

## SHORT NOTE

A note on *Leptotyphlops*  
Fitzinger in South West Africa

by

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Containing some forty species, the genus *Leptotyphlops* is widely distributed both in Africa and elsewhere in the world (FitzSimons, 1962). In South West Africa the group is represented by three closely related species; *Leptotyphlops scutifrons* (Peters), *L. occidentalis* FitzSimons, and *L. labialis* (Sternfeld).

On 21 May 1972 one of these small worm snakes was found on the floor of the laboratory at the Namib Desert Research Station, Gobabeb. An examination of this as well as a second unidentified example in the Station's collection originally found near the Kahn mine revealed that both lacked the anterior upper labial. Both were provisionally identified as *L. occidentalis* FitzSimons and sent to Mr. W. D. Haacke at the Transvaal Museum for checking. The identifications were confirmed and the specimens have been deposited in the Namib Desert Research Station collection.

The Gobabeb record extends this species' range somewhat to the west of its previously known distribution. While the Kahn Mine is outside the Namib Desert Park, Gobabeb lies well within its boundaries and this snake is an interesting addition to the Park's list of vertebrate fauna.

Described from Keetmanshoop only eleven years ago, existing records of this little known snake show a scattered distribution in South West Africa restricted to the more arid regions west of the 200 mm isohyet (Fig. 1).

Enjoying a wider distribution over most of Southern Africa *L. scutifrons* overlaps the range of *occidentalis* in the arid regions of the territory at Spitzkoppie (FitzSimons, 1962), and Gobabeb (Haacke pers. comm.) (Fig. 2).

Existing records (FitzSimons, 1962) indicate that *L. labialis* is confined to the northern parts of South West Africa. It has been collected at Brandberg, Namutoni, Otjiwarongo, Outjo, Sesfontein, Swartbooisdrift and Tsumeb. Further study both on the status, distribution and general ecology of these worm snakes would prove most interesting.

## REFERENCE

- FitzSimons, V. F. M., 1962. *Snakes of Southern Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: Purnell and Sons.

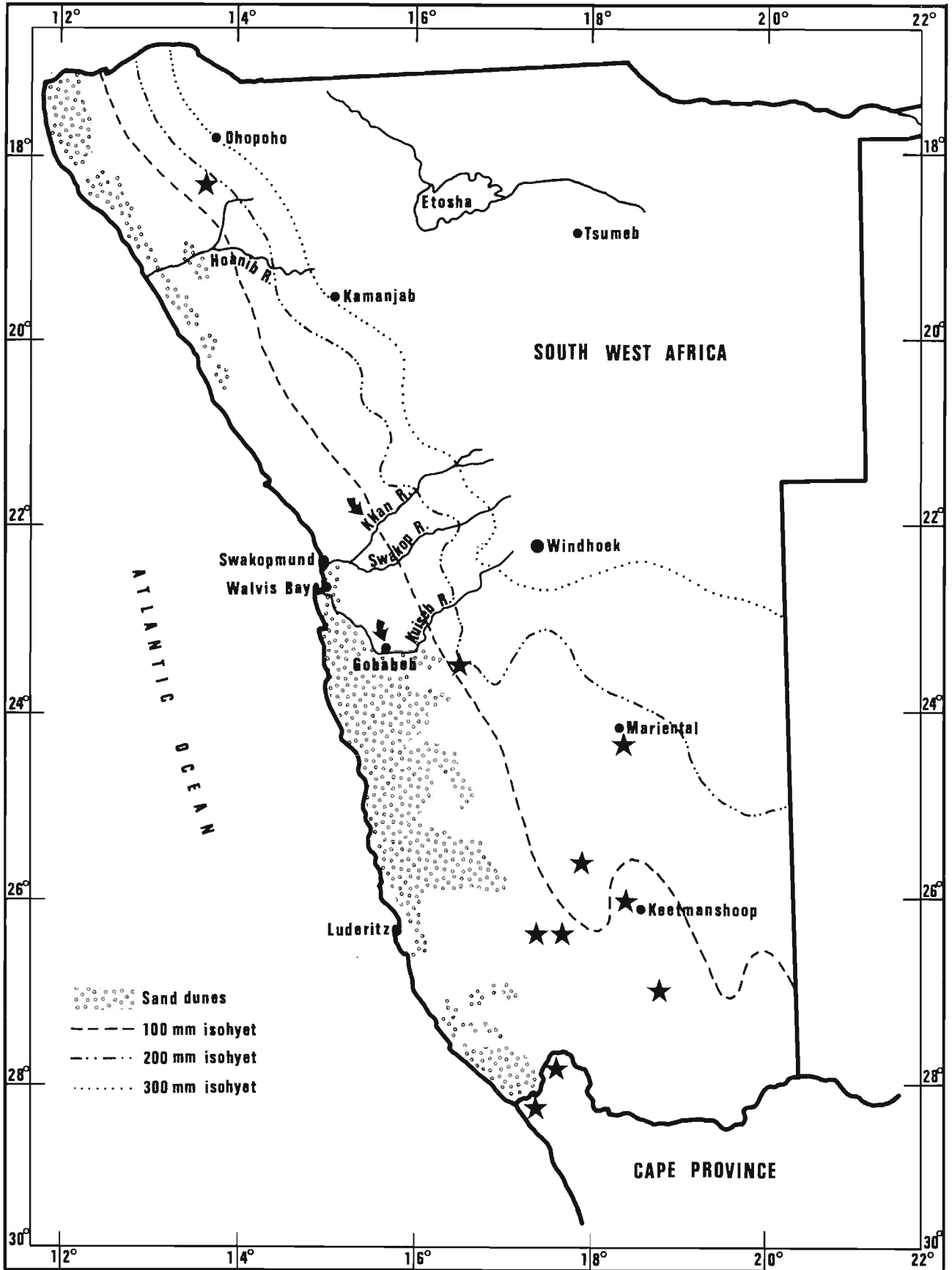


Figure 1. Distribution of *Leptotyphlops occidentalis* west of the 200 mm isohyet in South West Africa.

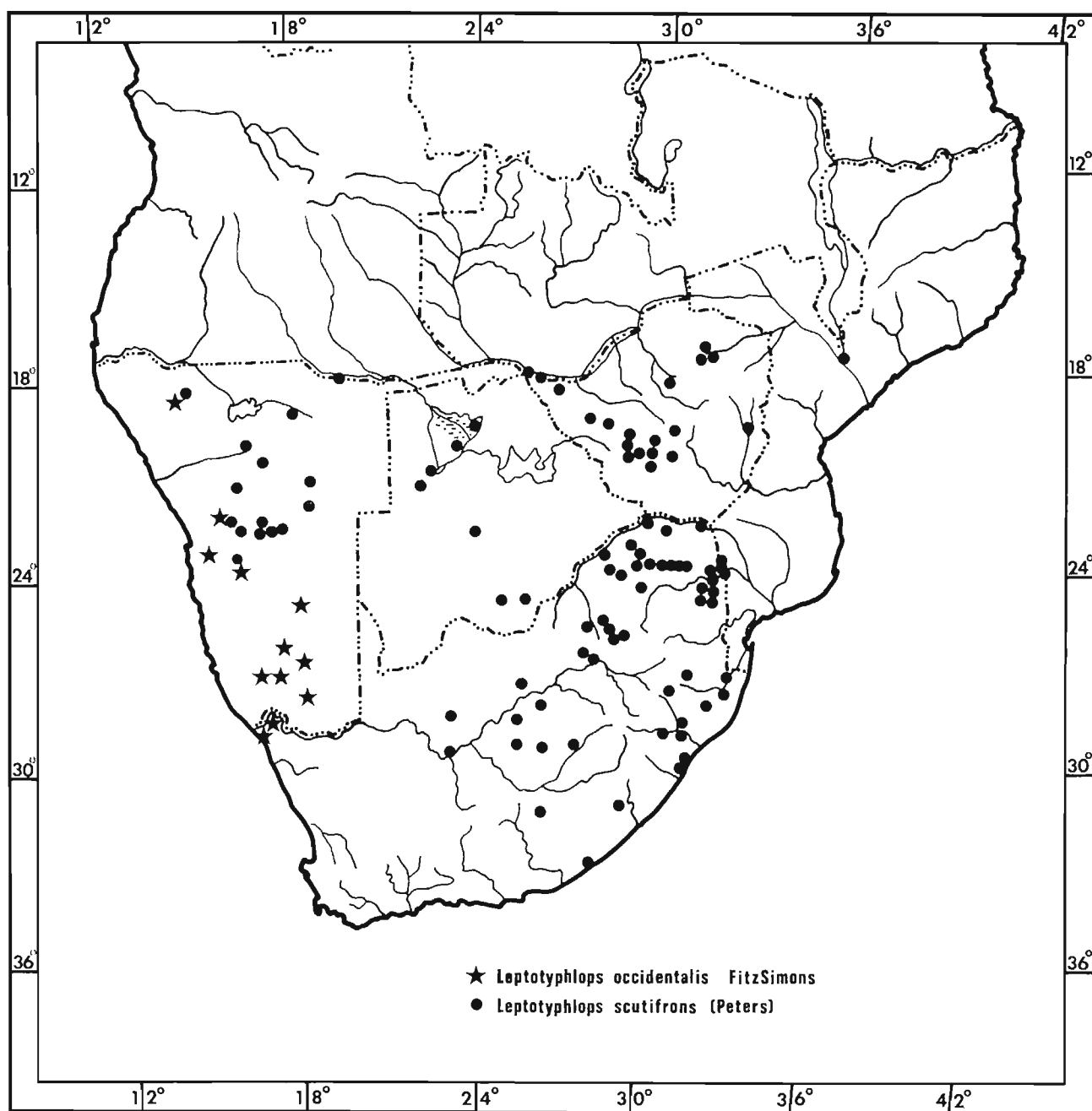


Figure 2. Distribution and overlap of *L. occidentalis* and *L. scutifrons* in Southern Africa.