

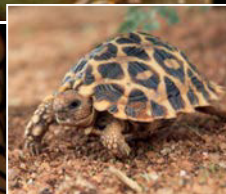
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AHN

AFRICAN HERP NEWS



Giant Legless Skinks
Agonistic Behaviour



Serrated Tent Tortoise
Winter Activity



Banded Caecilian
Behaviour



Eastern Shield Cobra
Distribution

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NEWSLETTER

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: *Dendroaspis jamesoni* from Soyo, Angola. Photograph by: Warren Klein.

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GERRHOSAURIDAE

Gerrhosaurus auritus Boettger, 1887

KALAHARI PLATED LIZARD



ON 8 February 2014, during a vertebrate survey on Farm Zonderwater, approximately 13 km north-west of Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa (2327 DA; 23° 35' 54.2" S, 27° 39' 17.5" E; 850 m a.s.l.), an adult (approximately 140 mm SVL) Kalahari Plated Lizard (*Gerrhosaurus auritus*) was captured in a Sherman small mammal trap by the first author. It was photographed in the field and then released (no collecting permit). The observation was made in natural sandveld habitat dominated by *Combretum apiculatum*, *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* and *Terminalia sericea*; the soil type was deep sandy loam with some clay (Clovelly 95%; W. de Frey pers. comm.). A combination of the following morphological features identify the specimen as *G. auritus*: indistinct dorsolateral stripes, four supraciliaries, scales on soles of feet keeled, broad and crescentic tympanic shield, smooth lateral scales, eight rows of ventral plates, rostral and frontonasal separated by nasals, 17 femoral pores on each thigh (Fig. 1). This observation was accessioned with the Animal Demography Unit (ADU) Virtual Museum (VM) (<http://vmus.adu.org.za>) with accession number "SARCA 153568".

A recent molecular analysis by Bates *et*

al. (2013) confirmed that *G. auritus* is a valid species, distinct from other taxa in the *G. nigrolineatus* species complex.

This species has a widespread distribution, occurring in bushveld and Kalahari sandveld across Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe (Branch 1998; Bates *et al.* 2013; Bates 2014). Currently only a single record of the species exists for South Africa, namely a specimen from Farm Groenfontein, 44 km WNW of Lephalale (2327CB), also in Limpopo Province, photographed and submitted to the SARCA virtual museum (Bates 2014). The new Zonderwater locality for *G. auritus* is situated 33 km east of the above-mentioned Groenfontein locality and represents only the second record (and second specimen) of this species for South Africa, and south of the Limpopo River. We recommend additional collecting be conducted in the Lephalale area in order to evaluate the geographic extent of this species in South Africa. A specimen of *G. flavigularis* (brown with distinct pale, black-edged dorsolateral stripes; five supraciliaries on either side of head) was also collected – in a funnel trap – on Zonderwater farm (23° 33' 43.4" S, 27° 39' 43.1" E), indicating sympatry between these two species at this locality.

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Figure 1. The observed Kalahari Plated Lizard (*Gerrhosaurus auritus*) from Farm Zonderwater, approximately 13 km north-west of Lephalale, Limpopo Province, immediately after capture.

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