

THE JOURNAL OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF RHODESIA.

No.3

MAY, 1958.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES...AMENDMENTS.

3.(c) Herpetologists and Organisations outside the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland may become Associate Members. An Associate member shall have no say in the running of the Association, but will receive the Journal as it appears and may correspond with any member.

5.(a) Add.....Associate Members shall pay an Annual Subscription of ten shillings (1 dollar 50c.), except where an exchange of publications has been agreed.

NEW MEMBERS

W.A.Menage,
P.O.Box 70,Salisbury,S.Rhodesia.
(Enterprise Road,Highlands,Salisbury,S.R.)

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Serum Department, South African Institute for Medical Research,
P.O.Box 1038, Johannesburg, South Africa. (Exchange of Publications).

J.D.Visser, FitzSimons' Snake Park, P.O.Box 5001, Snell Parade,
Durban, South Africa.

JOTTINGS FROM COBRA CORNER

Dear Member,

Most of this issue of the Journal is taken up with the Check-List of the Snakes of Southern Rhodesia, this will be a useful standby until the expanded version ("The Herpetology of Southern Rhodesia. Part 1...Snakes.") appears in print. I have had to leave gaps for two subspecies for which the descriptions are still in press, the data for these will probably appear in No.4 Journal.

Nobody seemed to have any strong feelings about the size of the Journal, so it remains at foolscap; this is actually a more convenient size for check lists and tables and the possible benefit derived from quarto (mainly ease in filing) is offset by a 50% rise in production costs which would follow a switch to the smaller size.

There was no opposition to the admission of Associate Members, so the Constitution has been amended accordingly.

As only four members were interested in the proposed blazer badge this project has been dropped until there is sufficient demand for it. Six members have supported the suggested lapel badge.

I am taking steps to have the Association name and badge registered and will then make enquiries about the cost of badges.

I have been gently chided by one American correspondent for failing to indicate the authorship of the articles in the first two Journals. All the articles in Nos. 1 & 2 were products of my own pen, but in future issues I hope to include some articles by other members and we are glad to welcome Desmond Vesey-FitzGerald as a contributor to this number.

Details are at present being worked out for the admission of three American Zoological Societies to Associate Membership and I have had several more applications from South Africa, so the foundation of a wide network of extralimital correspondents is being laid.

Contents of Journal No.3 are as follows:

- Page 2. A Checklist of the Snakes of Southern Rhodesia by D.G.B.
" 6. The Water Snakes of Lake Tanganyika. by D.Vesey-FitzGerald.
" 7. Feeding habits of Calamelaps & Aparallactus. by D.G.Broadley.
" 7. Wanted - Mole Snakes. and Here and There.

Good Hunting,

D.G.Broadley,
Hon.Secretary/Treasurer, H.A.R.

A CHECKLIST OF THE SNAKES OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA...March, 1958.

(Condensed from "The Herpetology of Southern Rhodesia. Part 1 ... Snakes." by Donald G. Broadley).

TYPHLOPIDAE

Typhlops delalandii Schlegel. Delaland's Blind-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 28. Diameter into length 41-50 times.
Largest..291-4-295mm. from Bulawayo. Range..Matabeleland.

Typhlops schlegelii mucruso (Peters). Zambezi Blind-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 32-36. Diameter into total length 21-53 times.
Largest..809-8-817mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

LEPTOTYPHLOPIDAE

Leptotyphlops conjuncta (Jan). Jan's Worm-Snake. / of nasal.
Midbody scale rows 14. Colour black; rostral less than twice width
Largest..132-13-145mm. from Umtali. Range..Eastern Districts.

Leptotyphlops scutifrons (Peters). Peters' Worm-Snake. / of nasal.
Midbody scale rows..14. Colour black; rostral more than twice width
Largest..209-14-223mm. from Balla Balla. Range..Mashonaland & Matabeleland.

Leptotyphlops longicauda (Peters). Long-tailed Worm-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 14. Colour flesh-pink.
Largest..178-27-205mm. from Irisvale. Range.. ?

BOIDAE

Python sebae (Gmelin). African Python.
Midbody scale rows 81-89; ventrals 270-284; subcaudals 63-81.
Largest..3430-380-3810mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

COLUBRIDAE...COLUBRINAE

Lycodonomorphus rufulus rufulus (Lichtenstein). Brown Water-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 166-175; subcaudals 55-74.
Largest..567-124-691mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia(?).

Lycodonomorphus rufulus mlanjensis Loveridge. Mlanje Water-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 21; ventrals 164-166; subcaudals 56-73.
Largest..340-120-460mm. from Nyamaropa. Range NE Districts.

Boaedon fuliginosus fuliginosus (Boie). Common House-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 26-33; ventrals 198-228; subcaudals 45-68.
Largest..1040-130-1170mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Lycophidion capense capense (A. Smith). Cape Wolf-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 165-192; subcaudals 25-39.
Largest..470-34(plus)-504mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Mehelya capensis capensis (A. Smith). Cape File-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 195-220; subcaudals 44-58.
Largest..1250-148-1398mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Mehelya nyassae (Gunther). Nyasa File-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 173-184; subcaudals 60-68.
Largest..470-105-575mm. from Fatima. Range..All S.Rhodesia(?).

Natriciteres olivacea olivacea (Peters). Olive Marsh-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 140-149; subcaudals 63-70.
Largest..407-120-527mm. from Victoria Falls. Range..All S.R. except
/extreme south and east.

Natriciteres olivacea uluguruensis (Loveridge). Montane Marsh-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15-17; ventrals 132-141; subcaudals 62-72.
Largest..280-116-396mm. from Vumba Mtn. Range..Eastern Border.

Meizodon semiornata semiornata (Peters). Semiornate Snake.
Midbody scale rows 21; ventrals 184; subcaudals 74.
Measures..262-83-345mm. from Sebungwe. Range..Zambezi Valley(?).

Philothamnus hoplogaster (Gunther). Southeastern Green-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 148-161; subcaudals 77-103.
Largest..460-158-618mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Philothamnus irregularis irregularis (Leach). Western Green-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 154-169; subcaudals 94-115.
Largest..808-338-1146mm. from Chirinda Forest. Range North & West.

Philothamnus semivariegatus semivariegatus (A.Smith) Bush-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 179-204; subcaudals 116-142.
Largest..780-328-1108mm. from Umshagashe River. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Prosymna sundevallii sundevallii (A.Smith). Sundevall's Shovel-Snout.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 154-181; subcaudals 23-28.
Largest..311-27-338mm. from Essexvale. Range..Matabeleland(?).

Prosymna lineata (Peters). Peters' Shovel-Snout.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 148-169; subcaudals 17-26.
Largest..270-20-290mm. from Irisvale. Range..All S.Rhodesia(?).

Prosymna ambigua stuhlmanni (Pfeffer) Eastern Shovel-Snout.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 132-162; subcaudals 23-31.
Largest..235-23-257mm. from Bulawayo. Range..All S.Rhodesia(?).

Pseudaspis cana (Linnaeus). Mole Snake.
Midbody scale rows 25-27; ventrals 181-208; subcaudals 52-68.
Largest..1065-165-1230mm. from Bulawayo. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Duberria lutrix subspecies. (Description in press.)

Telescopus semiannulatus semiannulatus A.Smith. Tiger Snake.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 202-241; subcaudals 58-70.
Largest..795-102(+)-897mm. from Bulawayo. Range.. All S.Rhodesia.

Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia hotamboeia (Laurenti). White-lipped Snake.
Midbody scale rows 18-21 (usually 19); ventrals 154-168; subcaudals 30
Largest..610-92(+)-702mm. from Nyamaropa. Range..All S.R. / -46.

Chamaetortus aulicus aulicus Gunther. Cross-barred Tree-Snake.
Not recorded from Southern Rhodesia, but may occur in the Eastern Districts.

Dispholidus typus (A.Smith). Boomslang.
Midbody scale rows 17-21 (usually 19); ventrals 171-196; subcaudals 104
Largest..1290-460-1750mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.R. / -130.

Thelotornis kirtlandii oatesii (Gunther). Oates' Vine-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 163-174; subcaudals 140-159.
Largest..900-517-1417mm. from Gatooma. Range..North-west S.R.

Thelotornis kirtlandii capensis A.Smith. Cape Vine-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 146-164; subcaudals 127-166.
Largest..910-530-1440mm. from Umtali. Range..South-east S.R.

Hemirhagerrhis nototaenia nototaenia (Gunther). Bark Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 164-168; subcaudals 72-83.
Largest..260-90-350mm. from Beitbridge. Range..below 2,500 ft.

Amplorhinus multimaculatus A.Smith. Many-spotted Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 140-141; subcaudals 58-75.
Largest..383-105-488mm. from Pungwe Causeway. Range..Eastern Dists.

Psammophylax tritaeniatus tritaeniatus (Gunther). Three-Lined Grass
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 150-168; subcaudals 54-67. / -Snake.
Largest..680-171-851mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Rhamphiophis oxyrhynchus rostratus Peters. Eastern Brown Beaked-
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 166-186; subcaudals 100-105. / Snake.
Largest..870-350-1220mm. from Mtoko. Range..below 4,000ft(?).

Dromophis lineatus (Dumeril & Bibron). Buff-striped Grass-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 149; subcaudals ?.
Measures..600-105(plus)-705mm. from Namini. Range..Namini(Zambezi).

Psammophis sibilans sibilans (Linnaeus). Olive Grass-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 167-177; subcaudals 92-107.
Largest..1253-487-1740mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Psammophis subtaeniatus subtaeniatus Peters. Stripe-bellied Sand-
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 158-175; subcaudals 105-123. / Snake.
Largest..763-392-1155mm. from Beitbridge. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Psammophis jallae Peracca. Rhodesian Sand-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 159-175; subcaudals 89-100.
Largest..762-373-1135mm. from Wankie. Range..Matabeleland, E to Sby.

Psammophis crucifer (Daudin). Cross-marked Grass-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 144-157; subcaudals 61-73.
Largest..287-88-375mm. from Odzani. Range..E.Districts; Matabeleland.

Psammophis angolensis (Bocage). Dwarf Sand-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 11; ventrals 140-162; subcaudals 72. / Balla Balla.
Largest..270-115-385mm. from Rusape. Localities: Rusape; Bulawayo;

Calamelaps unicolor mirolepis Gunther. Nyasa Purple-glossed Snake.
(This includes all Rhodesian material previously referred to:
C.concolor; C.warreni; C.polylepis and C.unicolor.) / caudals 19-29.
Midbody scale rows 19(males) or 21(females); ventrals 168-214; sub-
Largest..952-62-1014mm. from Odzi. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Calamelaps ventrimaculatus subspecies. (Description in press)

Xenocalamus bicolor bicolor Gunther. Bicolored Burrowing-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 218; subcaudals 24.
Measures..400-30-430mm. from Zambezi. Range..Western Matabeleland(?).

Chilorhinophis gerardi gerardi (Boulenger). Striped Burrowing-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 274-288; subcaudals 20-31. / Gatooma.
Largest..390-33-423mm. from Karoi. Range..Zambezi Valley, S to

Aparallactus lunulatus lunulatus (Peters). Reticulated Centipede-
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 148-173; subcaudals 55-62. / eater.
Largest..345-83-428mm. from Essexvale. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Aparallactus guentheri Boulenger. Black Centipede-eater.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 153-163; subcaudals 55-59.
Largest..275-82-357mm. from Umtali. Localities: Mazoe; Umtali.

Aparallactus capensis capensis A.Smith. Cape Centipede-eater.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 137-170; subcaudals 30-51.
Largest..268-63-331mm. from Odzi. Range..E.Districts; Mashonaland.

Aparallactus capensis capensis X bocagei intermediates.
Midbody scale rows 15; ventrals 156-178; subcaudals 45-63.
Largest..285-63-348mm. from Bulawayo. Range..Matabeleland.

COLUBRIDAE...DASYPELTINAE

Dasypeltis scabra (Linnaeus). Common Egg-eater.
Midbody scale rows 21-27; ventrals 192-248; subcaudals 45-70.
Largest..630-94-724mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

ELAPIDAE

Aspidelaps scutatus scutatus (A.Smith). Shield-Snake.
Midbody scale rows 21; ventrals 113-123; subcaudals 23-30.
Largest..510-59-569mm. from Zezani. Range..Matabeleland.

Elapsoidea sundevallii decosteri Boulenger. Southeastern Garter-
Midbody scale rows 13; ventrals 137-162; subcaudals 14-29. /Snake.
Largest..540-53-593mm. from Salisbury. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Naja haje haje (Linnaeus). Egyptian and Banded Cobras.
Midbody scale rows 19(rarely 17); ventrals 186-203; subcaudals 53-66.
Largest..1905-380-2285mm. from Nyamandhlovu. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Naja haje anchietae Bocage. Anchieta's Cobra.
Midbody scale rows 17. Not recorded from S.Rhodesia, but probably
occurs in the North-west. Recorded from Livingstone, N.Rhodesia.

Naja nigricollis mossambica Peters. Mozambique Spitting-Cobra.
Midbody scale rows 21-25; ventrals 182-203; subcaudals 54-70.
Largest..1285-258-1543mm. from Essexvale. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Naja melanoleuca Hallowell. Forest Cobra.
Midbody scale rows 19; ventrals 215; subcaudals 67.
Measures..1410-280-1690mm. from Mount Silinda. Range..E.Border.

Dendroaspis angusticeps (A.Smith). Southern Green-Mamba.
Midbody scale rows 17(usually 19); ventrals 214; subcaudals 120.
Measures..1275-427-1702mm. from Mount Silinda. Range..E.Border.

Dendroaspis polylepis polylepis (Gunther). Southern Brown-Mamba.
Midbody scale rows 21-25; ventrals 256-275; subcaudals 115-131.
Largest..2280-595-2875mm. from Bulawayo. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

VIPERIDAE

Atractaspis bibronii bibronii A.Smith. Southern Bibron's Burrowing
Midbody scale rows 21; ventrals 218-236; subcaudals 19-26. / Adder.
Largest..510-28-538mm. from Umtali. Range..Eastern Districts.

Atractaspis bibronii bibronii X rostrata intermediates.
Midbody scale rows 21-23; ventrals 217-252; subcaudals 20-27. / Ieland.
Largest..524-29-553mm. from Chishawasha. Range..Mashonaland; Matabe-

Causus rhombeatus (Lichtenstein). Rhombic Night-Adder.
Midbody scale rows 17-19; ventrals 138-151; subcaudals 24-32.
Largest..735-78-813mm. from Odzani. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Causus defilippii (Jan). Snouted Night-Adder.
Midbody scale rows 16-18; ventrals 112-127; subcaudals 10-19.
Largest..380-30-410mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Bitis arietans arietans (Merrem). Puff-Adder.
Midbody scale rows 31-36; ventrals 126-141; subcaudals 17-36.
Largest..920-70-990mm. from Umtali. Range..All S.Rhodesia.

Bitis gabonica gabonica (Dumeril & Bibron). Gaboon Viper.
Midbody scale rows 39-46; ventrals 134-136; subcaudals 19-22.
Largest..1196-70-1266mm. from Dzoroka, Chipinga. Range..E.Border.

Bitis caudalis (A.Smith). Horned Viper.
Midbody scale rows 24-27; ventrals 120-134; subcaudals 16-26.
Largest..300-22-322mm. from Bulawayo. Range..Matabeleland.

Bitis atropos (Linnaeus): Mountain Viper or Berg Adder.
Midbody scale rows 29-31; ventrals 121-134; subcaudals 18-25.
Largest..310-37-347mm. from Chimanimani Mts. Range..E.Border.

In order to establish the range of variation in Southern Rhodesian material, I collated the data for 1265 specimens. From this catalogue I can obtain some indication of the relative abundance of each species. The twelve commonest species were:

1. <u>Dispholidus typus</u>	86	specimens.
2. <u>Naja nigricollis mossambica</u>	76	"
3. <u>Naja haje haje</u>	75	"
4. <u>Boaedon f. fuliginosus</u>	65	"
5. <u>Crotaphopeltis h. hotamboeia</u>	61	"
6. <u>Typhlops schlegelii mucruse</u>	54	"
7. <u>Causus defilippii</u>	53	"
8. <u>Psammophylax t. tritaeniatus</u>	52	"
9. <u>Bitis a. arietans</u>	51	"
10. <u>Aparallactus c. capensis</u>	47	"
11. <u>Lycophidion c. capense</u>	46	"
12. <u>Causus rhombeatus</u>	45	"

It will be interesting to compare the figures for Northern Rhodesia when the Checklist for this territory is completed. At the moment Crotaphopeltis h. hotamboeia (38 specimens) leads from Causus rhombeatus (29). Naja h. haje is represented by a single specimen and I have not yet seen a Causus defilippii from N.R., although it does occur there.

In the list for S. Rhodesia the figures for the first two species could have been higher, for I neglected to take scale counts of many specimens of these common snakes.

THE WATER SNAKES OF LAKE TANGANYIKA. by Desmond Vesey-FitzGerald.

Snake-hunting by night on Lake Tanganyika is always a rewarding occupation. It is most fun on a dark, calm, moonless, night during the dry season, and so joined by some companions who came along for the adventure, and provided with torches, butterfly-nets and cloth bags, we set off from Abercorn one evening down the long hill to the lake. On the way we almost ran over a fine boom-slang gliding across the road, in fact it took several yards to pull up on the steep hill, by which time the snake had climbed up into a roadside bush. As we approached, he made a splendid threatening display with extended tongue, and blown out neck held in an S-shape ready to strike. Luckily I had my camera and got a splendid picture.

Arrived at the little port of Mpulungu, we spent some time looking around for a boat, and in the meantime collected a fine female night-adder emerging on a frog-catching expedition at dusk. The twinkling lights of the "white bait" fisherman's boats were already coming out from every sheltered bay, and so we paddled out to join them on the calm waters of the lake. Hardly had we got our acetylene flare going, than there was a shout of "Snake!" Sure enough there was a little olive-brown water-snake, with head erect, swimming rapidly at the surface. Breathlessly we set off in pursuit, fearing that at any moment the little fellow would dive into the depths of the lake. But not a bit of it, we soon found our efforts were unnecessary because the reptile was coming as fast as it could towards our light! A scoop with the net and the prize was ours, a lovely female Lycodonomorphus bicolor, containing five eggs ready to be laid and a freshly caught sardine in her gullet. I was jubilant because this species occurs nowhere else except in Lake Tanganyika, and it was one of the ones we had come to get. My companions however were not at all happy at the turn of events, they had not really believed that I intended to hoist living snakes into the little boat! But there was no alternative for them now because the lake itself appeared to be alive with snakes. My willing helpers were soon netting them at every turn. I was fully occupied bagging the catch as of course part of the bargain was that I let none loose in the boat.

Suddenly there was a really excited cry and the lamp was turned on to a splendid specimen, fully seven feet long, gliding like an arrow in the clear depths of the lake. For a moment every detail of the rich brown body was seen, and the three black bands on the neck at once determined it as the coveted Storm's Water-cobra, Boulengerina annulata stormsi. But before our decks could be cleared for action the serpent disappeared into the shades beneath the boat, and so another expedition must be organised to secure this prize.

FEEDING HABITS OF CALAMELAPS AND APARALLACTUS. by D.G. Broadley.

A male Calamelaps u. miolepis, 18" in length, was recently brought in to the National Museum from 15 miles north of Bulawayo. Fossorial species are invariably poor feeders in captivity, but this one proved to be an exception.

First I offered him a small dead Blind-Snake (Typhlops s. mucruso) which promptly vanished. A live Typhlops was then put in with him and some time later I saw it's tail lashing about above the sand, while it's head was down a burrow. I investigated and found the Calamelaps with his jaws clamped firmly behind the unfortunate Blind-Snake's head. He let go on being disturbed, but later swallowed his victim. This was followed by another small Typhlops and two Worm-Snakes (Leptotyphlops scutifrons), but small frogs, toads and lizards were ignored. More recently the Calamelaps has overcome his scruples to some extent and swallowed two small lizards (Mabuya v. varia and Nucras intertexta holubi).

Centipede-eaters (Aparallactus) rarely feed in captivity. A fine specimen of Aparallactus l. lunulatus from Essexvale ate two Red-legged Centipedes and I was lucky enough to witness one of these being overcome. The 17" snake seized the three inch centipede in the middle of it's body and chewed towards the head. In the meantime the centipede tried to sink it's fangs into the neck of the snake, but was foiled by the smooth scales, drops of venom were visible on the snake's neck. The venom of the Centipede-eater soon took effect and the chilopod gradually ceased to struggle and was rapidly swallowed head first.

A three-inch Red-legged Centipede was recovered from the stomach of an Aparallactus c. capensis from Gatooma, but the only centipedes taken by captive specimens were the inch long black species. I several times saw these little black-headed snakes seize a centipede and then drop it when they were bitten. Eventually they would grip it close behind the head and quickly dispose of it.

I would like to hear from any members who have observed fossorial species feeding in captivity. The genera concerned are: Typhlops; Leptotyphlops; Prosymna; Scaphiophis; Calamelaps; Xenocalamus; Chilorhinophis; Aparallactus; Aspidelaps; Elapsoidea; Atractaspis.

WANTED - MOLE SNAKES.

Dick Isemonger wants to do some research into the rate of growth of South African and Rhodesian Mole Snakes. He would like to get hold of two Rhodesian specimens of Pseudaspis cana not less than 2½ feet in length and offers 10/- per foot and all expenses involved.

HERE AND THERE

UMTALI...A juvenile Mamba (Dendroaspis p. polylepis) has just sloughed and is now black with a dark olive green head and neck. He struck and killed a small rat in ten seconds. (D.K. Blake)

BALLA BALLA...Five adult puffadders are feeding readily on dead lizards (Mabuya g. margaritifera), this is useful as the local rats avoid my traps, but as the snakes were very reluctant to take toads I hardly expected them to show any interest in lizards. (D.G.B)