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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, and short communications – subject to peer review) and *African Herp News*, the Newsletter (which includes short communications, natural history notes, geographical distribution notes, herpetological survey reports, venom and snakebite notes, book reviews, bibliographies, husbandry hints, announcements and news items).

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles shall be considered for publication provided that they are original and have not been published elsewhere. Articles will be submitted for peer review at the Editor's discretion. Authors are requested to submit manuscripts by e-mail in MS Word '.doc' or '.docx' format.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: *Smaug giganteus* from near Harrismith South Africa. Photograph by: Stuart Nielsen. Nikon D90 (1/1500, F5.6, ISO 400).

BRANCH, W.R. 1998. *Field Guide to the Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa*. Third edition. Struik, Cape Town, Pp. 399.

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GEKKONIDAE

***Hemidactylus mabouia* (Moreau De Jonnès, 1818)**
Moreau's Tropical House Gecko

On October 24th 2011, 20:00 a *Hemidactylus mabouia* was found and photographed (Fig. 1) by Rupert Huber at the facilities of Sossus Oasis campsite, Sesriem, Maltahöhe District, Namibia, 24°29'33,7" S, 15°48'13,4" E, altitude 786 m a.s.l.. The animal was not collected as a voucher specimen due to the lack of collecting permits, and the gecko was therefore released at the point of capture. The animal was in good condition.

Hemidactylus mabouia is native to parts of south and central Africa and its range within sub-Saharan Africa is extending rapidly due to accidental translocation by humans. Haagner & Branch (1996) report a record from Bedford, Eastern Cape Province, where a specimen was found in a cargo truck. Furthermore they observed a specimen at Port Elizabeth harbour which originated from a Durban cargo ship. Douglas (1990) reports another population from Bloemfontein, Free State Province, which was established from translocated individuals. Sesriem is a popular accommodation spot for tourists visiting Sossusvlei Dunes, and it is therefore very likely that the animal was introduced to the locality by visitors to the site.

Broadley (1977) shows a map (p. 11) of the distribution of Moreau's Tropical House Gecko in Southern Africa. It shows a record from the Caprivi-Strip (near Ngala, Chobe River) and is so far the only record from Namibia, although not listed under the localities. The specimen from Sesriem is the western most record of *H. mabouia* to date, compared to its former most western record in the Okavango Delta, Botswana, approximately 1160 km to the east (Broadley, 1977).

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- DOUGLAS, R. M. 1990. Incidences of Homosciens and Homoinsciens Translocation in the Oranje Free State: *Hemidactylus mabuia* and *Lygodactylus capensis*. *Journal of the Herpetological Association of Africa*, 37:55 – 56.
- HAAGNER, G. V. & BRANCH, W. R. 1996. *Hemidactylus mabouia*. *African Herp News*, 25:43 – 44.



Figure 1: Adult *Hemidactylus mabouia*, photographed at the Sossus Oasis campsite, Sesriem, Namibia.

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ABOUT THE COVER

***Smaug giganteus* Smith 1844
Giant Girdled Lizard or Sungazer**

Smaug giganteus is a charismatic Girdled Lizard species commonly known as the Sungazer. This name originates from its characteristic basking stance that entails lifting the anterior portion of its body off the ground and facing the sun. The species is also known as *Ouvolk* amongst landowners familiar with the species, a name attributed to the extremely sedentary position of a basking Sungazer. Stanley et al. (2011) recently re-assigned the Sungazer from the genus *Cordylus* to the genus *Smaug* based on results from mitochondrial DNA analyses, along with the congeners *S. warren warreni*, *S. w. barbertonensis*, *S. w. depressus*, *S. vandami*, *S. breyeri*, *S. mossambicus*, and *S. regius*.