

NEWSLETTER

HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
OF AFRICA



founded 1957

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This is the second in the recently initiated 'Newsletter'. It contains news on recent appointments, job vacancies, new books (with discounts), herpetological grants, etc. It is what a 'Newsletter' should contain. Any member with news for his fellow herpetologists is invited to send details to me for inclusion in the next HAA 'Newsletter'.

The next issue of the 'Journal' is dependent upon the submission of suitable manuscripts. At the moment only one has been accepted, and another is being reviewed. I don't believe that so little research is done by our members. The temptation, obviously, is to send original research for publication in the more prestigious journals (South African Journal of Zoology, Herpetologica, Copeia, Journal of Herpetology, etc.). This is natural. But the HAA Journal is what you the members make it. It can only be as good as the articles submitted. I have tried to improve its appearance, and the quality of printing. With our limited funds, however, only so much is possible. The journal needs to appear regularly, if it is to maintain, let alone improve membership. Only with the latter will increased funds be available for another step in the evolution of the Journal. Do you feel the 'Journal' is going the right way, but comes out too infrequently? Then if so, ask yourself - WHY? I'll expect your MS soon!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1984 are now due: African members: R6 p.a.

Other countries: US\$10 p.a.

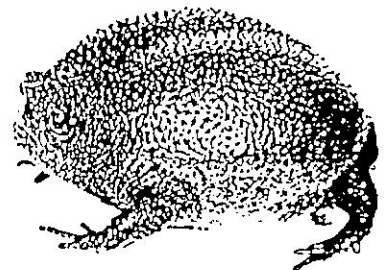
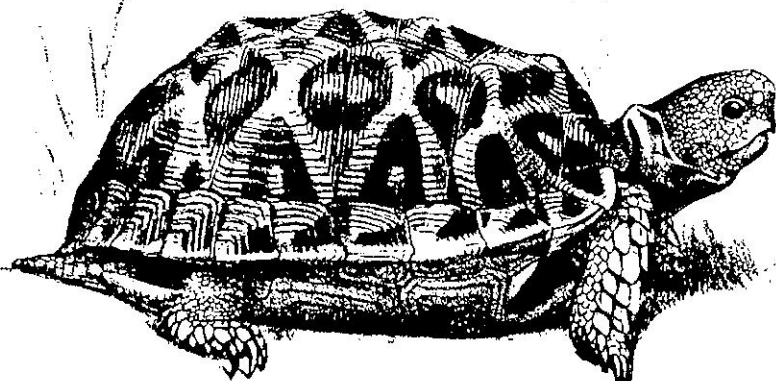
Encourage your friends to join. Support the Association.

Please pay promptly and, where possible, in South African currency.

BACK ISSUES

A limited number of back issues of the HAA Journal 25-29 are available at R2-00 each. Members having back issues they no longer need, may wish to donate them to the Editor for resale to new members. There is a constant demand for early issues, particularly from new institutions subscribing to the Journal.

Editor: Bill Branch, Port Elizabeth Museum,
P.O. Box 13147, Humewood 6013, South Africa



NOTES

Herpetology of Africa (Review)

Since I reviewed Herpetology of Africa by K.R.G. Welch (H.A.A. Journal 29), I have been looking into the taxonomy of Lygodactylus angularis and have noted that two of the taxa listed in my review had earlier been placed in synonymy by Pasteur (1964b) and should therefore be deleted from the checklist.

L. angularis dysmicus Perret is a synonym of L. gutturalis (Bocage)

L. angularis paurospilus Laurent is a synonym of L. angularis heenei Witte.

Colour Change in Lygodactylus capensis

In the early 1960's, I received reports of 'green geckos' on buildings at Beira, Mocambique. This led to speculation on the possibility of a species of Phelsuma having been introduced at the port, with freight.

I solved the mystery in November 1962, while staying at the Estoril Holiday Camp. The Cape Dwarf Gecko, Lygodactylus c. capensis was very common on the whitewashed or pastel-coloured walls of the chalets. These geckos were very pale grey in the sun. During the day, many geckos descended to forage for food in the grass. When disturbed, they ran back up the wall, but were now definitely light green in colour! This species is capable of a wide range of colour change, from almost white, through various shades of grey and brown to almost black, but I have never again come across a population that had the ability to turn green. I would be interested to hear from any H.A.A. member who has observed this phenomenon.

D.G. BROADLEY, National Museum, P.O. Box 240, Bulawayo, ZIMBABWE.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

The following herpetologists have recently taken up new positions.

Mr Ernest Baard, Herpetologist. Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, Jonkershoek Research Station, P.Bag 5014, Stellenbosch 7600.

Dr Hartwig Berger-Dell'mour, Curator of Lower Vertebrates. State Museum, P.O. Box 1203, Windhoek 9100.

Mr Richard Boycott, Curator. Transvaal Snake Park, P.O. Box 97, Halfway House 1685.

Mr D. Morgan, Assistant Curator. Transvaal Snake Park. P.O. Box 97 Halfway House 1685.

Mr le Fras Mouton, Curator. John R. Ellerman Museum of Zoology, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, 7600.

Mr D. Phelps. FitzSimon's Snake Park, P.O. Box 10457, Marine Parade, Durban, 4056.

Mr J.H. van Wyk, Curator of Herpetology, National Museum, P.O. Box 266 Bloemfontein 9300.

NEW MEMBERS

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Venom More Expensive Than Gold

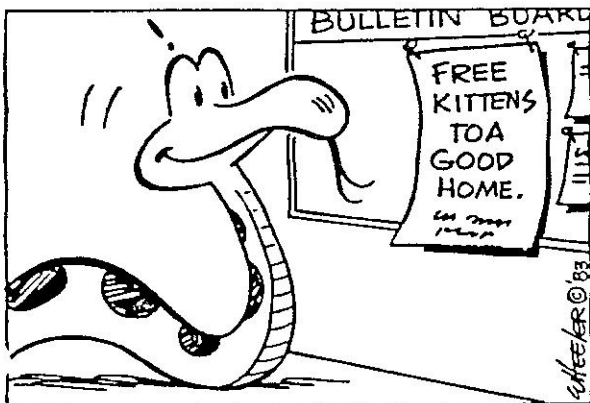
The venom of certain spiders, insects and snakes is thousands of times more precious than gold. Gold is selling for \$400 to \$500 an ounce. Compare that to these prices for an ounce of some venoms:

Western black widow, \$2,360,000
 Bumble bee, \$1,134,000
 Boomslang (snake), \$283,500
 Scorpion, \$276,412
 North American coral snake, \$55,712
 Erabu sea snake, \$42,859
 Indian krait (snake), \$13,835

Before you start milking your pet common Indian cobra for its venom (\$9072 per ounce), you should know that it will take dozens of milkings to accumulate an ounce. Moreover, you will have to wait about three weeks between milkings—it can take that long for a snake to replenish its supply. Besides that, the limited market for venom in the U.S. is supplied by professional labs and chemical companies.



Hospitals and labs buy venom for medical and research purposes. For one thing, it is used to make antivenin to treat poisonous bites. Fortunately, antivenins do not have to be species-specific. Antivenin from tiger snakes, for example, also works against venom from several other snakes. In the past, doctors treated such diseases as leprosy and epilepsy with venom. Now they employ it to alleviate pain, to stop blood from clotting and in the treatment of other disorders. Venom is also used in cancer and biochemical research.



PROSPECTIVE M.Sc. STUDENTS

OPPORTUNITY

RESEARCH HERPETOLOGIST

A graduate is required to do research in the field of Herpetology. The successful candidate will have to choose a research project concerning aspects such as either the Ecology, Environmental physiology, Anatomy or Taxonomy of any Reptile or Amphibian occurring in the O.F.S. The research results can be used to obtain a M.Sc. degree at any South African University.

QUALIFICATION

Candidates must be in the possession of a B.Sc. (Hons.) degree with Zoology as a major. A driving licence is essential and the successful candidate must be prepared to conduct field work.

The salary will depend on qualifications and experience.

BENEFITS

The Museum offers a wide range of benefits, including: a 13th cheque as a bonus, housing subsidy, adequate leave (including days between Xmas and New Year), flexitime, medical and pension schemes, stay and travel expenses when doing field work, the use of a vehicle pool.

INTERESTED?

Apply by prescribed form obtainable from the Head of your Department and post to, The Director, National Museum, Bloemfontein 9300 or contact Mr J.H. van Wyk at (051)-79609 if you need more information or application forms.

NATIONAL  MUSEUM
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JOB OPPORTUNITY

HERPETOLOGY

A Research Assistant is required to assist the Herpetologist with his research projects. The successful candidate will mainly do field and laboratory work. Additionally he/she will have the responsibility of the current Herpetological collection and the husbandry of live animals kept for exhibition purposes.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. The Biology of the femoral glands of the *Cordylus polyzonus*.
2. The reproductive biology of the female lizard *Cordylus polyzonus*.
3. The male reproductive cycle of the lizard *Agama atra*.
4. The ecology of the lizard *Cordylus giganteus*.



QUALIFICATION

Senior Certificate, but any post-matric qualification will be recommendable (especially Nature Conservation Diploma). The salary will depend on qualification and experience.

BENEFITS

The Museum offers a wide range of benefits, including a 13th cheque as a bonus, a housing subsidy, adequate leave (including days between Xmas and New Year), flexitime, medical and pension schemes, stay and travel expenses when doing field work.

INTERESTED

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society for the study of amphibians and reptiles

PUBLISHER OF
THE JOURNAL OF HERPETOLOGY * FACSIMILE REPRINTS IN HERPETOLOGY *
HERPETOLOGICAL REVIEW * THE CATALOGUE OF AMERICAN AMPHIBIANS
AND REPTILES * HERPETOLOGICAL CIRCULARS

SSAR GRANTS-IN-HERPETOLOGY

The Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles is pleased to announce that proposals are now being accepted for the 1984 Grants-In-Herpetology Program. This Program is designed to provide financial support to deserving individuals or organizations engaged in research on or conservation of amphibians and reptiles. All applicants (or their advisor or sponsor) must be a member of SSAR. Grant proposals will be considered in the following areas:

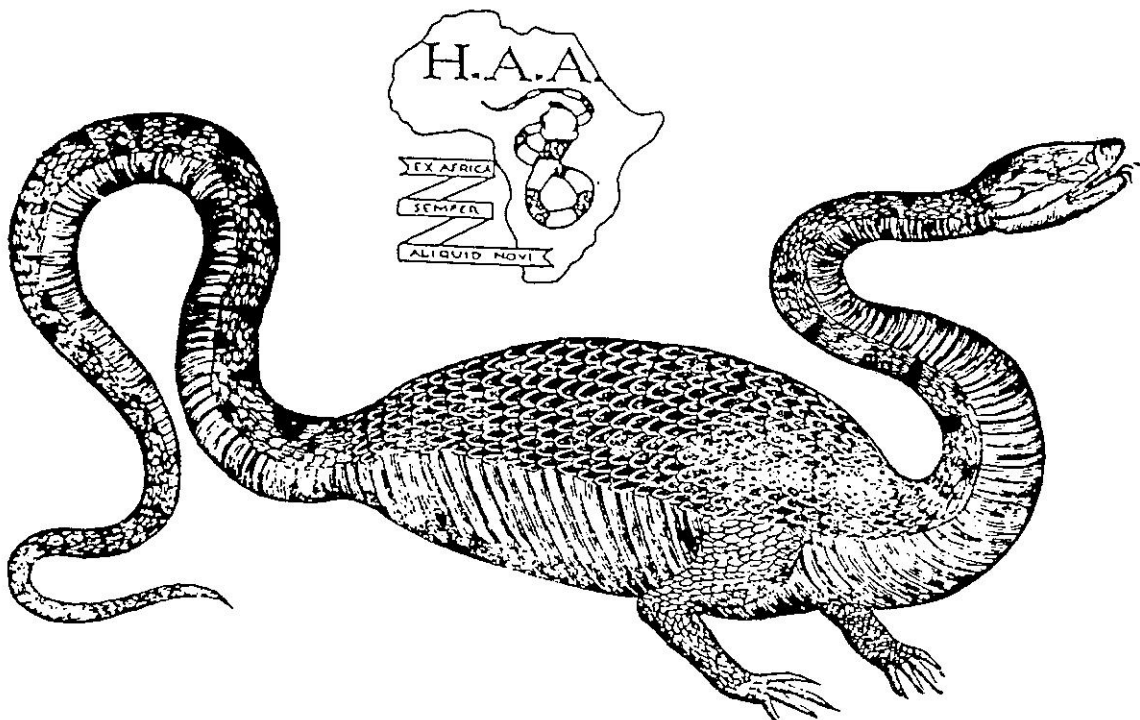
1. GRADUATE STUDENT HERPETOLOGICAL RESEARCH.
2. HERPETOLOGY-ORIENTED CONSERVATION.
3. REGIONAL HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS OR PROJECTS.
4. HERPETOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN ZOOS.
5. FIELD WORK (Auto Mileage). (2 awards of \$215.)

Each proposal should include the following information: A) Background & Objectives of the proposed project, in terms of its relevance to herpetology, B) Methods of carrying out the research or conducting the project, C) Budget for the project, which should not exceed \$430 in each category, and D) Curriculum Vitae and Letter of Support (if applicable). The proposal must be typed double spaced and must not exceed 5 pages, excluding cover page, abstract, budget, curriculum vitae, and bibliography. All proposals are due no later than 13 April, 1984.

For additional information on proposals see the December 1983 issue of Herp Review or write:

Dr. Linda Maxson
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and the New Year*



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THE GASTRIC BROODING FROG

Investigations of this species range across several scientific disciplines and provide a perfect opportunity for interdisciplinary co-operation. The investigations include the obvious biological component of documentation of the reproductive mode, and the applied interest in the method of inhibition of gastric secretion of hydrochloric acid. The potential clinical application of such a phenomenon, for the treatment of patients with gastric ulcers, has not escaped the attention of major drug companies.

Unfortunately, following the recent Australian drought, *Rheobatrachus* has become extremely scarce and it is now regarded to be an endangered species. It has become the central theme of a promotional activity of a Queensland conservation group seeking to establish a national park in an area that includes the habitat of this species. The conservation group involved is the Conondale Range Committee and there is reason to believe that, but for this group, forestry pressures would so alter the Conondale environment, that the habitat of *Rheobatrachus*, and eventually the species, would be eliminated.

Over the past two or three years the persons working on the species have been overwhelmed by requests for information, and the decision to produce this book arose from that interest. Hence the principle objective here is to put together all that is currently known about this amazing animal and its unique adaptations. These are considered in the context of its ecology, of the anatomical and physiological changes associated with gastric brooding, and of its evolutionary significance. The book is enhanced by many photographs including some of oral birth and will interest not only professional zoologists, gastroenterologists and

pharmacologists but also those with a general interest in the more fascinating elements of natural history.

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Contributors

Acknowledgements

Introduction *Michael J. Tyler, Department of Zoology, University of Adelaide*

1. Superficial Features *Michael J. Tyler and Margaret Davies, Department of Zoology, University of Adelaide.*
2. Natural History *Glen Ingram, Department of Amphibians, University of Queensland.*
3. Oral Birth and Perinatal Behaviour *Michael J. Tyler.*
4. Larval Development *Michael J. Tyler and Margaret Davies.*
5. Skeleton *Margaret Davies.*
6. Musculature *Thomas C. Burton, Department of Zoology, University of Adelaide.*
7. Reproductive System *Philippa Horton, Department of Zoology, University of Adelaide.*
8. Structural Changes to Stomach and Oesophagus *Joseph C. Fanning, Department of Pathology, University of Adelaide.*
9. Inhibition of Gastric Secretion *Paul O'Brien, Department of Surgery, Flinders Medical Centre and David Shearman, Department of Medicine, University of Adelaide.*
10. Evolution of Gastric Brooding *Michael J. Tyler.*
11. Phylogenetic Relationships *Michael J. Tyler.*
12. Miscellany *Michael J. Tyler.*

Literature on *Rheobatrachus*.
Bibliography
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176 pages August 1983

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