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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles shall be considered for publication provided that they are original and have not been published elsewhere. Articles will be submitted for peer review at the editor's discretion. Authors are requested to submit manuscripts by e-mail in MS Word '.doc or .docx' format.

The views and opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Editor.

COMMITTEE OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: *Lamprophis guttatus,* 12,5 km west of Mokhotlong, Lesotho. Photo: W. R. Branch.

EDITORIAL

First up, I'd like to apologise to HAA members and contributors for the long delay in getting this issue of the newsletter out. I have been faced with a few challenges this year and have discussed the future of *African Herp News* with the committee, so I'm hoping to see a more consistent and regular newsletter being published in the months ahead.

This has been an exceptionally busy one for African herpetology, and there is still more to come. Earlier this year we saw the long awaited launch of the *Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*. It was a two-phase launch, with an event in Pretoria, Gauteng, catering for the 'north-eastern' herpetological community and another event held in Cape Town, Western Cape, to cater for the 'south-western' crowd. The Atlas is the first to be published in a series of monographs titled Suricata and the most comprehensive conservation assessment of the region's reptiles.

12th Herpetological Association of Africa Conference

The 12th Herpetological Association of Africa Conference is scheduled to take place from 19 to 23 November 2014. It will be held at the Gobabeb Research and Training Centre in the Namib Desert, Namibia. This conference will afford herpetologists a great opportunity to discover some of the uniquely adapted desert reptiles found in the region. Visit the Herpetological Association of Africa website www.africanherpetology.org for more information.

Warren Schmidt
Newsletter Editor

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAUNCH OF THE ATLAS AND RED LIST OF THE REPTILES OF SOUTH AFRICA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND

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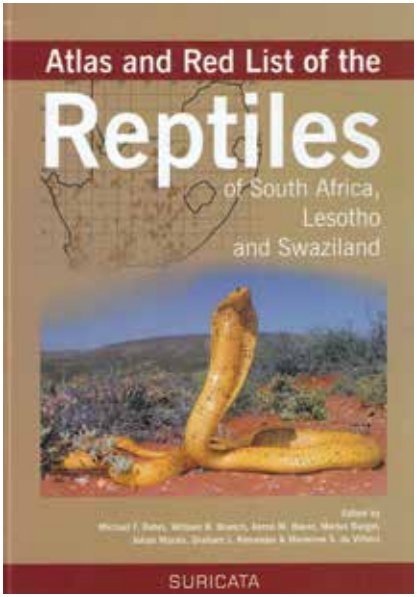
After a long anticipated wait, and following years of active field work, data crunching, reptile taxonomy reviews, workshops, and thousands of virtual museum submissions from the public, the *Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland* has finally been published.

The assessment has revealed that one-fifth of all reptile species and subspecies are of conservation concern, largely due to habitat destruction. Two species are considered extinct, five Critically Endangered, 10 Endangered and 21 Vulnerable.The Atlas is the most up-to-date work on the distribution of the reptiles in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. It covers 422 species and subspecies and a concerted effort was made to publish photographs of all reptile taxa in the region. The Atlas was edited by Michael Bates, William Branch, Aaron Bauer, Marius Burger, Johan Marais, Graham Alexander and Marienne de Villiers, all of whom did a sterling job in coordinating this project and seeing it through to publication.

The Atlas was launched at two venues, with the first launch taking place at the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens, on Wednesday 16 April 2014 and a second launch at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in Cape Town on Tuesday 6 May 2014. Both launches were attended by a host of South African herpetologists.



The Reptile Atlas and Checklist of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland marks the initiation of a new series of publications by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). By Act of Parliament in 2004, SANBI grew out of the National Botanical Institute to take responsibility for all biodiversity in South Africa. Its mandate was extended to include all life, not just plants. This publication marks the opportunity to launch a monographic series for South African animals *Suricata*, and the reptile atlas is the first of many planned animal monographs.

Left to right: Editors William (Bill) Branch, Johan Marais, Michael Bates, Marius Burger, Graham Alexander and Marienne de Villiers. Photo: Warren Schmidt.

Left to right: le Fras Mouton, Atherton de Villiers, John Measey, Krystal Tolley, Ernst Baard, Retha Hofmeyr and Andrew Turner. Photo: Shelley Edwards.

Left to right: Minister Counsellor Brevik of the Norwegian Embassy, Domitilla Raimondo from SANBI and Michael Bates from the National Museum. Photo: Warren Schmidt.

Harold Braack (left) and Bill Branch (right) celebrating the launch of the *Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland***. Photo: Warren Schmidt.**

Two of the editors: Marienne de Villiers and Johan Marais.
Photo: Warren Schmidt.

Graham Alexander (left) and Marius Burger (right). Marius led several highly succesful field trips to survey reptiles in undercollected areas.
Photo: Warren Schmidt.

Les Underhill (left) from the Animal Demography Unit and Wendy Foden (right). Photo: Warren Schmidt.

Herpetologists and reptile enthusiasts at the Pretoria launch. Photo: Warren Schmidt.

The Cape Town launch was held at the Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens. Photo: Ryan Daniels.

Marius Burger autographing several years of hard work. Photo: Lukas Otto.

ARTICLES

UPDATE ON REPTILE TAXONOMY POST-PUBLICATION OF THE ATLAS AND RED LIST OF THE REPTILES OF SOUTH AFRICA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND

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Reptile taxonomy and systematics is moving at a rapid pace. Since the official launch of the *Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland* (Bates *et al*, 2014), there have been several significant taxonomic revisions and new species descriptions affecting South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. This note serves to update the taxonomy of the region since the publication of *Suricata* 1.

Family Pelomedusidae

Petzold *et al* (2014) reviewed the African helmeted terrapins, *Pelamedusa*, and described six new species. These include *P. barbata* from the southwestern Arabian Peninsula, *P. kobe* from the Arusha region in Tanzania, *P. neumanni* from Kenya and Tanzania, *P. schweinfurthi* from the Central African Republic and South Sudan, *P. somalica* from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and *P. variabilis* from Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

Pelomedusa galeata (Schoepff, 1792) has been resurrected for populations in Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa.

Pelomedusa subrufa (Bonnaterre, 1789), is now restricted to Limpopo Province in South Africa, and elsewhere occurs in Southern Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Namibia and the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania (Petzhold et al, 2014).

Family Gekkonidae

Heinicke *et al* (2014), reviewed the phylogeny, taxonomy and biogeography of leaf-toed geckos. The South African species affected is *Afrogecko swartbergensis* (Haacke, 1996), which has been placed in a new genus, *Ramigekko*, named in honour of Bill Branch, *'rami'* meaning branch.

The Angolan species, *Afrogecko plumicaudus* Haacke, 2008, is transferred to the new genus *Kolekanos*. The remaining South African leaf-toed geckos, *Afrogecko porphyreus* (Daudin, 1802) and *Cryptactites peringueyi* (Boulenger, 1910), remain unchanged (Heinicke, 2014).

Jacobsen *et al* (2014) have described nine new species of *Afroedura* from Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. Although most of these species have been known for well over two decades, molecular studies have allowed for a clearer understanding of their

taxonomic affinities.

The new species are as follows: *A. rupestris*, *A. maripi*, *A. pongola*, *A. rondevelica*, *A. granitica*, *A. leoloenis*, *A. broadleyi*, *A. waterbergensis* and *A. pienaari*. All previously recognised subspecies have been elevated to specific status, i.e. *Afroedura africana namaquensis* (*A. namaquensis*), *A. multiporis multiporis* (*A. multiporis*) and *A. multiporis haackei* (*A. haackei*) and the Namibian *A. africana tirasensis* (*A. tirasensis*) (Jacobsen, 2014).

Travers, Jackman and Bauer (2014) published a molecular phylogeny of the Afromontane dwarf geckos (*Lygodactylus*). The phylogenetic analysis has given rise to a better understanding of the evolutionary history of these geckos, resulting in some taxonomic reshuffling, with some species being reassigned to clades that accurately reflect their evolutionary history. The previous Afromontane groupings were found to be non-monophyletic. Previously recognised subspecies have all been elevated to specific status. These fall within the *ocellatus* group and include the following South African species: *Lygodactylus ocellatus ocellatus* (*L. ocellatus*), *L. ocellatus soutpansbergensis* (*L. soutpansbergensis*), *L. nigropunctatus nigropunctatus* (*L. nigropunctatus*), *L. nigropunctatus incognitus* (*L. incognitus*) and *L. nigropunctatus montiscaeruli* (*L. montiscaeruli*) (Travers *et al*, 2014).

Broadley, Jackman & Bauer, 2014, reviewed the genus *Homopholis* and resurrected *Homopholis arnoldi* Loveridge, 1944, from the synonymy of *Homopholis wahlbergii* (A. Smith, 1849). *Homopholis arnoldi* is distributed in the northwestern and northern parts of Limpopo Province, as well as eastern Botswana, Zimbabwe and central Mozambique (Broadley *et al*, 2014).

Family Scincidae

Under the current taxonomic arrangement, South African skinks are divided into three subfamilies: Acontinae (25 taxa), Lygosominae (17 taxa), Scincinae (19 taxa). Hedges (2014) has proposed that the diverse Scincidae be split into 9 separate families, and has described two new families, the Ateuchosauridae and the Ristellidae.

Under this proposal, South African skinks would fall under the following arrangement: Acontidae Gray, 1839 (containing the genera *Acontias* and *Typhlosaurus*), Eugongylidae Welch, 1982 (containing the genera *Afroablepharus* and *Cryptoblepharus*), Lygosomidae Mittleman, 1952 (containing the genus *Mochlus*), Mabuyidae Mittleman, 1952 (containing the genus *Trachylepis*), Scincidae Oppel, 1811 (containing the genus *Scelotes*).

Family Typhlopidae

Hedges *et al* (2014) proposed a taxonomic framework for the snake family Typhlopidae. Under this proposal, the Typhlopidae is split into four subfamilies: Afrotyphlopinae, Asiatyphlopinae, Madatyphlopinae and Typhlopinae. Mainland African species would fall under the Afrotyphlopinae, which contains the genera *Afrotyphlops*, *Letheobia* and *Rhinotyphlops*. *Megatyphlops* Broadley & Wallach, 2009, is absorbed into the genus *Afrotyphlops* under this arrangement (Hedges *et al*, 2014).

The above proposed taxonomic changes should be taken into consideration when using the *Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*. Additional taxa and changes are expected as taxonomists gain further insight to the region's remarkable reptile diversity (M.F. Bates pers. comm.).

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DESCRIPTIONS OF BLACK BOOMSLANG (*Dispholidus typus* "*nigra*") IN THE LITERATURE

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"Authority" is often appealed to in support of a particular taxonomic position, but "authority" in the form of Robert Mertens - in his day widely regarded as Europe's leading herpetologist committed a *faux pas* when describing *Thrasops jacksonii mossambicus* (SMF 22246) as a new race of this harmless species when it proved to be a misidentified Boomslang (Loveridge 1944: 137, Mertens 1937: 13, 1967: 98), possessor of the most toxic venom of any African snake (Christensen 1955: 10, Meyer 1974: 224)! On the other hand, specimens of *Thrasops jacksoni* from Mt Elgon, Uganda (NMW 26054.1) and Beni, Democratic Republic of the Congo (NMW 26054.2) were first listed as *Dispholidus typus* var. *nigra* (pers. obs.) but this name did not get into print.

Science is democratic in that anyone, with or without adequate training, can participate; authority has no recognised veto but an editor does have. What should be recognised as of value is experience and in as far as Mertens had familiarity with a wide range of living 'herps' he was an authority. But his familiarity with *Thrasops* and *Dispholidus* would not have been as great as an otherwise ignorant, "unqualified" field collector in Africa who may have handled many more live specimens.

Arthur Loveridge was another "authority", meticulous in his methods, well-seasoned in the field in East Africa, yet examination of black specimens of Dispholidus typus in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) where he worked for decades, revealed two specimens from Buta (MCZ 25954-5), ex-Belgian Congo) to be mis-identified *Thrasops jacksoni*. In other major museums this discovery of error was repeated: In Berlin (ZMB) three "*Dispholidus typus*" from Bukoba, Tanzania (ZMB 11929, 13261, 13345) proved to be *Thrasops jacksoni*; in Leiden (RMNH) at least one of two "*D. typus*" from Ofoubou, Gabon (Waardenburg & Guisherit 1991: Table 1) has proved to be a *Thrasops aethiopissa* (RMNH 26853), the other not being available (July 2012) for confirmation. And lastly I am indebted to Olivier Pauwels and Jean Pierre Vande weghe (2008: 171) who have corrected my misidentification of a "*Dispholidus typus*" from Gabon (Knoepffler, 1966: 15) as *Thrasops jacksoni* to being a *Rhamnophis a. aethiopissa*: this is of some satisfaction to me as my re-identifiction (1983: 317) was made without seeing the specimen but on the basis of my conviction that a black snake ("noire-bleuté") with the meristics provided was most unlikely to be a *Dispholidus* and from being black unlikely to be *R. aethiopissa*.

Published accounts of *Dispholidus typus* by experienced herpetologists often refer to "black" specimens from different parts of Africa [Table 1]: in East Africa Loveridge (1918: 326 claimed to have green, brown and black varieties from Morogoro, Tanzania; Ionides (in Loveridge 1955: 187) claimed that black Boomslangs of both sexes occurred at Liwale, Tanzania where he was resident; and Spawls *et al*. (2002: 387) claim a variety

of colour patterns, including, "uniform black", echoing an earlier opinion by Spawls & Branch (1995: 21) that "...males may be uniform brown to black . .". From Southern Africa, Broadley (1983: 253) wrote, "...uniformly black above and greyish black below" (for some specimens) and Alexander & Marais (2007: 138) say, "In some areas, males are dark brown to black with a bright yellow or dark grey belly." A semantic difficulty here is that specimens are often described as black when that is the predominant colour without meaning that they are uniformly black, not even above and exclusive of the belly colour. Spawls *et al* (2002: 388) and Gower *et al* (2012: 134) provide a colour photograph of a Botswana specimen which is dark grey above, off-white with black scale edging below – but not black.

The writer's moment of truth came, when in Ghana on 14th February, 1967, he shook the frond of a palm to dislodge a large black snake which then slithered down the frond and he had but a moment to decide if it was a *Thrasops* or a black *Dispholidus*, to grab it or risk its escape: he decided it could not be a Boomslang as black ones were (and still are) unknown from West Africa and that he was right to make a grab is evidenced by the snake now being in his collection (as bh C34P16) and this being written!

For these reasons the writer remains sceptical of claims for the existence of black boomslang and has so far encountered only the following museum specimens which appeared to be black but with the reservations here provided:

1. Peter's (1882: 132) old Sena specimen (ZMB 10020) is in poor condition, darkened post-morten and was originally identified as *Bucephalus typus* var. *viridis* which suggests that it was once green and has discoloured with preservation and age.

2. A Liwale specimen (NMK 1208) is claimed to come from outside the vicinity of the Usambaras, but as Liwale was the collector's operational base, it is possible that this is an attributed, not the true source, of the specimen. The blackness of these two specimens is comparable to that found in the *Thrasops* spp. with which others have sometimes been confused.

3. A third male, from Derema (BMNH 1971.210) in the Usambaras appears to have been black in life.

4. Another male, from Tendaguru (ZMB 24168) appears black but was originally named *D. t. viridis*, again suggesting that it was green in life; it has blotches of blue on the body, perhaps arising from its poor state of preservation.

5. A female from Mlalo (MCZ 23357) is black and is likely to have been black in life.

6. A second female, from Amani (ZMB 20340), has lighter patches before and behind the eye and in places on the body where it would seem to be a partially melanised brown specimen.

7. A third female, from Mazumbai (ZMB 48154) has a light patch under the chin but is otherwise black and correctly identified.

8. A fifth male, from Kolah (ZMB 21647) in Namibia, at first sight appears to be black but on closer inspection is more accurately described as dark grey.

9. Boulenger (1896:189) details a specimen (Fa) from "Ushambola, Zanzibar" as "uniformly black" and having looked carefully at the specimen I cannot disagree with him. However, it is possible that in life it was green and has been darkened post-mortem

although Boulenger was writing his description no more than 20 years after registration of the specimen. I have not been able to find "Ushambola" on maps or in gazetteers but according to Parker *et al*. (1940: 313) this is an archaic spelling of Usambara!

Of those listed above and in Table 1 I accept only nos 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9 (in bold) as likely to have been as uniformly black in life as are adults of *Thrasops flavigularis*, *jacksoni* and *occidentalis* – except for a straw-coloured throat, the others showing signs of discolouration post mortem. If "Ushambola" is rightly attributed then all come from the Usambara Mts in Tanzania except for the Liwale specimen (here no. 2). The ventral scale numbers are very similar (3 m, 2 f, 180-190) and all come from within the area which Laurent (1955: 128, 1956: 220, 358,1958c: 124, 1960: 53) has recognised to be the province of *D. t. viridis*: they may be regarded as variants of that subspecies. The Namibian specimen (no. 8), Laurent would have assigned to *D. t. punctatus*.

On present evidence it is likely that uniformly black specimens are found only in the area of the Usambara Mountains, Tanzania.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Observation of live Boomslangs took place over the period of my employment in the University of Ghana (1960-86), primarily in Ghana but also during a visit to Nairobi Snake Park (1971). Collections of alcohol-preserved specimens have been studied in museums in Europe (BMNH, MNHN, NMW, RMNH, ZMB), the United States (MCZ, USNM, YPM) and Kenya (NMK) to whose curators I am indebted. Literature has been pursued in libraries in UK (BMNH and BL) and the USA (AMNH and MCZ in 1985) whose librarians have always been helpful and considerate.

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Table 1: Black *Dispholidus typus*.

Text No:	Country:	Sex:	s-v (mm):	Tail (mm):	Tail % s-v:	Ventrals:	Sub-caudals:	Prefang teeth:
1	Mz	m	c. 1000	295+		?	75+	5
2	Tz	m	1025	330+		182	92+	4/5
3	Tz	m	?	555+		180	126+	6
4	Tz	m	1360	515	37.9	186	124	4
5	Tz	f	1320	345+		183	107+	?
6	Tz	f	1200	460	31.9	190	126	4
7	Tz	f	1275	487+		184	124	4/3
8	Na	m	1170	330+		169	92+	5
9	Tz	m	1325	500		179	126	5

Table 2: Published claims of black *Dispholidus typus*.

Author:	Year: Page:	Country:	Locality:
Loveridge	1918: 326	Tanzania	Morogoro
Stevenson-Hamilton	1929: 122	S Africa*	
Pringle	1954: 24	S Africa	
Ionides, in Loveridge	1955: 187	Tanzania	Liwale
Loveridge	1957: 273	Tanzania	
Hoesch	1960: 342	Namibia	
Pike	1964: 40	Zimbabwe	
Wakeman	1966: 102	Uganda	
Broadley	1983: 253	S Africa	
MacKay & MacKay	1985: 19	Kenya	
Hinkel & Fischer	1988: 17	Rwanda	
Fischer & Hinkel	1993: 267	Rwanda	
Spawls & Branch	1995: 21	E Africa	
Alexander & Marais	2007: 138	S Africa	

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NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

PIPIDAE

***Xenopus laevis* (Daudin 1802)**
African Clawed Frog

DIET

On 11 November 2013, we were seine netting Lamloch farm-stall dam, near Kleinmond (34°19'49"S, 19°04'55"E) to remove *X. laevis* whose numbers had built up to high levels at this site which is traditionally associated with *X. gilli* (cf. Measey & Davies 2011; Picker & De Villiers 1989). Upon capture, an adult male *X. laevis* (snout to vent length: 65.0 mm; head width: 16.6 mm; mass 28.0 g) regurgitated an adult male *Stongylopus grayii* (SVL 32.9 mm; HW 10.7 mm; remaining mass 2.8 g). The prey was partially digested (near the vent) suggesting that this item had been ingested some time previously, and that it had been captured from behind.

Invasive populations of *Xenopus laevis* are now documented from four continents, with some extensive work published on the ecology of these extralimital populations (see Measey *et al*. 2012 and references therein). The reputation of these frogs as voracious predators appears to be well deserved, as studies have documented that the diet to include fish (Lafferty & Page 1997; McCoid & Fritts 1980), mammals, birds (Measey 1998) and larval amphibians (Crayon 2005; Schramm 1987). Stewart (1967) observed *X. laevis* consume a post-metamorphic *Ametia* (presumably *A. angolensis* complex), although the relative sizes of these animals was not mentioned (also see Channing 2001). Other studies have inferred that the greatest effect that *X. laevis* populations may be on tadpoles of native species, but direct evidence is often lacking (Fouquet & Measey 2006; Lillo *et al*. 2005; Lobos & Measey 2002; Measey 1998). The difficulties of finding direct evidence of vertebrate meals have led some authors to speculate that predation pressure on other amphibians may be negligible (Lobos & Jaksic 2005). Compared to studies on invasive populations, there is still remarkably little known about the ecology of native southern African populations of *Xenopus laevis*.

Populations of *Xenopus laevis* are known to occupy the habitat of many threatened frogs in the southwestern cape, and at this site both *Microbatrachella capensis* (Critically Endangered) and *X. gilli* (Endangered) are known to breed. We suspect that large numbers of *X. laevis* at these sites are not only detrimental to these frogs due to competition, but also through direct predation of adults and presumably also tadpoles.

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Figure 1. Male *Xenopus laevis* regurgitating adult *Strongylopus grayii*.

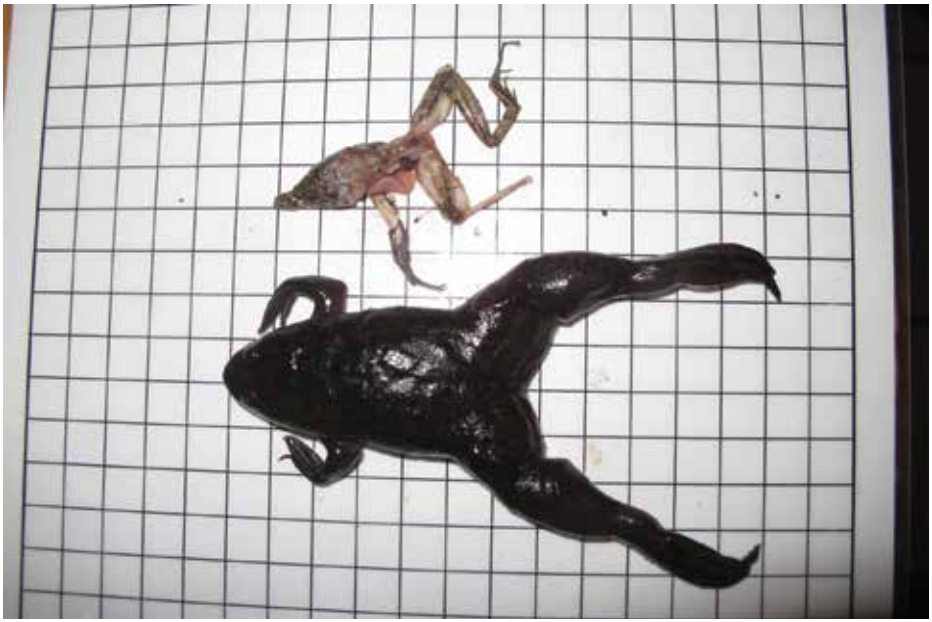

Figure 2. Adult *Strongylopus grayyi* (top) and *Xenopus laevis* (bottom).

TESTUDINIDAE

***Psammobates oculifer* (Kuhl, 1820)**
Serrated Tent Tortoise

DORMANCY

A male *P. oculifer* individual (SCL 10.5cm) found in urban Windhoek, central Namibia, and given to the author for safekeeping in early 2013, was kept in an indigenous garden setting in Windhoek. This individual settled in well and foraged without additional food being supplied. On 1 May 2013 the tortoise settled into dormancy at the base of an *Aloe arborescens* (Cunningham & Simang 2006 noted their preference for "thorny" plants as lying-up places) only becoming active again on 18 September 2013 – i.e. after four months and 17 days. It was observed that the tortoise was not totally dormant as it regularly shifted body positions, especially during early September just prior to it becoming active again. Average winter temperatures for Windhoek is 14°C (Mendelsohn *et al*. 2002) although the 2013 winter was unusually mild with no frost experienced (pers. obs.) and the first rains for the 2013/14 season were measured on 24 (3 mm), 25 (3 mm) and 26 (11 mm) September 2013.

Kalahari Tent Tortoises are known to become dormant or semi-dormant for extensive periods (e.g. at least 4-5 months – Boycott & Bourquin 2000) during the dry winter months and known to retreat to secluded areas where they partially bury themselves into loose soil at the base of scrub, bush-clumps or fallen trees, or even retreat into animal burrows (Alexander & Marais 2007; Boycott & Bourquin 2000; Branch 1998).

This observation on dormancy for a *P. oculifer* individual from central Namibia confirms the long period of inactivity as indicated by Boycott & Bourquin (2000).

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GERRHOSAURIDAE

***Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus* Hallowell, 1857**
Black-lined Plated Lizard

ENDOPARASITES

Three *G. nigrolineatus* (mean snout-vent length, SVL = 96.7 mm ± 24.9 SD, range = 78-125 mm) were collected on 15 June 2013 in DRC, Kinshasa Province, Mpoli, (03.11525°S, 16.11889°E, elevation: 289 m). These voucher specimens were fixed in buffered formalin solution in the field, soaked in water for 24 h, and transferred to 70% ethanol before being deposited in the UTEP Biodiversity Collections (UTEP 20892-20894). The digestive tract of these specimens was removed, opened, and the contents were examined under a dissecting microscope. Two species of Nematoda were recovered. They were cleared in a drop of lactophenol on a glass microscope slide, coverslipped, and studied under a compound microscope. Each of the three *G. nigrolineatus* harbored in the small and large intestines specimens assignable to *Africana acuticeps* (prevalence = number lizards infected/number lizards examined X 100 = 100%; mean intensity = mean number parasites per infected lizard = 22.7 ± 22.0 SD, range = 1-45) and one lizard (in its stomach) harbored three larvae assignable to *Abbreviata* sp, (prevalence = 33%). Voucher helminths were deposited in the United States National Parasite Collection (USNPC), Beltsville, Maryland, USA as: *Africana acuticeps* (USNPC 108149); *Skrjabinoptera wetzeli* (USNPC 108148).

Africana acuticeps has previously been reported from *Chamaeleo gracilis* and *C. dilepis*, both from DRC (Baylis 1937). A discussion of *Africana* species is in Bouamer & Morand (2007). *Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus* represents a new host record for *A. acuticeps*. *Skrjabinoptera wetzeli* was originally described from *Agama aculeata* in DRC (Hörchner & Weissenberg, 1965). It has also been reported from *Agama hispida* from Zambia (Simbotwe, 1979) and *Chondrodactylus turneri* and *Trachylepis spilogaster* from Namibia (McAllister *et al*., 2011). *Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus* represents a new host record for *Skrjabinoptera wetzeli*.

Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus was recently restricted to the region of Gabon and Lower Congo by Bates *et al*. (2013). As the locality Mpoli is in the lower Congo region, we are confident in referring the lizard hosts discussed above to this species. To our knowledge there are two published reports of helminths found in *G. nigrolineatus*. Southwell & Lake (1939) reported the cestode *Oochoristica truncata* (as *O. agamae* from *C. flavigularis nigrolineatus*) from Kwango in southwestern Belgian Congo (modern-day Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC). Given its proximity to confirmed records from lower Congo (sensu Bates *et al* 2013), this record is attributable to *G. nigrolineatus*. Goldberg and Bursey (2010) reported the same species of cestode from *G. nigrolineatus* (now considered to be *G. intermedius*) from Uganda.

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CHAMAELEONIDAE

***Bradypodion melanocephalum* (Gray, 1865)**
KwaZulu Dwarf Chameleon

REPRODUCTION

Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (29°45'634"S, 31°01'675E, 2931CC, 34m a.s.l). On the 8 September 2013, a gravid adult female Kwa-Zulu Dwarf Chameleon (*Bradypodion melanocephalum*) was collected at the above location. At this time she weighed 7.4 g. On the 21 September of the same year the birth of 14 live young was observed. The average mass was 0.2 g (See Table 1). No still-births occurred. The female, which was measured after she had completed parturition, had a snout-vent length of 58 mm and a tail length of 55 mm. Her mass at this stage was 3.2 g, which is relatively close to the combined weight of all fourteen babies which was 2.8 g.

Birth in this chameleon species has not previously been documented during the month of September. Raw (1976) and Branch (1998) state that birth occurs during the summer months and litter sizes contain up to 12 tiny babies. However, Tilbury (2010) mentions that litters can contain 10 to 19 young.

Table 1: Snout-vent and tail length measures for a litter of fourteen neonate *Bradypodion melanocephalum* from Durban, South Africa.

Individual:	**SVL (mm):**	**Tail (mm):**	**Total (mm):**
1	20	22	42
2	19	21	40
3	20	23	43
4	21	24	45
5	20	21	41
6	19	20	39
7	21	24	45
8	21	23	44
9	20	24	44
10	21	23	44
11	20	21	41
12	20	24	44
13	21	24	45
14	20	24	44
Mean	**20.21**	**22.71**	**42.93**

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COLUBRIDAE

***Amblyodipsas polylepis* (Bocage, 1873)**
Common Purple-glossed Snake

Mimicry

On the evening of 8 February 2014, at approximately 20:00 an adult Common Purple-glossed Snake (*Amblyodipsas polylepis*) was encountered on a dirt road in the Crocriver Conservancy near Mbombela, Mpumalanga, South Africa (25º353'15.51" S; 31º08'28.15"E; 700 m.a.s.l). Accessioned into the Reptile Map Virtual Museum as SARCA No. 151657. While photographing the snake it began to exhibit stereotypical defensive behaviour, including hiding the head under body coils, and raising the tail tip (Marais 2004). However, further handling of the snake with large forceps resulted in an as yet undescribed stereotyped defensive behaviour that resembled the defensive hood-spreading typical of a cobra (*Naja*). While keeping the head protected under body coils the snake dorso-ventrally flattened the last 120 mm of the body, and curled the tail tip perpendicular to the body (Fig. 1). In doing so, it assumed a replica position of those adopted by defensive *Naja*. When the body of the snake was grasped gently using a pair of forceps, the snake twisted the body so that the "hood" was facing the point of contact in the same way that a cobra follows a moving threat. Additionally, the snake would arc its body in a manner that imitated an artificial strike, such that the tip of the tail (= the cobra's head) would contact the forceps.

Naja species. occur through the geographic distribution of *A. polylepis* (Branch 1998, Spawls *et al*. 2002), suggesting that they would make an appropriate mimic

model. Moreover, the hooding behaviour of *Naja* spp. represents an unambiguous anti-predatory display that is likely understood by numerous predators of snakes. We are uncertain as to the prevalence of such behaviour, and concede that our interpretation of such posturing may represent nothing more than coincidental similarity. However the similarity between the posture and movements observed and those displayed by *Naja* is striking, and certainly warrant further investigation.

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Figures 1-3: While handling the snake it began to show stereotypical defensive behaviour including hiding the head under body coils and raising the tail tip. Further handling with forceps resulted in behaviour resembling that of a spread hood.

COLUBRIDAE

***Gonionotophis nyassae* (Günther, 1888)**
Black File Snake

DIET

On the evening of 4 February 2014, at approximately 19:00, an adult Black File Snake (*Gonionotophis nyassae*) (SARCA No. 98927) was encountered on a dirt road in the Crocriver Conservancy near Mbombela, Mpumalanga, South Africa (25º33'38.07"S; 31º10'50.11"E; 960 m a.s.l), in the process of subduing and swallowing a struggling East African Shovel-snout (*Prosymna stuhlmannii*; Fig. 1-6). We were unable to measure either of the snakes directly; however we estimate the total length of the File Snake to be 600 mm, and the total length of the Shovel-snout to be 200 mm. The entire process of ingestion took fewer than 5 min to complete, following which the File Snake moved off the road.

Our observation is the first record of *P. stuhlmannii* in the diet of *G. nyassae*, and represents one of only two known instances of ophidiophagy in the species. Shine *et al*. (1996) reviewed the available literature regarding the diet of *G. nyassae* and examined the stomach contents of 58 specimens. They reported that the species is known to primarily consume terrestrial lizards, particularly lygosomatine skinks, and occasionally frogs (Shine *et al*. 1996). Additionally, they identified the remains of two snakes in the guts of preserved specimens: one a *Leptotyphlops*, the other unidentifiable. More recent texts (Branch 1998, Marais 2004, Alexander & Marais 2008) do not provide aditional information on the diet of *G. nyassae*.

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Figures 1-4: *Gonionotophis nyassae* (SARCA No. 98927) feeding on *Prosymna stuhlmanni*. Photo: Bryan Maritz.

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PSEUDOXYRHOPHIIDAE

***Dromicodryas bernieri* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854**
Bernier's Striped Snake

CLIMBING BEHAVIOUR

On 9 December 2007 at 14:45, a *Dromicodryas bernieri* was seen climbing a pine tree in a rural area alongside Route 7 near Ambatolampy, Madagascar (19°23'25.77"S, 47°25'27.37"E). (See figure 1 and 2.) It could be seen slowly moving its way upwards, using the rough bark to hold its grip. The pine tree was solitary with short mowed grasses surrounding it, and a human settlement 20 meter distant. After 8 min the snake disappeared out of sight at a height of approximately 5 m. This seems to be the first published record of tree climbing in *D. bernieri*. Most snake species appear terrestrial, rarely entering shrubs or trees. The Malagasy widely-distributed *Dromicodryas bernieri* is also terrestrial (Glaw & Vences, 2007). The reason for this arboreal behavior remains unknown. Possibilities are seeking shelter or foraging. *D.bernieri* feeds on lizards (Glaw

& Vences, 2007) and many Malagasy geckos live in trees. However, the snake showedno interest in potential gecko retreats under loose bark and in cavities. It seems most likely that the snake sought shelter in the tree, perhaps to avoid predation.

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Figure 1. *Dromicodryas bernieri* climbing a pine tree near Ambatolampy, Madagascar.

Figure 2. Detail of *Dromicodryas bernieri* climbing. Photo: Richard Struijk.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTIONS

LACERTIDAE

***Pedioplanis lineoocellata lineoocellata* (Duméril & Bibron 1839)**
Spotted Sand Lizard

On 10 February 2013, a juvenile *Pedioplanis l. lineoocellata* was found 25 km south of Gam, Otjozondjupa region, Namibia (field number SK160, to be catalogued at the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, Germany). Based on museum collections (Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (Pretoria), Port Elizabeth Museum and the National Museum of Namibia (Windhoek) five localities with *P. l. lineoocellata* populations (or at least single records) have been recorded near the Otjozondjupa region, plus an additional one from near Katima Mulilo in the non-arid Caprivi strip (Fig. 1, circled area). However, in the literature these areas are largely overlooked as being part of the distribution range of the species (see Branch, 1998). -Bates & Heideman (1997) recorded a specimen of *P. lineoocellata* (referred to *P. l.* cf. *pulchella*) from Onyaanya in Ovamboland which represented the most northerly record for this species. Timberlake & Childes (2004, p. 325) classify *P. lineoocellata* as part of the Central Kalahari Fauna and describe its distribution as "a wide range in arid SW Africa, ranging north through the Kalahari to the margins of the Okavango/Makgadikgadi".

The collected *P. l. lineoocellata* specimen has a snout-to-vent length (SVL) of 28 mm, 12-14 rows of ventral scales around midbody, two large black-edged transparent scales it each lower eyelid, no enlarged tympanic shield and the posterior dorsal scales are rhombic, slightly overlapping and slightly keeled, smaller but almost as large as the scales on the tibia. The colour is blackish with a greyish head and a greyish broad vertebral stripe lined by two rows of 14 and 15 light grey spots. On each side there is one dorsolateral and one lateral cream-coloured stripe and an additional row of spots in between. The limbs are grey with light spots.

The southern-most record of the five localities from the Otjozondjupa region (see Fig. 1), catalogued as TM 80374 and recorded by Wulf Haacke (former Curator of Herpetology in the Transvaal Museum (now the Ditsong Museum of Natural History, Pretoria), was confirmed during our survey. It was found in Kalahari Acacia Woodland (20°27'46"S, 20°43'21"E, 2020BD) in a patch largely dominated by *Combretum apiculatum* with a semi-dense grass layer on sandy soil (Fig. 2). In the surrounding area, which was much more open and *Acacia* sp. was the dominating tree species, the following reptile species were recorded: *Trachylepis varia, Meroles squamulosus, Ichnotropis capensis, Heliobolus lugubris* and *Agama aculeata*.

The nearest record from the Otjozondjupa region is 25 km away at Gam, catalogued as SMR 3519 in the National Museum of Namibia. The nearest record within the published distribution range is from Farm Labora 436 (TM 33517) which is 200 km south-west.

The known range of *Pedioplanis l. lineoocellata* extends from around the Etosha pan in northern Namibia south to the Sperrgebiet and Bloemfontein in South Africa, east across southern Botswana to the Limpopo Province in South Africa (Branch, 1998). Generally, the species is known to occur in a variety of habitats including karroid veld, mesic thicket and arid and mesic savannah, but it is absent from deep sand areas like the Namib Desert and the central Kalahari (Branch, 1998).

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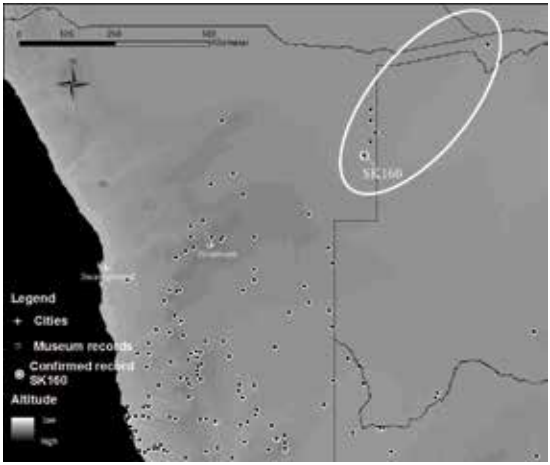

Figure 1. Part of the distribution range of *P. l. lineoocellata* compiled from the museum collections of the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong Museum of Natural History, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth Museum (both in South Africa) and the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek, including the confirmed record SK160. The circled area shows the localities that are hitherto mostly neglected in the literature.

Figure 2. Habitat of *P. l. lineoocellata* south of Gam, Namibia.

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***Pedioplanis undata* (A. Smith, 1838)**
Western Sand Lizard

On 13 February 2013, four individuals of *Pedioplanis undata* (field numbers SK175-178, to be catalogued at the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, Germany) were collected at Gobabis, Gobabis District, Omaheke Region, Namibia (Fig. 1).

The four individuals, one adult male, one adult female and two juvenile specimens (Fig. 2 A-D), were caught near the Goba Lodge at 22°26'53"S, 18°57'33"E (2218BD) in savannah habitat on broken rocky ground with dense grass cover and interspersed shrubs (Fig. 3). Two more individuals were observed but not caught. All individuals exhibited similar escape behaviour dashing from shrub to shrub. When undisturbed they spent their time in more open areas with less dense grass cover and stonier substrate with sand and larger pebbles. Together with *P. undata*, four other lizard species were recorded: *Meroles squamulosus*, *Trachylepis varia*, *Gerrhosaurus flavigularis* and *Agama anchietae*.

Description of the specimens: The female (Fig. 1A) was gravid and contained four eggs. Its snout-to-vent length (SVL) is 57 mm, which is larger than the maximum recorded so far (54 mm; Branch, 1998). The specimen has 9-10 ventral scale rows around midbody, eight enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supracilliaries and a large tympanic scale.

The male individual (SVL = 54 mm) has 10-11 ventral scale rows, six enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supracilliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1B).

The smaller juvenile specimen (SVL = 27) has 10-11 ventral scale rows, five enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supracilliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1C).

The larger juvenile specimen (SVL = 29 mm) has 9-11 ventral scale rows, six enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supracilliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1D).

Compared to Branch (1998) and Conradie et al. (2012), the number of enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid is not in concordance with previous descriptions of the species.

Tissue samples of allspecimens were collected separately and stored in 99% Ethanol. We sequenced the mitochondrial ND2 gene (NADH dehydrogenase subunit 2) of the male and the female adult specimensand confirmed the identification of these vouchers as belonging to *P. undata*. A more comprehensive genetic analysis of the species is in preparation.

The species is endemic to Namibia (Conradie *et al*., 2012) and occurs widely in Northern and Central Namibia but enters the Namib Desert in the West only marginally. Southernmost records reach 23°30', and further inland the species has only once been recorded east of the B1 between Windhoek and Grootfontein, in 1985 at Ongegund/ Grootfontein (catalogued as SMR 4445, National Museum of Namibia/Windhoek). The new records from Gobabis lie approximately 190 km east of Windhoek and 290 km south of Ongegund.

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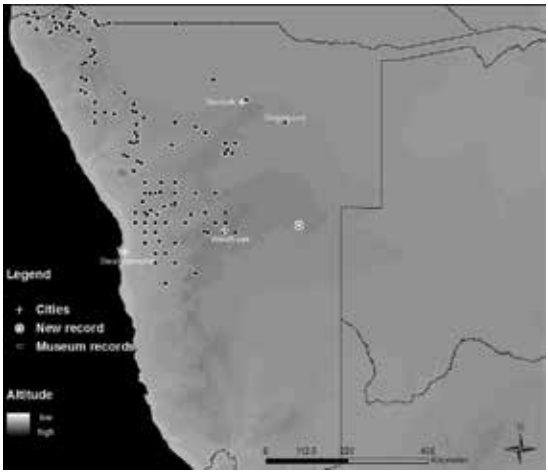

Figure 1. Distribution of *P. undata* compiled from the museum collections of the Museum for Nuturkunde, Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong National Museum of Natural History, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth Museum (both South Africa) and the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek, including the new record from Gobabis.

Figure 2. Habitat of *P. undata* near Gobabis, Namibia.

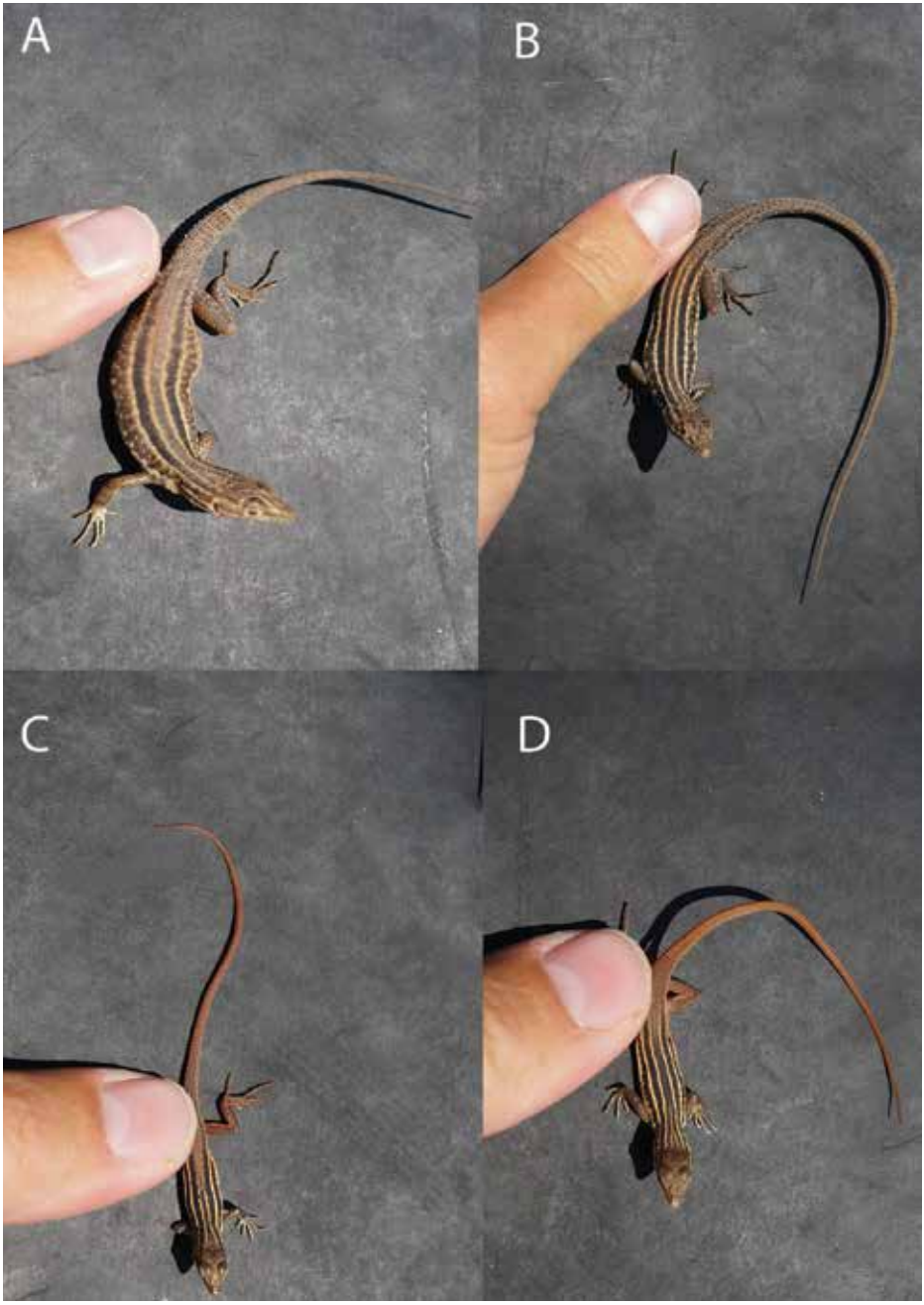

Figure 3. Images of live specimens of the four collected individuals of *P. undata*: (A) adult female (SK177), (B) adult male (SK178), (C) the smaller juvenile (SK176) and (D) the larger juvenile (SK175).

GERRHOSAURIDAE

***Tetradactylus africanus* (Gray, 1838)**
Eastern Long-tailed Seps

South Africa, Eastern Cape Province, Pondoland Coast, Lusikisiki district, Msikaba (3129BD, see below). On 20 December 1989 a female (ovaries examined) *Tetradactylus africanus* was collected at this locality and deposited in the collection of the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (Pretoria). The specimen (TM 69067) had a snout-to-vent length of 87.5 mm and tail length of 204 mm (of which 47 mm was regenerated). It is readily referable to *T. africanus* as each limb consists of only a single digit. Additional scalation details: head shields smooth; interparietal in contact with frontal, separating frontoparietals; dorsal scales in 14 longitudinal and 74 transverse (from nuchal row to row above vent) rows; ventral scales in six longitudinal and 57 transverse (axil to groin) rows.

This species occurs at a few localities in Swaziland and is fairly widespread in KwaZulu-Natal where it extends as far south as the Port Edward area in locus 3130AB (Bates 2014), but in the Eastern Cape it is known only from FitzSimons' (1943: 297) 'Pondoland Coast' record. The latter record is represented by a specimen (NMB R209) in the collection of the National Museum in Bloemfontein. This specimen was examined by the author and its identity confirmed (Bates 2014).

The Msikaba locality therefore represents only the second record of *T. africanus* in the Eastern Cape and may also represent the most southerly record for the species. This species may be more widespread in Pondoland, which has not been thoroughly surveyed for reptiles, although the area has experienced considerable habitat destruction as a result of cultivation, plantations and urban development (Mucina et al. 2006). *Tetradactylus fitzsimonsi* Hewitt, 1915, now treated as a full species, appears to be restricted to the Port Elizabeth and George areas (Bates 2014). Note: There are several villages called 'Msikaba' (also Mzikaba) in the area, as well as the Msikaba River, Msikaba Gorge and Msikaba campsite (opposite Mkambati Nature Reserve); locus 3129BD includes the latter three areas and seems most likely to encompass the 'Msikaba' collection site of this mainly lowland species.

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***Tetradactylus africanus* (Gray, 1838)**
Eastern Long-tailed Seps

Mozambique, Namaacha (25°59'; 32°01'E; 2532CC); most of the area is 500-600 m a.s.l.). A male (large swollen testes) *Tetradactylus africanus* collected in 1962 at this locality was deposited in the collection of the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (Pretoria). The specimen (TM 28717) has a snout-to-vent length of 60.5 mm and (original) tail length of 217 mm. It is readily referable to *T. africanus* as each limb consists of only a single digit. Additional scalation details: head shields smooth except for frontal and frontonasal which are striated; frontoparietals in contact; dorsal scales in 14 longitudinal and 74 transverse (from nuchal row to row above vent) rows; ventral scales in six longitudinal and 55 transverse (axil to groin) rows.

This locality, on the border of southern Mozambique and north-eastern Swaziland, represents the first record of *T. africanus* for Mozambique, and is also the most northerly record for the species. The nearest other record (south-west of Namaacha) is at locus 2631AD in Swaziland (Bates 2014). *Tetradactylus africanus* is fairly widespread in KwaZulu-Natal and also occurs peripherally in the Eastern Cape, South Africa (Bates 2014). Branch's (1988, 1998) map for *T. africanus* includes extreme southern Mozambique, but he does not mention this country under 'range'. This species was not recorded from Mozambique by Pietersen (2014) in a recent compilation of new records for the country. Southern Mozambique has not been thoroughly surveyed for reptiles, so it remains to be seen whether this species, known from a single specimen collected over 50 years ago, still occurs there.

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SERPENTES
LAMPROPHIIDAE: ATRACTASPIDINAE

***Polemon christyi* (Boulenger, 1903)**
CHRISTY'S SNAKE-EATER

On the 12 February 2014 at about 20h00, whilst CT was road cruising for herpetofauna about 4km south of the village of Shonongo, 16 km WNW of Fungurume, southern Katanga, DRC (10°32'01.62"S, 26°20'15.54"E elevation 1189 m a.s.l.), a small black snake was spotted next to the road. The area traversed by the road comprised recently ploughed maize fields. February is the middle of the rainy season in Katanga, and the evenings were warm although not particularly humid. The area is characterised by an undulating hilly topography, overlain with well developed *Brachystegia* woodland at an average altitude of 1200 m. The soils are composed of a rich laterite loam with some clay. The valleys between the hills are used for cultivation of crops by the local tribesmen.

When first seen, the snake was initially thought to be a juvenile *Atractaspis*. However, on approach, its movements while "Atractaspoid" were not entirely typical, as it did not produce the typical tight neck flexure posturing usually seen in *Atractaspis* species. It did however still thrash and jerk, freeze with body dorso-ventrally flattened, and occasionally display a small degree of neck flexion. The snake was collected and maintained for a while before being deposited into the Port Elizabeth Museum (PEM R20734).

The principal physical features of the snake were as follows: Snout-vent length: 257 mm; Tail length: 17 mm; Total length – 274 mm; ventrals: 2 + 209; subcaudals divided: 20 + s; anal divided; midbody scales: 15-15-15. Head with rounded snout, neck indistinct; cephalic scalation typical (Fig. 1); upper labials 7, 3-4 entering orbit, 5th in narrow contact with parietal; lower labials 7, 1st in contact behind mental, 1-3 in contact with anterior chin shields, 5th largest; 2 pairs of chin shields, 1st largest; temporals 1 + 1; supra-nasals in contact behind rostral; nostril pierces rear edge of small nasal, and contacts a large postnasal; loreal absent, postnasal in broad contact with single preocular; postoculars 2, lower smallest. A pair of well-developed back-fangs occur on the maxilla just anterior to the eye. Colour in life uniformly glossy black above (Fig. 2.), with ventrals and subcaudals each edged posteriorly in silver white; in preservative uniformly glossy black above and below. In most respects the specimen closely fits the type of *P. christyi* (even having identical ventral and subcaudal counts), although Boulenger (1903) records the nasal as entire.

Polemon christyi is a rarely-seen species, described by Boulenger (1903) as *Miodon christyi*. Boulenger (1903) named the snake after its collector, Cuthbert Christy (1863-

1932), a British doctor and zoologist. The snake was collected as Christy led a British Government commission investigating trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) in Uganda. Two other snakes were also named after him, including *Boulengerina christyi* (Boulenger 1904) and *Chamaelycus christyi* Boulenger 1919. Later, searching for elephants during zoological investigations in the Aka River region, Belgian Congo, Christy shot but only wounded a male buffalo. He was badly gored after it retaliated and later died from the wounds incurred.

Polemon christyi is now considered to have a relatively large range, extending from western Kenya, Uganda west of the Nile, into eastern DRC and south through western Rwanda and Burundi to western Tanzania and Zambia west of the Luangwa Valley (Pitman 1974). Spawls *et al*. (2002) noted two Kenya records (Kakemega and Netima), as well as Tatanda in south-western Tanzania. Its distribution through the Albertine Rift region and eastern DRC is less well known, with localities for the latter including: Kivu region (Laurent 1956, 1960), Garamba National Park (de Witte 1966), and Upemba National Park (de Witte 1953). It remains known from only three Zambian localities (Mbala, Kasempa and Solwezi; Broadley 1971), and was also recently recorded from Wilindi Forest Reserve, Misuku Hills, northern Malawi (Mecurio 2007). Our new record falls in the south-western part of the species' range, approximately 174 km north of the Solwezi record (Broadley 1971), and 220 km SSW of the Lusinga, Upemba NP record (De Witte 1953). The current records appear to cluster in northern and southern groups, but this may be an artefact of poor collecting in the central region.

Hughes & Barry (1969) transferred to *Polemon*, without comment, all species previously allocated to *Miodon* and *Cynodontophis* (Witte & Laurent 1947), including *P. christyi*. This transfer has not been formerly re-assessed, and although subsequent molecular analysis (Nagy *et al*. 2005) placed a number of species (e.g. *notatum*, *collaris* and *acanthias*) in a monophyletic clade, these results do not necessarily support the monophyly of *Polemon* (sensu lato) as none of these species were previously assigned to *Polemon* (Witte & Laurent 1947).

While being kept in a small (2 litre) container, the snake burrowed into the soil but tended to prefer to rest under pieces of bark that were laid on the surface. Over the course of several weeks it was offered a variety of different food items including, earthworms, grasshoppers, newly-metamorphosed toadlets and geckos (*Hemidactylus mabouia* and *Lygodactylus gutturalis*). It took only one item – an adult *L. gutturalis* and ignored all other items. Pitman (1974) noted that its diet consists of other snakes, predominantly *Typhlops* and *Leptotyphlops*, while Broadley (in litt. to Pitman) recorded *Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia* as a prey item.

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Figure 1. Head scalation: note lack of loreal, nostril condition and smooth shields. Photo: Colin Tilbury.

Figure 1. *Polemon christyi* showing all-black colouration, with dorsoventral flattening and slight neck flexure during defensive display. Photo: Colin Tilbury

LAMPROPHIIDAE

***Lamprophis guttatus* (A. Smith, 1843)**
SPOTTED HOUSE SNAKE

On 5 March 2014 during fieldwork in Lesotho as part of faunal surveys associated with the Polihali Dam environmental impact assessment, a snake was found dead, but without obvious external injuries, on the A7 tarred road 12.5 km west of Mokhotlong, Mokhotlong district, Lesotho (29°16'42.4"S, 28°56'15.0"E; 2928BD; 2349 m a.s.l.), by W.R. Branch.

It was a female *Lamprophis guttatus* measuring 442 mm from snout to vent, tail length 75 mm, with a relatively heavily-blotched dorsal colour pattern (Fig. 1). Morphology was consistent with Broadley (1990): ventrals (unkeeled) 210; anal entire; subcaudals (divided) 50 + spine; scale rows 23 – 22 – 17; preocular 1 (although the trapezoidal loreal on the left side has a narrow projection that just enters the orbit between 3rd supralabial and preocular); postoculars 2; supralabials 8 (3-5 entering orbit); infralabials 8 (1st in contact behind mental, 1-4 in contact with anterior chin shields); temporals 2 + 2; nostril central in suture between pre- and post-nasals.

The specimen has been deposited in the herpetological collection of Port Elizabeth Museum (PEM R20682). It was found adjacent to a low dolerite ridge in heavily-grazed grassland (Fig. 2). Although the recent reptile atlas account (Maritz 2014) does not record this species from Lesotho, Ambrose (2006) noted a specimen from Ha Rapokolana (29˚22'30"S, 28˚01'46"E; 2928AC) in the Jorotane valley (unpublished Van As, 2002). This specimen has not been examined for confirmation of identity. The specimen discussed here is therefore the first formally documented record (i.e. based on a known museum voucher) of *L. guttatus* for Lesotho. This record lies approximately 50 km west of the nearesr record in adjacent KwaZulu-Natal (Bourquin 2004, Maritz 2014).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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***Lamprophis guttatus* (PEM R20682) from 12.5 km west of Mokhotlong, Mokhotlong district, Lesotho. Photo: W. Branch.**

Habitat of *Lamprophis guttatus* 12,5 km west of Mokhotlong, Mokhotlong district, Lesotho. Photo: W. Branch.

***Gonionotophis crossii* (Boulenger, 1895)**
Crosse's File Snake

Sierra Leone, Northern Region, Tonkolili District, Tonkolili Iron Ore Project. On 2 December 2013, a large (1030+150 mm) file snake was presented to KMH by the staff of African Minerals Limited. The animal was found by the side of a road near the Tonkolili Project office and had apparently been killed by a passing vehicle. This female specimen was already decomposing, but had in its gut a large 390 mm + 80mm female snake identified by DGB as probably *Psammophis sibilans* (Fig. 1). KMH had noticed that the tail of the prey animal protruded from the mouth of the predator. Both specimens were preserved in 10% formalin and deposited with Mr. J. Johnny, Lecturer and Researcher, for inclusion in the collection of Njala University, Freetown.

Crosse's File Snake is readily identified, because it is the only West African species with as many as 17 midbody scale rows (very rarely 19: Broadley 2007). This savanna species has a wide range from Senegal to the Central African Republic (Trape & Mane 2006), but the only file snakes previously recorded from Sierra Leone are the forest species *G. guirali* and *G. poensis* (Menzies 1966). This suggests that *G. crossii* is expanding its range due to excessive deforestation.

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Figure 1. DOR *Gonionotophis crossi* with prey (*Psammophis phillipsii*?).

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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

African Herp News publishes manuscripts in four categories, namely Articles, Herpetological Surveys, Natural History Notes, and Geographical Distributions. **CONTRIBUTIONS SUBMITTED IN AN INCORRECT STYLE (SEE GUIDELINES BELOW) WILL BERETURNED TO THE AUTHORS**. All submissions should be set in 10 pt, Times New Roman font, with 1.15 line spacing throughout. Submitted manuscripts should not contain any consecutive space characters, nor should they contain tab characters. Every word in English common names should start with a capital letter (e.g., Namaqua Dwarf Adder).

ARTICLES

African Herp News publishes longer contributions of general interest that would not be presented as either Natural History Notes or Geographical Distributions. A standard format is to be used,as follows: **TITLE** (capitals, bold, centred); **AUTHOR(S)** (bold, centred); Author's address(es) (italicised; use superscript Arabic numerals with author's names and addresses if more than one author); **HEADINGS** (bold, aligned left) and **Subheadings** (bold, aligned left) as required; **REFERENCES** (bold), following the standardised formats described below.

HERPETOLOGICAL SURVEYS

African Herp News publishes succinctly annotated species lists resulting from local surveys of amphibians and reptiles on the African continent and adjacent regions, including the Arabian Peninsula, Madagascar, and other islands in the Indian Ocean. The area surveyed may be of any size but should be defined geographic unit of special relevance to the herpetological community.

For example, surveys should address declared or proposed conservation reserves, poorly explored areas, biogeographically important localities or administrative zones. The relevance of survey results should be judged by the extent that these records fill distributional gaps or synthesise current knowledge. As far as possible survey records should be based on accessible and verifiable evidence (specimens deposited in public collections, photos submitted illustrating diagnostic features, call recordings and sonograms, or DNA sequences accessioned into international databases). Survey results should be presented in the same format as used for Articles (described above), and must additionally include a section titled **SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT** (bold)comprising Scientific name (including author citation), location and habitat, evidence (including registration numbers and location of vouchers), and comments (where required). **REFERENCES** should follow the standardised formats described below.

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

Brief notes concerning the biology of the herpetofauna of the African continent and adjacent regions, including the Arabian Peninsula, Madagascar, and other islands in the Indian Ocean. Astandard format is to be used, as follows: **FAMILY:** Scientific

name (including author citation); English common name (using Bill Branch's *Field Guide to Snakes and Other Reptiles of SouthernAfrica*, third edition, 1998, for reptiles; and Du Preez&Carruthers' *A Complete Guide to the Frogs of Southern Africa*, 2009, for amphibians as far as possible); **KEYWORD** (this should beone 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). The body of the note should include information describing the locality (Country; Province; quarter-degree locus; location; latitude and longitude in D° M' S" format; elevation above sea level), providing the date (day,month, year), naming the collector(s), and stating the place of deposition and museum accession number or describing the fate of the animal. **REFERENCES** should follow the standardised formats described below. **SUBMITTED BY: NAME**, Address, E-mail.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTIONS

Brief notes of new geographical distributions of amphibians and reptiles on the African continent and adjacent regions, including the Arabian Peninsula, Madagascar, and other islands in the Indian Ocean. Records submitted should be based on specimens deposited in a recognised collection. Astandard format is to be used, as follows: FAMILY; Scientific name (including author citation); English common name (using Bill Branch's *Field Guide to Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa*, third edition, 1998, for reptiles; and Du Preez & Carruthers' *A Complete Guide to the Frogs of Southern Africa*, 2009, for amphibians as far as possible). The body of the note should include information describing the locality (Country; Province; quarter-degree locus; location;latitude and longitude in D° M' S" format; elevation above sea level), providing the date (day, month, year), naming the collector(s), and stating the place of deposition and museum accession number, or fate of the animal. The body should also include information on the size, colourand taxonomic characters (e.g., scalation, webbing) used to identify the specimen, as well as the distance to the nearest published locality. **REFERENCES** should follow the standardised formats described below. **SUBMITTED BY: NAME**, Address, E-mail.

REFERENCES

Reference formatting is similar to *African Journal of Herpetology*. References should be listed inthe following format:

ALEXANDER, G. J. 2007. Thermal biology of the Southern African Python (*Python natalensis*): does temperature limit its distribution? Pp. 50-75. In HENDERSON, R.W., AND POWELL, R.(eds.), *Biology of the Boas and Pythons*, Eagle Mountain Publishing, Utah.

BRANCH, W. R. 1998. *Field guide to the snakes and other reptiles of southern Africa*. Third edition. Struik Publishers. Cape Town.

COTTONE, A. M. 2007. Ecological investigations of the Psammophiidae (Squamata: Serpentes). Unpubl.MSc thesis. Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

FROST, D. R. 2010. Amphibian Species of the World: an Online Reference. Version 5.4 (8 April,

2010). http://research.amnh.org/vz/herpetology/amphibia/ (accessed 27 April 2010).

LAMB, T., BISWAS, S. & BAUER, A. 2010. A phylogenetic reassessment of African fossorialskinks in the subfamily Acontinae (Squamata: Scincidae): evidence for parallelism and polyphyly. Zootaxa, 2657: 33-46.

Note that author names are set as SMALL CAPS, not ALL CAPS, and that Journal Titles are not abbreviated. Formatting should be achieved using paragraph settings and NOT tabs or spaces.

Citations should occur in chronological order: (Branch 1998, Alexander 2007, Cottone 2007,

Frost 2010, Lamb et al. 2010). For papers with more than two authors, only the first author shouldbe named in the text (e.g., Masterson et al. 2010) without italicising "et al.". Cite unpublished data as in press, e.g. (in press), which then appears in the list of references, or as J. J. Marais (pers.comm.), in which case Johan J. Marais's name and institutional affiliation should appear under Acknowledgements. Unpublished reports should be cited as personal communications.

TABLES, FIGURES, AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Tables should be submitted as separate MS Excel files. Tables should be small enough to fitonto an A5 page, and should NOT contain any vertical lines. Photographs and figures should besubmitted as separate JPEG files, and not embedded in the text. They should preferably be over 1MB in size, and not more than 5MB. The name of the photographer should be given, if nottaken by the author of the submission. Each table, figure, or photograph, needs to be associatedwith an appropriate caption that should follow the reference list in the submission.

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2013-2014

FEE STRUCTURE 2013 FOR AFRICAN RESIDENT MEMBERS
(Posting to addresses in Africa)

	1 year	**3 years**
Ordinary members	ZAR 200	ZAR 600
Scholars (attending high school)	ZAR 100	

FEE STRUCTURE 2013 FOR NON-AFRICAN RESIDENT MEMBERS
(Posting to addresses outside Africa)

Membership	**1 year**	**3 years**
	US$ 60	US$ 180

BANKING DETAILS
Account Name: Herpetological Association of Africa
Account Number: 1793 6077
Bank: ABSA
Branch: Eastgate
Swift Code: ABSAZAJJ
Clearing Code: 6356050

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS
We only accept credit card payments in US$, which are accepted by Bibliomania (http://www.herplit.com). Please contact Mr.Breck Bartholomew in the USA (breck@herplit.com), if you would like to pay by credit card. When paying via Bibliomaniaplease quote your surname and HAA membership reference number (obtainable from the Secretary, BuyiMakhubo (buyi.makhubo@nasmus.co.za) as the transaction reference,and state that it is an HAA payment. You may also pay electronically using the Bibliomania website: http://www.herplit.com/HAA.html

NOTICE REGARDING ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS
It is essential that your membership reference number (or initials and surname, if you are a new member) be used as a reference for electronic payments, and that you let the HAA Treasurer, Johan Marais (johan@africansnakebiteinstitute.com), know when youauthorise the payment, so that it can be traced.

NB: BANK FEES
Please note that all bank fees for credit cards and electronic payments to the HAAmust be borne by you, the payee. Thus, please ensure that you add an extra 5% tocover bank charges, or that these come directly off your account when electronicallytransferring money, and NOT off the amount received by the HAA.

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