

African Herp News

**Newsletter of the
Herpetological Association of Africa**



Number 61

October 2014

HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

<http://www.africanherpetology.org>

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 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, 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.

COPYRIGHT: Articles published in the Newsletter are copyright of the Herpetological Association of Africa and may not be reproduced without permission of the editor.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE HERPETOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

CHAIRMAN

P. Le F. N. Mouton, Department of Botany and Zoology, Stellenbosch University, Private Bag X01, Matieland 7602, South Africa. E-mail: pnm@sun.ac.za

SECRETARY

BuyiMakhubo, 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. E-mail: john@measey.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Warren Schmidt, Postnet Suite 101, Private Bag X01, East Rand 1462, South Africa.

E-mail: africanherpnews@gmail.com

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

Graham Alexander, School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa. E-mail: graham.alexander@wits.ac.za

Michael Bates, Department of Herpetology, National Museum, PO 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. E-mail: aaron.bauer@villanova.edu

Andrew Turner, Scientific Services, Western Cape Nature Conservation Board, Private Bag 5014, Stellenbosch 7600, South Africa. E-mail: aaturner@capenature.co.za

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: *Lamprophis guttatus*, 12,5 km west of Mokhotlong, Lesotho. Photo: W. R. Branch.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTIONS

LACERTIDAE

Pedioplanis lineocellata lineocellata (Duméril & Bibron 1839)

Spotted Sand Lizard

On 10 February 2013, a juvenile *Pedioplanis l. lineocellata* was found 25 km south of Gam, Otjozondjupa region, Namibia (field number SK160, to be catalogued at the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, Germany). Based on museum collections (Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (Pretoria), Port Elizabeth Museum and the National Museum of Namibia (Windhoek) five localities with *P. l. lineocellata* populations (or at least single records) have been recorded near the Otjozondjupa region, plus an additional one from near Katima Mulilo in the non-arid Caprivi strip (Fig. 1, circled area). However, in the literature these areas are largely overlooked as being part of the distribution range of the species (see Branch, 1998). -Bates & Heideman (1997) recorded a specimen of *P. lineocellata* (referred to *P. l. cf. pulchella*) from Onyaanya in Ovamboland which represented the most northerly record for this species. Timberlake & Childes (2004, p. 325) classify *P. lineocellata* as part of the Central Kalahari Fauna and describe its distribution as “a wide range in arid SW Africa, ranging north through the Kalahari to the margins of the Okavango/Makgadikgadi”.

The collected *P. l. lineocellata* specimen has a snout-to-vent length (SVL) of 28 mm, 12-14 rows of ventral scales around midbody, two large black-edged transparent scales at each lower eyelid, no enlarged tympanic shield and the posterior dorsal scales are rhombic, slightly overlapping and slightly keeled, smaller but almost as large as the scales on the tibia. The colour is blackish with a greyish head and a greyish broad vertebral stripe lined by two rows of 14 and 15 light grey spots. On each side there is one dorsolateral and one lateral cream-coloured stripe and an additional row of spots in between. The limbs are grey with light spots.

The southern-most record of the five localities from the Otjozondjupa region (see Fig. 1), catalogued as TM 80374 and recorded by Wulf Haacke (former Curator of Herpetology in the Transvaal Museum (now the Ditsong Museum of Natural History, Pretoria), was confirmed during our survey. It was found in Kalahari Acacia Woodland (20°27'46"S, 20°43'21"E, 2020BD) in a patch largely dominated by *Combretum apiculatum* with a semi-dense grass layer on sandy soil (Fig. 2). In the surrounding area, which was much more open and *Acacia* sp. was the dominating tree species, the following reptile species were recorded: *Trachylepis varia*, *Meroles squamulosus*, *Ichnotropis capensis*, *Heliobolus lugubris* and *Agama aculeata*.

The nearest record from the Otjozondjupa region is 25 km away at Gam, catalogued as SMR 3519 in the National Museum of Namibia. The nearest record within the published distribution range is from Farm Labora 436 (TM 33517) which is 200 km south-west.

The known range of *Pedioplanis l. lineocellata* extends from around the Etosha pan in northern Namibia south to the Sperrgebiet and Bloemfontein in South Africa, east across southern Botswana to the Limpopo Province in South Africa (Branch, 1998). Generally, the species is known to occur in a variety of habitats including karroid veld, mesic thicket and arid and mesic savannah, but it is absent from deep sand areas like the Namib Desert and the central Kalahari (Branch, 1998).

REFERENCES

- BATES, M.F. & HEIDEMAN. 1997. Report on a collection of lizards from Owambo District, Northern Namibia. *African Herp News* 26:16-21.
- BRANCH, W. R. 1998. *Field guide to the snakes and other reptiles of southern Africa*. Third edition. Struik Publishers. Cape Town.
- TIMBERLAKE, J.R. & CHILDES, S.L. 2004. Biodiversity of the Four Corners Area: Technical Reviews Volume Two (Chapters 5-15). Occasional Publications in Biodiversity No 15, Biodiversity Foundation for Africa, Bulawayo/Zambezi Society, Harare, Zimbabwe.

SUBMITTED BY

SEBASTIAN KIRCHHOF, Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin, Germany, E-mail:

sebastian.kirchhof@mfn-berlin.de, **CHRISTY ANNA HIPSLEY**, Museum für

Naturkunde, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43,

10115 Berlin, Germany, E-mail: christy.hipsley@mfn-berlin.de, **AMMON CORL**,

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Department of Integrative Biology, University of

California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA, E-mail: corlammon@gmail.com,

HARTWIG DELL'MOUR, Roche Diagnostics Vienna, Johann Gruber Promenade

22, 3433 Königstetten, Austria, E-mail: hartwig_dellmour@yahoo.de,

hartwig.dellmour@roche.com, **JOHANNES MÜLLER**, Museum für Naturkunde,

Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin,

Germany, E-mail: johannes.mueller@mfn-berlin.de

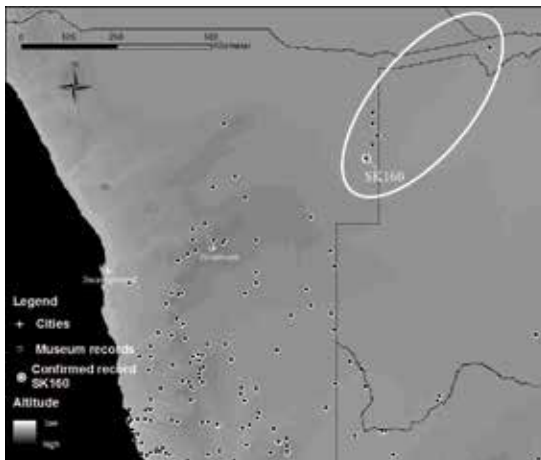


Figure 1. Part of the distribution range of *P. l. lineocellata* compiled from the museum collections of the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong Museum of Natural History, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth Museum (both in South Africa) and the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek, including the confirmed record SK160. The circled area shows the localities that are hitherto mostly neglected in the literature.



Figure 2. Habitat of *P. l. lineocellata* south of Gam, Namibia.

***Pedioplanis undata* (A. Smith, 1838)
Western Sand Lizard**

On 13 February 2013, four individuals of *Pedioplanis undata* (field numbers SK175-178, to be catalogued at the Museum for Naturkunde Berlin, Germany) were collected at Gobabis, Gobabis District, Omaheke Region, Namibia (Fig. 1).

The four individuals, one adult male, one adult female and two juvenile specimens (Fig. 2 A-D), were caught near the Goba Lodge at 22°26'53"S, 18°57'33"E (2218BD) in savannah habitat on broken rocky ground with dense grass cover and interspersed shrubs (Fig. 3). Two more individuals were observed but not caught. All individuals exhibited similar escape behaviour dashing from shrub to shrub. When undisturbed they spent their time in more open areas with less dense grass cover and stonier substrate with sand and larger pebbles. Together with *P. undata*, four other lizard species were recorded: *Meroles squamulosus*, *Trachylepis varia*, *Gerrhosaurus flavigularis* and *Agama anchietae*.

Description of the specimens: The female (Fig. 1A) was gravid and contained four eggs. Its snout-to-vent length (SVL) is 57 mm, which is larger than the maximum recorded so far (54 mm; Branch, 1998). The specimen has 9-10 ventral scale rows around midbody, eight enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supraciliaries and a large tympanic scale.

The male individual (SVL = 54 mm) has 10-11 ventral scale rows, six enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supraciliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1B).

The smaller juvenile specimen (SVL = 27) has 10-11 ventral scale rows, five enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supraciliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1C).

The larger juvenile specimen (SVL = 29 mm) has 9-11 ventral scale rows, six enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid, five upper labials before the subocular scale, two rows of granules between the supraocular and the supraciliaries and a large tympanic scale (Fig. 1D).

Compared to Branch (1998) and Conradie et al. (2012), the number of enlarged black-edged transparent scales in the lower eyelid is not in concordance with previous descriptions of the species.

Tissue samples of all specimens were collected separately and stored in 99% Ethanol. We sequenced the mitochondrial ND2 gene (NADH dehydrogenase subunit 2) of the male and the female adult specimens and confirmed the identification of these vouchers as belonging to *P. undata*. A more comprehensive genetic analysis of the species is in preparation.

The species is endemic to Namibia (Conradie *et al.*, 2012) and occurs widely in Northern and Central Namibia but enters the Namib Desert in the West only marginally. Southernmost records reach 23°30', and further inland the species has only once been recorded east of the B1 between Windhoek and Grootfontein, in 1985 at Ongegund/Grootfontein (catalogued as SMR 4445, National Museum of Namibia/Windhoek). The new records from Gobabis lie approximately 190 km east of Windhoek and 290 km south of Ongegund.

REFERENCES

- BRANCH, W. R. 1998. *Field guide to the snakes and other reptiles of southern Africa*. Third edition. Struik Publishers. Cape Town.
- CONRADIE, W., MEASEY, J. G., BRANCH, W. R. & TOLLEY, K. A. 2012. Revised phylogeny of African sand lizards (*Pedioplanis*), with the description of two new species from south-western Angola. *African Journal of Herpetology*, 61:91-112.

SUBMITTED BY

SEBASTIAN KIRCHHOF, Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin, Germany, E-mail: sebastian.kirchhof@mfn-berlin.de, **CHRISTY ANNA HIPSLEY**, Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin, Germany, E-mail: christy.hipsley@mfn-berlin.de, **AMMON CORL**, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Department of Integrative Biology, University of

Geographical Distributions

California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA, E-mail: corlammon@gmail.com, **HARTWIG DELL'MOUR**, Roche Diagnostics Vienna, Johann Gruber Promenade 22, 3433 Königstetten, Austria, E-mail: hartwig_dellmour@yahoo.de, hartwig.dellmour@roche.com, **JOHANNES MÜLLER**, Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin, Germany, E-mail: johannes.mueller@mfn-berlin.de

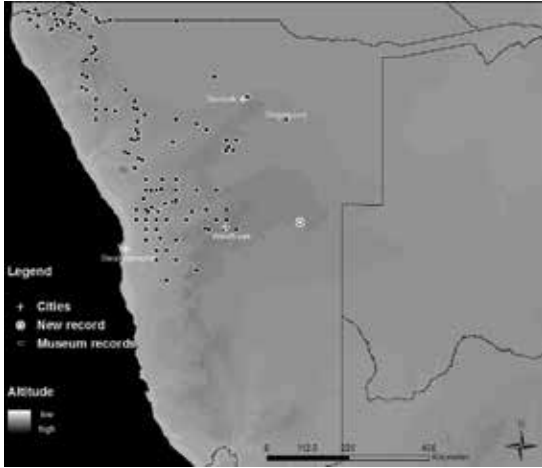


Figure 1. Distribution of *P. undata* compiled from the museum collections of the Museum for Nuturkunde, Berlin, (Germany), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Austria), Ditsong National Museum of Natural History, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth Museum (both South Africa) and the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek, including the new record from Gobabis.



Figure 2. Habitat of *P. undata* near Gobabis, Namibia.

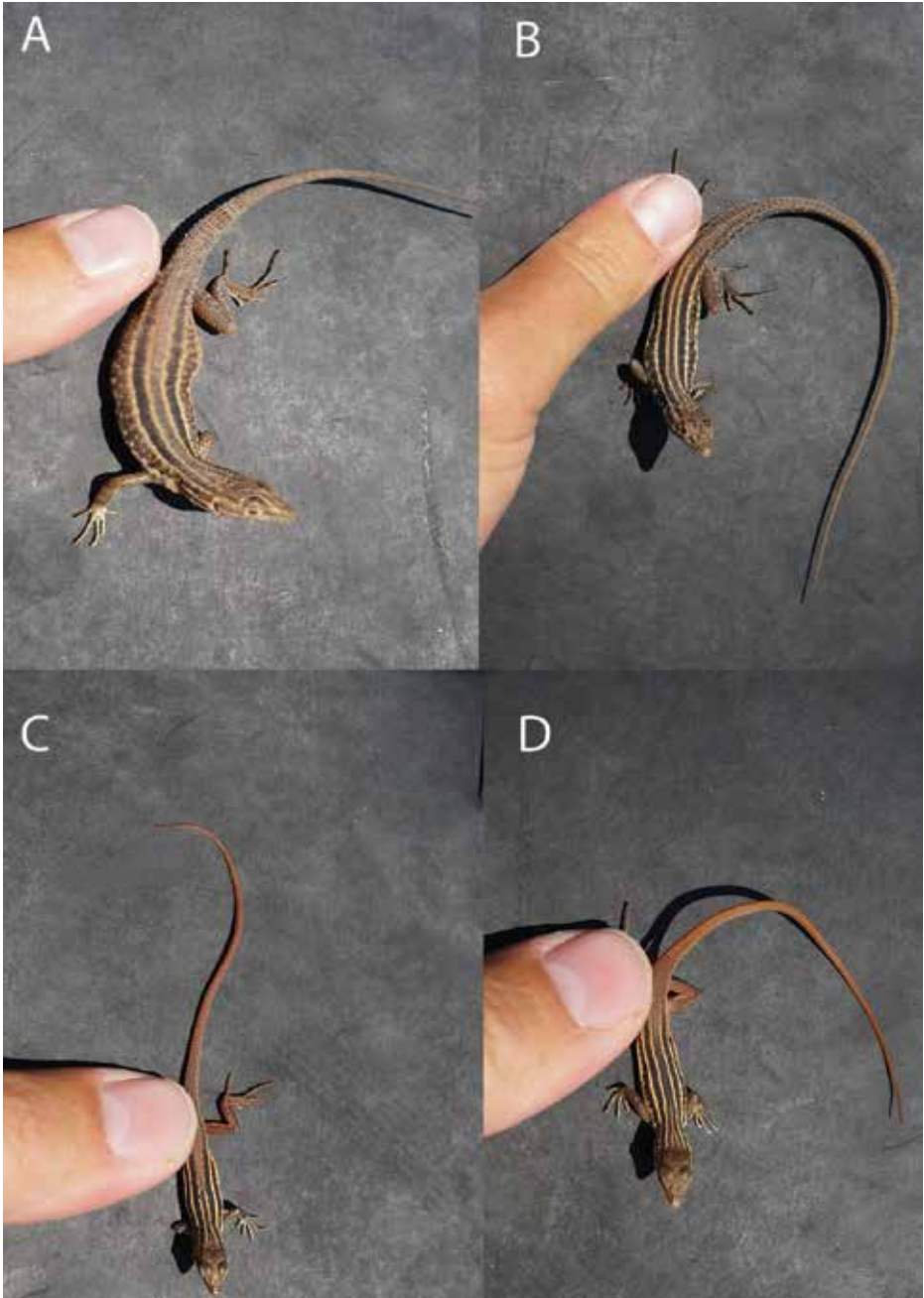


Figure 3. Images of live specimens of the four collected individuals of *P. undata*: (A) adult female (SK177), (B) adult male (SK178), (C) the smaller juvenile (SK176) and (D) the larger juvenile (SK175).