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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: *Nucras taeniolata* from Groendal Wilderness Area, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Photograph by: Werner Conradie. Canon EOS 450D (1/160, F32, ISO 100).

Marchand, Rheana (Erell Institute/Salish Kootenai College)

Microhabitat analysis of *Chondrodactylus turneri*

I characterized the habitat use and activity patterns of adult male, adult female, and juvenile *Chondrodactylus turneri*, a common nocturnal gecko endemic to southern Africa, during December-January 2011-2012 in the Namib-Naukluft National Park, Namibia. I assessed their activity periods relative to time of night and the lunar cycle, measured characteristics of habitable rocks, determined microhabitat use by adult and juvenile geckos, and examined measurement data for size differences among males, females, and juveniles. Of the 120 lizards that were captured and measured, 40 were adults (snout-to-vent length (SVL) = 78.8 ± 0.6 mm) and 80 were juveniles (SVL = 41.9 ± 0.6 mm). There was no sexual dimorphism in body length (SVL) between adult males and females, but adults did differ in body proportions. Head width, but not head length, was significantly associated with snout-vent length in adult males. The opposite trend occurred among adult females: head length, but not head width was significantly correlated with snout-vent length. Rocks were considered habitable if they were at least 0.5 m wide and 0.5 m long and had at least 1 crevice that was 15 X 5 cm. Lizards were captured by hand on habitable rocks significantly more often than on uninhabitable rocks. Juveniles were captured in the open 84% of the time, but adults were captured equally often in the open and in crevices. Adult males and adult females did not differ in their capture locations. Higher rocks with more crevices were preferred by geckoes; together, rock height and number of crevices accounted for 31.8% of the variation in gecko captures. Proximity to other rocks did not explain any of the variation in lizards occupying rocks. More detailed observations on lizard movement patterns and the characteristics of lizards co-occurring will be provided.

Maritz, Bryan (University of the Witwatersrand); **Alexander, Graham** (University of the Witwatersrand)

Striking it rich: why ambush predators eat large meals?

Snakes that ambush prey are known to consume relatively enormous meals. While the costs associated with consuming large meals have been investigated, few studies have attempted to quantify the relative advantages of consuming very large meals, primarily because the frequency with which such prey items are encountered by wild snakes remains unknown. We quantified prey availability and feeding preferences for the African viperid *Bitis schneideri* in order to understand the advantages of consuming very large meals. We used captures from 4185 pitfall trap-nights to quantify the prey community available to ambushing snakes. Additionally, we used observations of