

ISSN 1017 - 6187

## AFRICAN HERP NEWS

No. 27: APRIL 1998

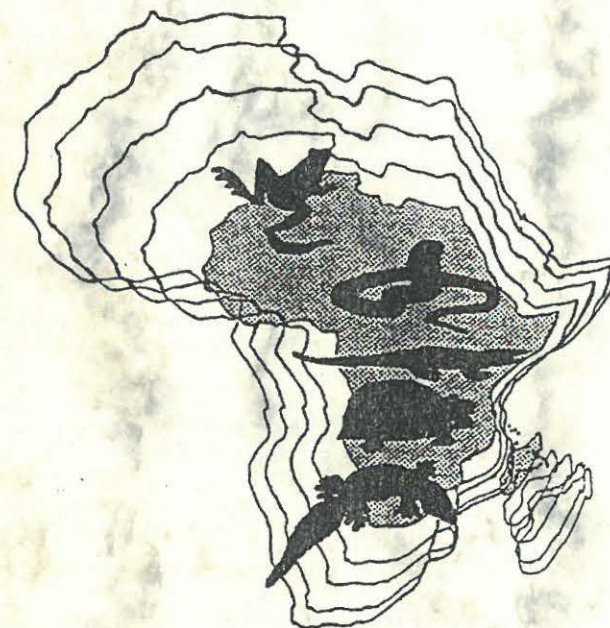
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## AFRICAN HERP NEWS

HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA  
NEWSLETTER



APRIL 1998

NO. 27

## HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

### Founded 1965

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

### Editor's note:

Articles will be considered for publication provided they are original and have not been published elsewhere.

Articles may be submitted for peer review (at least two reviewers) at the Editor's discretion.

Lists of reviewers will be published in the newsletter from time to time.

Authors are requested to submit long manuscripts on disc in ASCII format.

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

Articles and news items appearing in *African Herp News* may be reprinted, provided the author's name and newsletter reference are given.

### Typist:

Dr. Angelo Lambiris.

## COMMITTEE OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

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Mr. W.D. Haacke, Department of Herpetology, Transvaal Museum, P.O. Box 413, Pretoria 0001, South Africa.

### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. R. Laurent, Prof. J.C. Poynton, Dr. C. Gans, Dr. D.G. Broadley.

## EDITORIAL

I would like to thank our past Chairman, Mike Bates, and his Committee for their hard work and dedicated efforts towards the development of the Association. The Newsletter has seen a number of changes under Mike's expert editorship, and it is with some diffidence that I take up the reigns from him - his will not be an easy act to follow.

We had hoped to bring out two issues of the Newsletter in 1997, but the change of editorship and printers, and a rather small number of contributions for inclusion, resulted in an unavoidable delay in the production of this issue. However, teething problems have been successfully overcome, and I am now starting to assemble material for the December issue.

Ernst Baard has taken over organisation of the forthcoming H.A.A. Symposium,

to be held in Stellenbosch. The first announcement has already gone out, and a second announcement is enclosed with this issue of the Newsletter.

Contributors to the Newsletter submitting typed scripts are requested to use double spacing and wide margins (at least 2.5 cm) all round, to facilitate editorial preparation. Longer articles may be submitted on disc (Word 6.0 or Word 7.0). Articles may also be sent by e-mail, as a Word 6.0 attachment, to the editor at <lambiris@pixie.udw.ac.za>

**Angelo Lambiris**

**Chairman / Newsletter Editor**

## NEW H.A.A. COMMITTEE

The new committee members elected in December 1997 are as follows:

### Additional Members

Mr. Mike Bates  
Dr. William Branch  
Mr. Rod Douglas  
Mr. Wulf Haacke

### Chairman/Newsletter Editor

Dr. Angelo Lambiris

### Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Frank Farquharson

\*\*\*\*\*

### Journal Editor

Dr. Martin Whiting

Museum, P.O. Box 413, Pretoria 0001, South Africa).

**COLOPUS WAHLBERGI WAHLBERGI**  
Peters, 1869; Kalahari Ground Gecko;

(a) Botswana, Ngamiland district, near the southern tip of Linyati Swamp (1823DA); November 1973; D. Dandridge; Transvaal Museum, TM 45985. Adult male, svl = 57 mm, tail lost. Locus indicated in Haacke, 1984, *Koedoe* Suppl., fig. 2.

(b) Botswana, Ngamiland district, Tsodilo Hills (1821DD; 18°45'19"S 21°45'41"E); 19 April 1995; M. Barts; Transvaal Museum, TM 81100. Adult male, svl = 46 mm, t = 39 mm.

(c) Botswana, Ngamiland district, 12 km S of Toteng on the Ghanzi road (2022BD; 20°16'S 22°55'E); M. Barts; Transvaal Museum, TM 59756 & 59797, both juveniles.

(d) Namibia, Western Caprivi Strip, Katima Mololo district, near W bank of the Kwando River, S of Kongola bridge (1723BD; 17°52'S 23°19'E); 13 April 1997; E. Erb; Transvaal Museum, TM 81099. Juvenile, svl = 30 mm, t = 28 mm.

The published distribution maps for this taxon (Haacke, 1976, *Ann. Transvaal Mus.* 30(3):39, fig. 1; and Auerbach, 1987, *The Reptiles and Amphibia of Botswana*, Mokwepa Consultants: 90) indicate a northern range limit within Botswana at about 21°30'S while in Namibia it reaches the Angolan border, well into the 500+ mm average rainfall zone. A single record for this higher rainfall zone in Botswana had already been shown in 1984 (Specimen a, above) (Haacke, 1984, *Koedoe* Suppl.: 174, fig. 2). Since then two records from Zimbabwe (Victoria Falls 1725DD, Broadley & Spawls, 1991, *J. Herpetol.*

*Assoc. Africa* 39:19; and 5 km SW of Dotama Pan 1924CD, Broadley & Rasmussen, 1995, *Afr. Herp News* 22:52) extended the known range considerably to the north-east across the border into western Zimbabwe, but still leaving northern Botswana practically vacant.

The above listed records in the Transvaal Museum indicate that this gecko is widespread all over northern and in fact over most areas of Botswana with a sandy substrate and actually extends into the Western Caprivi Strip, Namibia, from where a recent initial investigation was unable to prove its presence (Haacke, 1996, *Afr. Herp News* 25: 29-33). It is obvious that the northern range limit extends well into Angola and it is very likely that this species will also be found in SW Zambia.

Submitted by: **W.D. HAACKE**  
(Department of Herpetology, Transvaal Museum, P.O. Box 413, Pretoria 0001, South Africa).

## SCINCIDAE

**ACONTIAS MELEAGRIS MELEAGRIS**  
(Linnaeus, 1758): Cape Legless Skink; South Africa, Western Cape Province; two localities.

(a) Laaiplek, Vredenburg district (3218CC, 32°47'S, 18°09'E); 23 February 1997; N.J.L. Heideman, B.A. Wilson, M.G.J. Hendriks, N. Don & C. Moses; National Museum, Bloemfontein, NMB R7511-7512 (under tins, about 10 m apart), R7516-7517 (under lawn cuttings).

(b) Farm Draai Hoek (10), Piketberg district (3218AD, 32°28'S, 18°20'E); 24 February 1997; collectors as above;

NMB R7513-7515, found under sheet metal in kraal.

Specimens were dark and unstriped dorsally, and measured 161-211 mm snout-vent length. Together with three quarter-degree loci (3217DD, 3318AA, 3218BB) plotted on the map in Visser (1984, *Landbou Weekblad*, 14 September 1984, pp. 72-73, 75-77) these are the most westerly localities for the species. The nearest locality plotted by Broadley & Green (1969, *Arnoldia [Rhodesia]*, 4[26]: 1-29) is in locus 3318BC.

Submitted by: **B.A. WILSON**  
(Department of Education, Worcester), **M.G.J. HENDRIKS** (University of the Western Cape, Belville South), **N.J.L. HEIDEMAN** (Department of Zoology, University of the North, QwaQwa Campus, P/B X13, Phutaditjhaba 9866) (to whom correspondence should be addressed), **M.F. BATES** (Department of Herpetology, National Museum, Bloemfontein), **N. DON** and **C. MOSES** (Soghne College of Education, Worcester).

## SERPENTES

### VIPERIDAE

**BITIS GABONICA GABONICA**  
(Duméril & Bibron, 1854): Gaboon Viper; Malawi, Northern Region, Kaningina Forest Reserve, east of Mzuzu (11°31' S, 34°07' E; 1134CA; 1360m a.s.l.); November 1994; L. Chinula; Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe, NMZB 14552.

Kaningina Forest Reserve is predominantly *Brachystegia* woodland with areas of wetter forest. Although

recognised as occurring in Malawi (Mitchell, 1950, *Nyasaland J.* 3(2):46-57; Sweeney, 1961, *Snakes of Nyasaland*. The Nyasaland Society and the Nyasaland Government, Zomba) *Bitis g. gabonica* appears to be unknown in the country. Those given by Johnston (1897, *British Central Africa*. Methuen & Co., London) came, as indicated by Loveridge (1953, *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 110(3):143-322), from portions of British Central Africa that are today part of Zambia, not Malawi. While no specimens were known, there was reference to skins of *Bitis g. gabonica* from the Mzuzu area (Mitchell, 1950). Sweeney (1961) discusses several additional records from around Mzuzu and the nearby Viphyia, and Dr. D.G. Broadley (*in lit.*) had seen the skinned head of one in a collection of snakes at Nkhata Bay Secondary School, east of Mzuzu.

Data for the specimen are as follows: Juvenile male measuring 420+42 mm; 133 ventrals; 31 pairs of subcaudals; 36 mid-body scale rows; anal entire.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank Mrs. Kathrein Hüttner for making available the specimen, Dr. Klim Hüttner for the locality coordinates and Dr. D.G. Broadley for reviewing a draft of this note and providing the museum cataloguing data.

Submitted by: **D.P. CRITCHLOW**  
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