MNHN 1986.1809, an adult male (SVL 1576 mm, tail length 428 mm, ventrals 186, subcaudals 81, dorsal scale rows at midbody 13) collected by Madame Van Woensel in Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo), Uele, Zobia Pl., on a bufonid species. The stomach also contained the remains of a large black ant and a beetle which were certainly ingested by the toads.

We hereby report that it appears to feed mostly on amphibians, and that a specimen from Ghana kept for several years at London Zoo fed entirely on frogs and toads. According to Hughes (1976, Bull. I.F.A.N. (A), 38 (2): 457-466), this Ghanese specimen was not traced in collections, so that its specific identity could not be checked, as Pseudohaje goldii (Boulenger, 1895) also occurs in that country. Spawls & Branch (1995, The Dangerous Snakes of Africa. Natural history. Species directory. Venomous and snakebite. Blandford, London: pp. 1-192) mentioned that it “probably eats amphibians, maybe mammals”.

We here present a documented case of predation by P. nigro on a bufonid species. The stomach of the specimen MNHN 1986.1809, an adult male (SVL 1576 mm, tail length 428 mm, ventrals 186, subcaudals 81, dorsal scale rows at midbody 13) collected by Madame Françoise Xavier (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris) in Liberia, Nimba, “grassfield savanna, Nimba research” on July, 17, 1969, contained the partly digested remains of two specimens of Bufo maculatus Halloway, 1854, ingested head first. The stomach also contains a dozen of large black ants and a beetle which were certainly ingested by the toads.


The predation on a terrestrial amphibian in a grassfield savanna by a tree cobra seems to offer an interesting contribution to the biology of this little known species.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Prof. Alain Dubois and Dr Patrick David (MNHN, Paris) and
AMPHIBIA

ANURA

RANIDAE

PTYCHADENA MAPACHA Channing, 1993; Mapacha Grass Frog
Namibia; Rundu district, Ojimatako River near tar road bridge (17°24'S, 20°28'E); 21 April 1998; Dr. N.H.G. Jacobsen and W.D. Haacke. Four juvenile to adult specimens (TM 82265 - 82268) deposited in the Natural History Museum (Transvaal Museum) of the Northern Flagship Institution, in Pretoria, of which TM 82267 and 82269 have been transferred to the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek. The only previous records are from the surroundings of Kati ma Molilo (17°24CB) in the Eastern Caprivi Strip, Mukwe district, Namibia. This sample extends the range by just over 3°W or about 370 km to the west into the main part of Namibia. It also confirms the occurrence in the Okavango system and therefore the probability exists that it will be present in the Okavango Delta in Botswana, as well as in Angola.

The frogs were found during the day along the shallow vegetated marshy edge of the Omaramba Omatako at a point where the water of the Okavango River pushes up its bed of the otherwise dry Omaramba to a point just beyond the bridge of the tar road which runs parallel to the Okavango.

We are indebted to the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism of Namibia for providing us with a collecting permit. A special word of thanks is due to Professor Alan Channing, University of the Western Cape, for correcting our initial identification attempts.

Submitted by
W.D. HAACKE (Department of Herpetology, Natural History Museum [Transvaal Museum] of the N.F.I., P.O. Box 413, Pretoria, 0001, R.S.A.)
REPTILIA
SAURIA

SCINCIDAE

MELANOSEPS LONGICAUDA Tornier, 1900; Pangani Black Limbless Skink
Tanzania, Muheza District, Manga Forest Reserve, 5° 02'S: 38° 47'E (053888), altitude 240 metres; 26 August 1998; Frontier-Tanzania (a collaboration between the University of Dar es Salaam and the Society for Environmental Exploration in UK); Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe NMZB 15665. Found during the excavation of a quadrat for millipedes in leaf litter in coastal forest.

The specimen is broken in the middle, but measures ca. 64 + 22 mm. There are three supraocclusals, four supraciliaries, two supralabials anterior to the subocular, 18 midbody scale rows, ca. 125 ventrals and 44 subcaudals. Colouration uniform black except for the pure white chin.

This fossorial skink has not previously been collected this century. The two syntypes came from "Masailand" and "Karakwe am Pangani" (= Korogwe on the Pangani River) and Tornier reported 19 midbody scale rows and 118-120 ventrals (Brygoo & Roux-Estève, 1981, Bull. Mus. natn. Hist. nat. Paris, 4e Ser., 3 (A): 1169-1191). The present specimen has a much shorter tail than the syntypes, but agrees in its small size. As the Manga Forest Reserve is only ca. 45 km northeast of Korogwe, there seems little doubt that this specimen should be assigned to _M. longicauda_, which resembles _M. rondoensis_ Loveridge, 1942, of southeastern Tanzania in its small size (snout-vent length less than 100 mm) and low ventral counts (114-127), rather than the two large East African species _M. ater_ (Günter, 1873) and _M. loveridgei_ Brygoo & Roux-Estève, 1981, (snout-vent length more than 100 mm; ventrals 130-168).

Submitted by
DONALD G. BROADLEY (Biodiversity Foundation for Africa, P.O. Box FM 730, Famon, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.)

SPAMMOPHIS BREVIROSTRIS AND ACONTIAS SP: THE VALUE OF ROAD KILLS

On 20 January 1992, whilst driving through the old Transkei, en route to Kosi Bay, GH stopped for a very flattened road kill near Marenbemi, 23.4 km SE of Mount Frere, Eastern Cape, in the valley of the Tiva River, on the N2 road (31°03'S, 28°53'E; 3128BB). The specimens proved to be an adult _Psammophis brevirostris brevirostris_ (for the taxonomic status of this species see F. Brandstätter, 1996, _Die Sandrennattern_, Die Neue Brehm-Bucherei Bd. 636, Westarp Wissenschaften, Magdeburg, 142 pp). It had an obvious stomach content that proved to be an _Acontias_ sp. The snake (PEM R6895) had an approximate snout-vent length 810 mm and 158 ventrals. The fragmentary remains of the skink (AJL 3989; Angelo Lambiris private collection, Durban) lacked the head, an indeterminate portion of the forebody, and the proximal region of the tail. The scales were in 18 rows at the approximate midbody region, and were dark brown with darker margins on the dorsal, and paler on the ventrum. Due to damage, it was not possible to determine the species. It may be either _A. gracilicaudata gracilicaudata_, which is recorded from Umtata (3128DB; D. Broadley and A. Greer, A revision of the genus _Acontias_ Cuvier (Sauria: Scincidae), _Arnoldia Rhod._ 4(26): 1-29, 1969), or _A. poecilus_, recorded from Leisure Bay (3130Mb; 0.98). 1969, _A. poecilus_, recorded from Leisure Bay (3130Mb; 0.98). 1967)

Submitted by
DONALD G. BROADLEY (Biodiversity Foundation for Africa, P.O. Box FM 730, Famon, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.)

This report includes the second and third records, including the most southerly record, of *P. b. brevirostris* from the Eastern Cape. It is also the first record of this diurnal snake feeding on a large, fossorial skink. If the skink is *A. poccidius* it is the first record for the Eastern Cape Province, and the sixth known specimen; if it is *A. gracilicauda* then it is the most eastern record for the Province. This interesting discovery indicates the value of road kills!

Submitted by
W. R. BRANCH (Department of Herpetology, Port Elizabeth Museum, P.O. Box 13147, Humewood 6013, South Africa; pcmwrb@zoo.up.ac.za) and G. V. HAAGNER (P.O. Box 13235, Durban, 4000, South Africa).

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

An International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology is launched

International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology was founded 1998 in Guelph, Canada. The profound interest among many professional and amateur herpetologists in the history of their science or hobby was demonstrated in recent international herpetological meetings. The founders' conception was to launch a Society that can provide a forum for herpetologists, bibliophiles, and historians of biology to meet and share their common interests. The initial founding group consisted of twelve persons. A constitution was laid down and an executive committee was elected. The Society is a not-for-profit organization.

Thus, the aims of the Society are to bring together individuals who have a serious interest in the history as well as the bibliography of herpetology and to support the spread of knowledge of these topics among members and the general public. Opportunities are created for the members to meet other people with the same interest and to extend and cultivate their acquaintances.

The Society will achieve its aims by organizing formal meetings with lectures, discussions and other similar activities. These meetings will normally be held in connection with other herpetological meetings, such as congresses with international participation. Activities that include visits to private and public libraries, museums, research stations, antiquarian bookshops &c. will be other means of assembly. The founders also feel that a dedicated channel for publishing papers in the disciplines is lacking. A printed bulletin with brief articles, essays, bibliographies and news of people and events in our field will therefore be a central pillar of the Society. This will, as demands arise, be supplemented by a less formal newsletter that will be distributed either as a leaflet or e-mail.

The executive committee of five people is representing academic professionals, students and amateurs from Canada, Sweden and USA. The first bulletin was published in May 1999. Meetings were held in Pennsylvania, USA later in the summer. Members as a group were invited to an exclusive presentation of the library of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. The Academy is the oldest extant Natural History Museum in the United States and its exceptional book and journal holdings in herpetology were displayed.

Membership fee for two years (1999-2000 or 2000-2001) is US$30 (student $10) or life $300. Anyone interested in more information about the Society is invited to visit our website, www.teorekol.lu.se/~rana/ISHBH, and contact us from there or write to International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology, Box 2123, SE-220 02 LUND, Sweden.

Chairperson: Richard Wahlgren e-mail: Richard.Wahlgren@skansk.se
GEORGE SHAW'S "GENERAL ZOOLOGY"
THE FIRST WORLD SUMMARY OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN ENGLISH

With a Systematic Review of Shaw's Nomenclature by Hobart M. Smith and Patrick David

George Shaw (1751-1813), an English naturalist who became Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum, is one of the most familiar names in herpetology. His volume on amphibians and reptiles in his series "General Zoology" comprises the first world review of herpetology in English. Shaw's book, published in 1802, covered 432 species which represent a large fraction of the species known at the time. Of these, Shaw described 109 as new and two dozen of his taxa survive, including some of the most familiar species in the world: Ambystoma maculatum, Rana catesbeiana, Carcilia gracilis, Geochelone radiata, Ctenosaura acen-thura, Python regius, and Bitis nasicornis. The text includes scientific and common names, extensive references to previous literature, natural history, and useful historical information. The 141 plates (see the samples at the bottom of this page) are typical of the era: excellent likenesses at their best, but sometimes amusing, fanciful, or even purloined from other works. Taken together, the text and plates represent an authoritative and classic survey at the start of the century during which herpetology became a science.

Hobart M. Smith (Boulder) and Patrick David (Paris) provide an extensive introduction in which Shaw's species are correlated with modern taxa. Many of Shaw's names have not been previously synonymized. They also provide a comprehensive index to Shaw's names.


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