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# AHN

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# HAA

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## COMMITTEE OF THE HAA CHAIRMAN

**Graham Alexander**, School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa.

*E-mail: graham.alexander@wits.ac.za*

## SECRETARY

**Buyi Makhubo**, Department of Herpetology, National Museum, P. O. Box 266, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa.

*E-mail: buyi.makhubo@nasmus.co.za*

## TREASURER

**Johan Marais**, Suite 150, Postnet X4, Bedfordview 2007, South Africa.

*E-mail: johan@africansnakebiteinstitute.com*

## JOURNAL EDITOR

**John Measey**, Department of Zoology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, South Africa.

*E-mail: john@measey.com*

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR

**Jessica da Silva**, South African National Biodiversity Institute. Kirstenbosch Research Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.

*E-mail: africanherpnews@gmail.com*

## ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

**Michael Bates**, Department of Herpetology, National Museum, P.O. Box 266, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa. *E-mail: herp@nasmus.co.za*

**Aaron Bauer**, Department of Biology, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085, USA.  
*Email: aaron.bauer@villanova.edu.*

**Shelley Edwards**, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. *E-mail: s.edwards@ru.ac.za*

**Bryan Maritz**, Department of Biodiversity and Conservation at the University of the Western Cape. *E-mail: bmaritz@uwc.ac.za*

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taxa is unlikely. Our findings support the elevation to species status, but we note that vicariance between these two distributions might be recent. Thus our results do not preclude these two taxa representing a single species. With the conservation status of *P. leightoni* affected by the clarification of this complex, we recommend these preliminary models be used in conjunction with further phylogenetic analysis for conclusive species delimitation.

**COUNTING EGGS BEFORE THEY HATCH: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOLS FOR KZN'S THREATENED FROG SPECIES**

JEANNE TARRANT<sup>1\*</sup> & ADRIAN ARMSTRONG<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Threatened Amphibian Programme, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Building K<sup>2</sup>, Pinelands Office Park, Ardeer Road, Modderfontein, 1609, South Africa;

<sup>2</sup>Biodiversity Research & Assessment Division, Scientific Services, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, P.O. Box 13053, Cascades 3202, South Africa.

Monitoring is an essential means of detecting amphibian declines and is being increasingly implemented in different parts of the world to gauge trends and spur conservation interventions. Development of monitoring and surveillance protocols was initiated in 2013 for four of KwaZulu-Natal's

threatened frog species using Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Norms and Standards for Surveillance and Monitoring Plans for Biodiversity. The methods have been tested for two species to date, the Critically Endangered *Hyperolius pickersgilli* (Pickersgill's reed frog) and the Endangered *Natalobatrachus bonebergi* (kloof frog). Some initial work using automated microphone arrays have also been tested to measure densities and special utilisation of the Endangered mistbelt chirping frog, *Anhydrophryne ngongoniensis*. Data were collected seasonally at three sites in KZN for *H. pickersgilli* using both automated and manual audio transect survey methods. *Natalobatrachus bonebergi* was monitored monthly throughout the year at two sites in KZN and three reserves in the Eastern Cape using transect egg clump counts. Data for Vernon Crookes Nature Reserve on the KZN south coast have been collected since December 2013 and provide the most comprehensive dataset of all sites based on egg clump counts. The primary response variable for detecting trends for this species is total number of egg clumps and a secondary response variable is mean number of eggs per clutch, both of which give an indication of breeding activity and potential population size. Data on additional variables were also collected to provide information on habitat preferences and detect emerging threats. Monthly monitoring has

shown the species to have a protracted breeding season (August-June), but that the drought conditions in 2014 and 2015 severely affected breeding activity. In all cases, these monitoring efforts are a joint collaboration between provincial conservation authorities, academic institutions, NGOs and volunteers, demonstrating the valuable contributions of citizen scientists to species conservation.

**A SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ASSESSMENT OF SNAKE OCCURRENCES IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA BETWEEN AUGUST 2015 AND APRIL 2016**

FRANCOIS THEART

Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences, Namibia University of Technology, Private Bag 13388 Windhoek, Namibia.

Conflict between snakes and people in urban areas is a problem Windhoek shares with many cities around the world. Surrounded by farm and conservation land, this capital city of Namibia experiences regular snake occurrence in and around houses, gardens and industrial sites. This study used snake removal data from the city's designated snake removal institution, Snakes of Namibia, in order to record numbers and diversity of snakes occurring in the city during the summer of 2015-2016, and identify possible reasons for conflicts.

It also provides a baseline for annual biodiversity monitoring with snakes as a proxy for ecosystem community dynamics. Over the period August 2015 to April 2016, 182 snakes of 12 species were removed from homes, gardens and industrial sites in the city. Puff adder (*Bitis arietans*) which represented 36% (n = 65) and zebra snake (*Naja nigricincta*) 29% (n = 53) dominated removal incidents. Of the other species, only brown house snake (*Boaedon capensis*) 11% (n = 21) and boomslang (*Dispholidus typus viridis*) accounted for more than 10% of removals. Monthly snake removals correlated highly with monthly total rainfall, with highest number of incidents reported in January 2016 (23%, n = 41). Incidents were concentrated in the eastern and southern suburbs, as a result of garden irrigation although the study could not assess whether reporting diligence was consistent across all suburbs. Although 81% (n = 147) of snake incidents involved venomous species no snakebite incidents were reported during the period. The study provides a baseline for year-on-year monitoring, a useful parameter for the city's biodiversity programme.