

## SHORT NOTE

### A first record for *Prosymna visseri* in southern Africa.

by

G.R. McLachlan,  
South African Museum,  
PO Box 61, Cape Town 8000  
Republic of South Africa

The small snake *Prosymna visseri* was previously known from three specimens all collected in Angola, and housed in the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria. While looking for geckos north-west of Kamanjab, the writer encountered a specimen in a deep granite fissure about 3m above ground level. The locality is at 19° 25' S, 14° 29' E.

Morphologically the specimen agrees with the descriptions by FitzSimons (1957) and Broadley (1980) except that the loreal shield is fused with the large prefrontal so that the latter is in contact with the first and second upper labials. There is also a very small interparietal at the anterior end of the interparietal suture.

Lines of pits are present along the hind-margin of the internasal and prefrontal; also along the lateral margins of the frontal.

The specimen is a male, ventrals 189, subcaudals 52. Stomach empty.

Dimensions, HB 263, tail 60 mm. The colour-pattern of the head is slightly different from the specimen figured by Broadley (1980:543, fig. 18). The pale vertebral stripe which was yellowish in life, does not bifurcate on the nape but stops abruptly two scales behind the head-shields. Where the lateral arms of the bifurcation would have been there are two pale triangular marks (see plate 1).

The addition of this species to the list of Namibian snakes means that no less than four species of *Prosymna* occur in the northern half of the territory — *P. visseri*, *angolensis*, *frontalis* and *bivittata*.

*P. visseri* differs from all the other members of the genus *Prosymna* in habits, as all the known specimens have been found deep in granitic fissures where they presumably seek food, probably in the form of gecko eggs. The country north-west of Kamanjab is mopane woodland with bold granite koppies and outcrops, hence the name Kamanjab which means "large rocks". The rainfall averages 325 mm per annum. The specimen SAM 46951 is housed in the South African Museum, Cape Town.

#### REFERENCES

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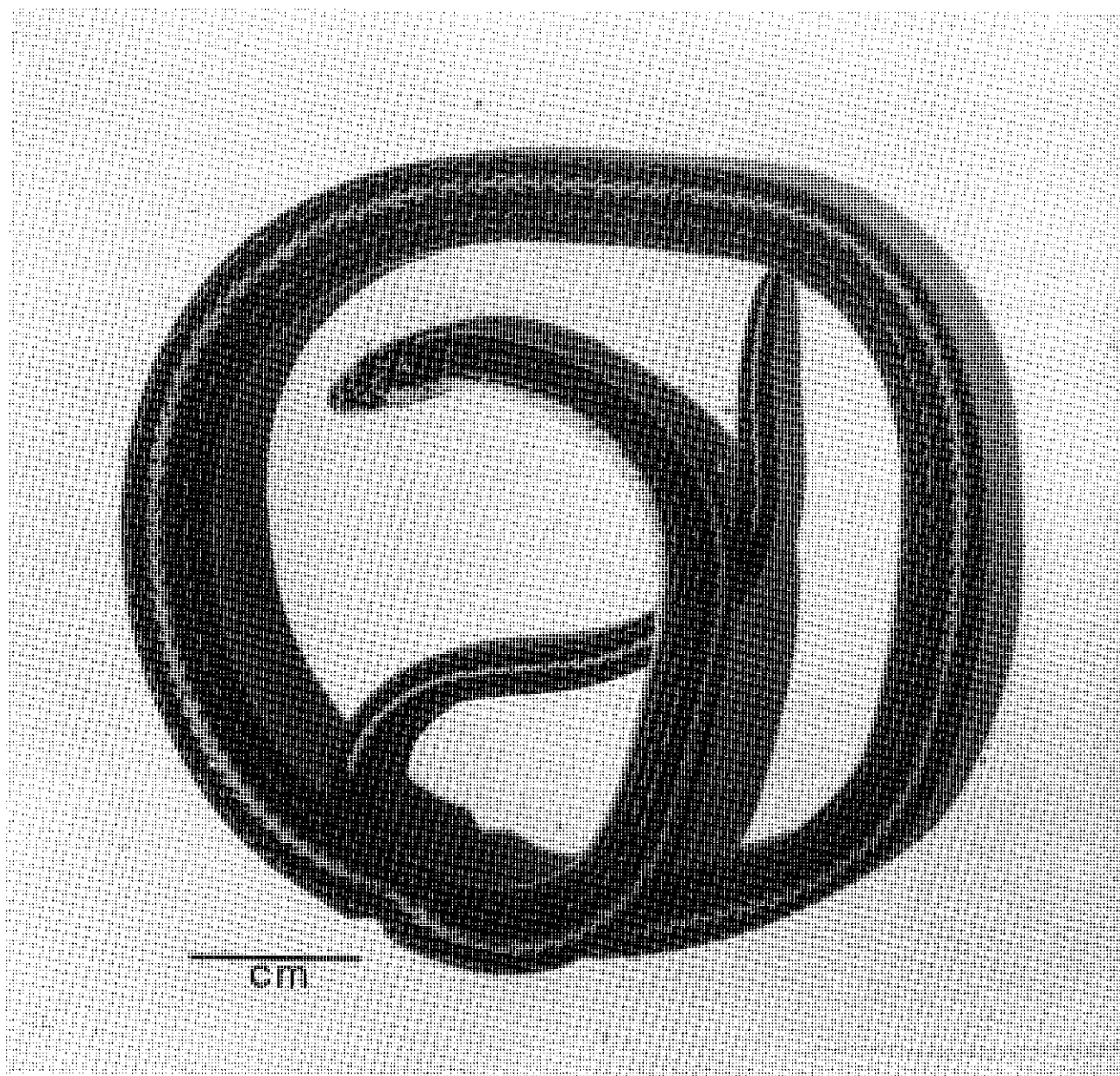


PLATE 1: *Prosymna visseri* from north of Kamanjab.