

***Pachydactylus capensis* - Cape Thick-toed Gecko**

Found in similar situations as the above gecko and some were seen under the plastic lining of the reservoir.

***Pachydactylus turneri* - Turner's Thick-toed Gecko**

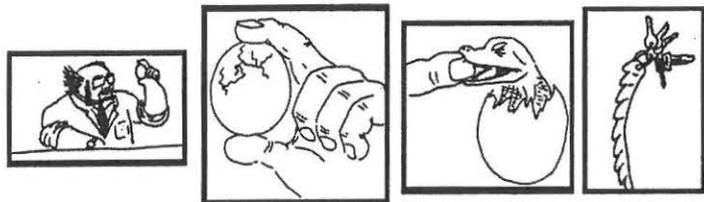
Only two were found down at the farm stores. 09/03/97 adult seen in the roof. 03/11/98 caught adult behind polystyrene boxes at 11h00.

CONCLUSION

I was surprised by the diversity and abundance of several species. A total of 12 amphibian and 31 reptilian species were recorded in this region. Many species such as the *Mabuya* spp., *Lygodactylus capensis*, *Philothamnus semivariegatus* and *Naja mossambica* seem to have adapted well to the transformation of the previous habitat.

The common occurrence of Mozambique Spitting Cobras around human dwellings was noteworthy, particularly around Kwena Gardens. The creation of the crocodile farm has created perfect micro-habitats for these cobras in the form of rocky walls, embankments and artificial cover. Numerous water features attracting its amphibian diet has also allowed this snake to proliferate and around the office and curio shop, where many adult cobras were found; rodents were also very common. Despite its prevalence, encounters with man are often not a problem as this snake usually avoids conflict. Venomous snakes are common at Sun City, with five dangerous species recorded. In the two years at Sun City no bites were recorded from venomous snakes, despite many outdoor activities.

I am currently compiling a detailed account of the herpetofauna from Sun City and the Pilanesberg. It will consist of a diarized listing of species encountered, as well as a species by species account, detailing measurements, sexes, dates and times and more detailed information of the species. This will conclude with a revised and updated checklist of the herpetofauna of the Pilanesberg National Park. Anyone who would like to receive a copy on completion can contact me at the above postal address.

**NATURAL HISTORY NOTES**

African Herp News publishes 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.

A standard format is to be used, as follows: **SCIENTIFIC NAME**; Common name (using Bill Branch's *Field Guide to Snakes and other Reptiles of Southern Africa*, third edn. 1998, for reptiles; and Passmore & Carruthers' *South African frogs*, 1995, for amphibians as far as possible); **KEYWORD** (this should be one or two words best describing the topic of the note, eg. Reproduction, Avian predation, etc.); the **Text** (in concise English with only essential references quoted and in abbreviated form); **Locality** (country, province or state, location, quarter-degree unit, and latitude and longitude if available; elevation above sea level; use metric units); **Date** (day, month, year); **Collector(s)**; **Place of deposition and museum accession number** (required if specimens are preserved).

Submitted by: **NAME**, Address (in parentheses).

REPTILIA:
SAURIA

Adolfus jacksoni Boulenger, 1899
Jackson's lizard

MORPHOLOGY

Kenya, Rift Valley Province, Nandi District, Chemundu Location, 2 km from Kombe Market Center (0° 16' 01" N; 35° 02' 05" E).

David Chumba collected a specimen at a wood pile a few meters from his house. The specimen had the following scale morphology: 8 supralabials; 9 oculars; 6 columns and 28 rows of ventrals; 32-34 midrow scales; 6 supraciliaris; 2 nasals; sub-digital lamellae 4th toe: 14 (fore), 16 (hind); 16 femoral pores. The dorsal scales have a single keel and the keels on the tail are very prominent, giving the lizard a rough look. Its back is army green in colour with black, irregular, medial dots. The flanks are pigmented with thick black lateral stripes that are dotted with a luminescent, cyan colour. According to Donald Broadley (pers. comm.), the lizard was

originally described from the Ravine Station on the Mau Escarpment and he personally observed a specimen in the outskirts of Kakamega Forest.

Submitted by

Armand G.H. Poblete (University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Department of Biological Sciences, P. O. Box 2500, Eldoret, Kenya).

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GEKKONIDAE

Ptenopus garrulus maculatus

Common Barking Gecko

BEHAVIOUR

Lizards of the genus *Ptenopus* are ground-burrowing geckos. They live in the dry areas of Southern Africa (Namibia, Republic of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe). Three species are currently recognized (Branch, 1998). These geckos are commonly known as barking geckos. Males call (bark) at the entrances of their burrows to signal to females their ability to mate, and may call from sunset to early morning (Branch, 1998; Haacke, 1976).

Calls have previously been recorded and analyzed (Haacke, 1976). Result showed a difference in call characteristics between local populations, regarding both the number of "clicks" per call and the call rhythm. Could those differences have an effect on the female mating answer behaviour? I kept two groups (group A and group B) of *Ptenopus garrulus maculatus* from two different localities at home, in the same room. The following behaviour was observed.

When male A began to call, females in group A (including a sexually receptive female), walked nervously along the glass wall of the terrarium, pausing at intervals to listen to the calls, and sometimes responded with a vocal answer (Girard, 1997). When male B began to call, there was no reaction from the females in group A (not even from the sexually receptive one).

When male A began to call, female B remained hidden in its burrow or had no reaction. When male B called, female B showed her head at the burrow entrance and moved its head from right to left at intervals. I believe, however, that female B was too young and probably not sexually receptive. These observations have been noticed on several occasions, but it is necessary to obtain more information to verify the "answer behaviour".

References

- Branch W. R. 1998. *Field guide to snakes and other reptiles of Southern Africa*. Struik Publishers, Cape Town.
- Girard F. 1997. *African Herp News* 26:32
- Haacke, W. D. 1976. The burrowing geckos of Southern Africa. *Annals of the Transvaal Museum* 30:14-28.

Submitted by

F. Girard (167, bd Vincent Auriol, 75013, Paris, France)

CORDYLIDAE

Cordylus tropidosternum jonesi Boulenger, 1891

Tropical girdled lizard.

LONGEVITY

I bought two specimens (adult males) of *Cordylus tropidosternum jonesi* in 1975 at a pet shop (at that stage South Africa still exported large quantities of girdled lizards). The first specimen died in 1986 and the second one died recently in November 2001, after 26 years of captivity. I do not know of a similar longevity record for this species.

Submitted by

F. Girard (167, bd Vincent Auriol, 75013, Paris, France)

CORDYLIDAE

Cordylus tropidosternum tropidosternum Cope 1869.

Tropical girdled lizard.

REPRODUCTION

A studbook breeding programme for *Cordylus tropidosternum tropidosternum* and *Cordylus tropidosternum jonesi* was started in the Netherlands in 1994. The aim of this studbook is to create genetically healthy and reproductively active captive populations. The studbook currently contains 57 animals in total, of which the majority are *C. t. tropidosternum* individuals. Since 1998, an increasing number of studbook participants have had breeding successes with *C. t. tropidosternum*. One trigger that appears to stimulate captive breeding is seasonal variation in climatic conditions. A cool and dry resting period is desirable for several weeks, followed by a warm and humid spring. However, this trigger is not essential as some breeding

REPTILIA:
SAURIA

SCINCIDAE

Acontias meleagris meleagris Linnaeus, 1758.

Cape Legless Skink

DISTRIBUTION

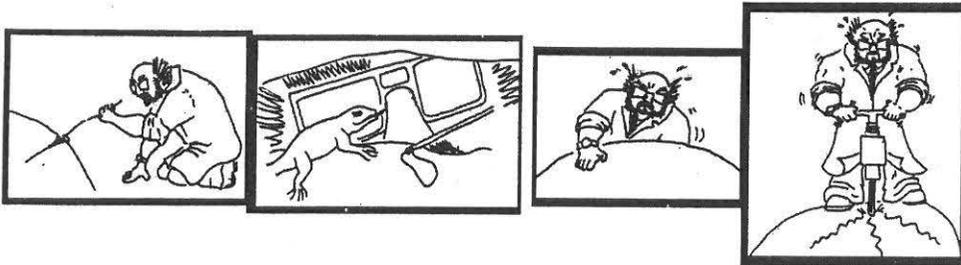
South Africa, Western Cape Province; one locality.

Two specimens (one dead and one alive) were found at dusk (19h50), on the N7, 3 km before Clanwilliam (Citrusdal /Clanwilliam), on 12 November 2001. One live specimen was found at night (20h30) on the R364, 2 km from Clanwilliam, on the same date. Unfortunately, no specimens were measured (no equipment was available, but a slide is being furnished). I have already found these lizards crossing the road at night on several occasions near Veldruff.

This record extends the distribution range northwards by around 100 km. The nearest record is from the farm Draai Hoek in the Piketberg district (3218 AD, 32°28S, 18°20E), with specimens collected by B.A. Wilson, M.G.J. Hendriks, N.J.L. Heideman, M.F. Bates, N. Don and C. Moses (1998, n°27, African Herp News)

Submitted by

F. Girard (167, bd Vincent Auriol, 75013, Paris, France)



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE
HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA
held at the Zoology Department of the University of Stellenbosch on
12 September 2001

The Chair opened the meeting at 16h00, having invited all symposium delegates to attend. This, she stated, would allow non-members the opportunity to express their views to the benefit of the Association. Forty-three (43) members and non-members were present.

1. The Chair presented a financial report and balance sheet submitted by the Secretary/Treasurer. The rise in office expenses over the past year was queried (postal charges for the journal and newsletter were included).
2. As this was an informal meeting, reports were not submitted by the Chair, Secretary, Editor of the Journal of African Herpetology and Editor of African Herp News.

The meeting then went into open discussion:

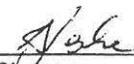
1. Prof. Bauer suggested that an award be introduced at future symposia for the best student lecture presented. He further stated that he was prepared to contribute financially towards such an award. Dr Branch suggested that funds from the sale of the "Belgian Congo Book" be channelled towards such an award.
2. The introduction of a Life Membership category was again raised by the floor. After much discussion it was decided that this was an involved process and that it had considerable implications. It was pointed out that such a category would have to be actuarially evaluated before it could be introduced. It was then brought to the attention of the meeting that a non-contributory Life Membership already existed in the form of Honorary Life Membership which formed a part of the Associations award for *Exceptional Contribution to African Herpetology*.
3. Some of the attending students stated that they had experienced problems of response with their membership applications. It was further stated that prospective overseas members had also been experiencing such problems. It was suggested that perhaps a separate Committee post be established for membership applications and membership. No decision was reached.

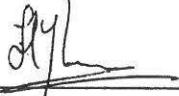
4. The floor suggested that different categories for symposia registration be instituted in future. For example, a cheaper category for student registration fee be introduced. It was pointed out that the sponsoring University departments often paid the student registration fees. However, some students added that not all their expenses were covered in this manner. It was also suggested that registration fees and the cost of functions be listed as separate items for future symposia. No decision was taken on the former while the floor rejected the latter.
5. It was further suggested that the Association should generate some profit from symposia in order to bolster funds for other expenses, such as printing. To this end it was suggested that conference fees be raised to realise a profit. Although it was pointed out that HAA symposia fees were very low in comparison to other symposia, the floor was divided on a final decision. Some other suggestions for raising funds at symposia were: auctions and the sale of ties, T-shirts and golf shirts. While auctions were considered a good idea, it was pointed out that the response for T-shirts prior to the current symposium was so poor that none had been made. As had been examined at previous symposia, the quantities, and therefore the costs, that needed to be ordered in order to make the exercise cost-effective, was prohibitive.
6. In response to questions on the progress of the updated *Lizards of Southern Africa* book, Dr Branch stated that several species accounts had been withdrawn by the authors, or the authors were now no longer prepared to prepare the relevant species accounts. He pointed out that, because of the numbers of new species, the name FitzSimons was no longer appropriate in the title and that effectively a completely new book would have to be written.
7. The Association's financial contribution (R10 000.00) towards the publication of the "Belgian Congo Book" was discussed. It was noted that very few of the copies ordered by the Association had been sold. Dr Branch felt that the Association had received good publicity by having its name associated with both the book and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. However, some members felt that this was an expensive advertising and public relations exercise which the Association could ill afford without being able to recoup the expense in due course.
8. Dr Branch offered to host the 7th HAA Symposium on African Herpetology at the Port Elizabeth Museum in the year 2003.

The meeting was closed at 17h15

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA for the year ended 28 February 2001**

The financial statements were approved and are hereby signed to that effect:


Chairman


Treasurer

**Report of the independent auditor to the members of the
Herpetological Association of Africa**

We have audited the annual financial statements. These financial statements are the responsibility of the members. Our responsibility is to report on the financial statements based on our audit.

Scope

We conducted our audit in accordance with statements of South African auditing standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes:

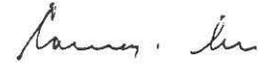
- an evaluation of the appropriateness of the accounting policies,
- an examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures included in the annual financial statements,
- an assessment of the reasonableness of significant estimates and
- a consideration of the appropriateness of the overall financial statement presentation.

We consider that our audit procedures were appropriate in the circumstances to express our opinion presented below.

Opinion

In our opinion these financial statements fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position of the company at 28 February 2001, and the results of its operations and cash flow information for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting practice and in the manner required by the Companies Act.

CASSIDY AND ASSOCIATES
Chartered Accountants (S.A.)



INCOME STATEMENT (year ended 28 February 2001)

	2001	2000
Income		
Interest	3,335	8,162
Donations	0	7,030
Sale of journals	6,276	2,507
Subscriptions	28,816	27,102
	<u>38,427</u>	<u>44,801</u>
Expenses		
Audit fees	900	800
Proceedings	400	0
Congo Book	2,000	8,784
Journals	35,091	13,550
Newsletters	1,441	5,878
Bank charges	68	904
Office expenses	6,946	1,091
	<u>46,846</u>	<u>31,007</u>
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	(8,420)	13,793

BALANCE SHEET (year ended February 2001)

	2001	2000
Funds Employed		
Accumulated funds:		
Balance beginning of year	73,435	59,640
Net (deficit)/surplus for year	(8,420)	13,794
	<u>65,015</u>	<u>73,434</u>
Employment of funds		
Current assets:		
UBS - Durban	49,041	53,037
Standard Bank - Bloemfontein	17,896	16,607
Volkscas - Durban	0	5,403
	<u>66,937</u>	<u>75,047</u>
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	1,921	1,611
	<u>1,921</u>	<u>1,921</u>
Net current assets:	65,016	73,435

PRESS RELEASES**A major breakthrough for environmental law enforcement**

Numerous attempts by two Czech poachers, Viteslav Tomasek and Walter Grosser, to foil Cape Nature Conservation's law enforcement team have backfired. Tomasek and Grosser have instead been dealt the heftiest fine in the history of the Cape Nature Conservation ordinance.

During a police blockade in Bulwer, Kwazulu Natal on 26 January 2001, the Czechs were caught with various indigenous fauna and flora without the necessary permits and documentation. The two accused had recorded detailed video footage and 140 photographs of their poaching activities in the Western Cape. They were charged under the Natal conservation legislation and found guilty of the illegal possession and importation of tortoises and fined R4000.

During this time, however, Cape Nature Conservation's (CNC's) law enforcement team was informed by the Kwazulu Natal conservation officials of the Czechs' poaching trip to the Cape. CNC opened a case against the two Czechs at the Worcester police station. During the investigation the accuseds were found in possession of 306 insects, 23 geometric tortoises, 15 common padloper tortoises, 16 angulate tortoises, 16 frogs, 11 scorpions and even various succulents, without the necessary documentation and/or permits.

The Czechs were charged on seven accounts according to the Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance 19/1974 and a further two under the South African National Parks Board Act. Notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence, the case took an unexpected turn. Although both parties pleaded guilty on April 3, Tomasek pleaded ignorance of the law while giving evidence during mitigation of his sentence, and the court changed their plea to not guilty. As a result, a new court case was scheduled and the case was tried all over again. Although both parties admitted to their crimes, they entered a plea of not guilty basing their plea on their claim that they were ignorant of the law and were not aware that their actions were wrongful. However, during the proceedings, the court found otherwise. This time they were charged and found guilty on all counts of illegal possession and hunting of the abovementioned fauna and flora. According to the Cape's nature conservation Ordinance and the South African National Parks Act, Tomasek and Grosser were fined R84 500 each. This amounts to R169 000, the biggest fine in the history of the Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance. Tomasek has already paid his fine while Grosser is currently appealing against the sentence and was freed on R5000 bail.

Mr Fanie Bekker, Director of Operational Services at CNC, said: "Environmental crime is one of the biggest threats to South Africa's unique natural heritage. Conventional threats like alien vegetation are being managed fairly successfully by conservation agencies. Environmental crime is a quiet killer of biodiversity and also makes substantial inroads into its potential to contribute towards economic growth and job creation, which depend heavily on sustainability of the natural resources as its main ingredient. In light of the above, CNC has established a dedicated Environmental Crime Prevention component that will, in partnership with other role-players, fight this cancer. The impact made in this case, is the start of a few envisaged projects to ensure that a dramatic impact will be made on environmental crime in the Western Cape and beyond."

Issued by
Western Cape Nature Conservation Board, 31 August 2001

Wildlife smugglers fined R168 000 each

Cape Town - Two Slovakian wildlife smugglers, found guilty in the Atlantis regional court last week of illegally collecting suitcases full of tortoises on the Cape's West Coast, received fines totalling R168 000 each yesterday. The two men, Martin Kyskyn and Martin Juricek, both 27, were found guilty on Wednesday last week on three charges of hunting, possessing and transporting the distinctively marked angulate tortoises without permits.

Supplied by
Frank Farquharson (*Mercury*: 13 December 2001)

Unique terrapins hatch at the Pretoria Zoo

Two unique Gabon hinged terrapins have been hatched at the Reptile Park of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, in Pretoria. These terrapins, reaching a length of up to 30 cm, are found throughout Central Africa and feed primarily on fish, invertebrates and carrion. The reason for their name is well illustrated by the hinge at the bottom front of the shell. This can close over the head and vital organs to protect the terrapin from any possible danger. Gabon hinged terrapins can remain under water for lengthy periods of time and in the dry season, they dig into the soil where they remain dormant until the first rains arrive.

Issued by
Angiliné Cloete, 4 September 2001

HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA MEMBERSHIP FEES AS AT 1 JANUARY 2002

AFRICAN MEMBERSHIP

ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP

1 year membership R100.00. Submit in Rand.

3 year membership R270.00. Submit in Rand.

SCHOLAR:

1 year membership R70.00. Submit in Rand.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP

DOLLAR PAYMENTS

1 year membership \$30.00. Submit in US Dollars by personal cheque or money order.

3 year membership \$80.00. Submit in US Dollars by personal cheque or money order.

Note: Please, no U.S. "postal" money orders, US Dollar "Eurocheques" or Rand Eurocheques.

Members in Europe can now pay the US Dollar equivalent in EUROS by personal cheque or money order.

RAND PAYMENTS FROM OVERSEAS

1 and 3 year memberships - Rand equivalent of US Dollar rate payable by banker's draft or money order (NOT postal order).

Owing to numerous banking problems, members are kindly requested not to submit payments directly to any Building Society or Bank Account. All payments should be made out to the Herpetological Association of Africa and be submitted directly to:

THE SECRETARY
HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA
P. O. BOX 20142
DURBAN NORTH 4016
SOUTH AFRICA