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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.

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

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: *Hyperolius pusillus* from near Nelspruit, South Africa. Photograph by: Bryan Maritz. Canon EOS 50D (1/250, F25, ISO 200).

PYTHONIDAE

***Python natalensis* Smith, 1840**
Southern African Python

REPRODUCTION

The Southern African Python (*Python natalensis*) is widespread in southern Africa and is found in Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa. The species reaches a southern limit in the northern portion of Gauteng Province, South Africa. Brooding *P. natalensis* have been observed basking and coiling around clutches of eggs to raise egg temperature and improve the incubation of the eggs (Alexander 2007) and it has been hypothesised that the distribution of *P. natalensis* is proximally limited by the colder temperatures that result from an increase in altitude (Alexander 2007). The range limitation in Gauteng appears to be related to the environmental temperatures of the Highveld and their impact on the brooding success of female *P. natalensis* (Alexander 2007).

On 23 December 2010, my colleagues and I observed and photographed a large female Southern African Python (*Python natalensis*) with neonates at Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve (RDNR), Gauteng (25.63483° S, 28.36566° E; Fig. 1). The female was first encountered and photographed by staff at RDNR during an alien plant removal project in August 2010 and was repeatedly encountered at the same locality by staff during patrols throughout September to December 2010. Neonate *P. natalensis* were first observed on Tuesday 21 December 2010 by Jackson Lephuting and Joshua Mathebula at RDNR. Observations of the behaviour of *P. natalensis* neonates after hatching indicate that they may spend between 48 – 72 hours below ground after hatching, which suggests that hatching occurred on 18 or 19 December 2010 (Prof. G. J. Alexander, Pers. Comm.)

Fig. 1: Photograph of an adult, female *P. natalensis*, with a neonate at Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve.

The history of *P. natalensis* at RDNR is confused by the unconfirmed and confirmed reports of translocations of *P. natalensis* into RDNR during the last decade or so. Translocations of individuals from the surrounding areas may have led to the establishment of *P. natalensis* at RDNR or may just have contributed to the local population but it is not possible to say which of the two possibilities true. Nevertheless, this record is simultaneously the first confirmed record of *P. natalensis* and the first confirmed record of breeding for the species in the RDNR. Historical records of *P. natalensis* and incidental encounters recorded by Whittington-Jones et al. (2008) indicate that our record of *P. natalensis* at RDNR is also one of the southernmost records of *P. natalensis* reported since 2000 (Fig. 2). We note that this does not mean that *P. natalensis* does not occur further south than RDNR in Gauteng. Most recent reports of *P. natalensis* remain unconfirmed due to a lack of suitable evidence – photographic or otherwise but see SARCA record number 767 of a *P. natalensis* individual photographed at Blaauwbank Mine in the Magaliesburg (go to www.vmus.adu.org.za). Historical records of pythons suggest that the species can occur further south than RDNR, but the rate of habitat transformation and the densification of urban settlements are expected to have a negative impact on populations of *P. natalensis* in the southern parts of the species' distribution in Gauteng. The persistence of *P. natalensis* will most likely depend on protected areas of habitat such as Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve and others.

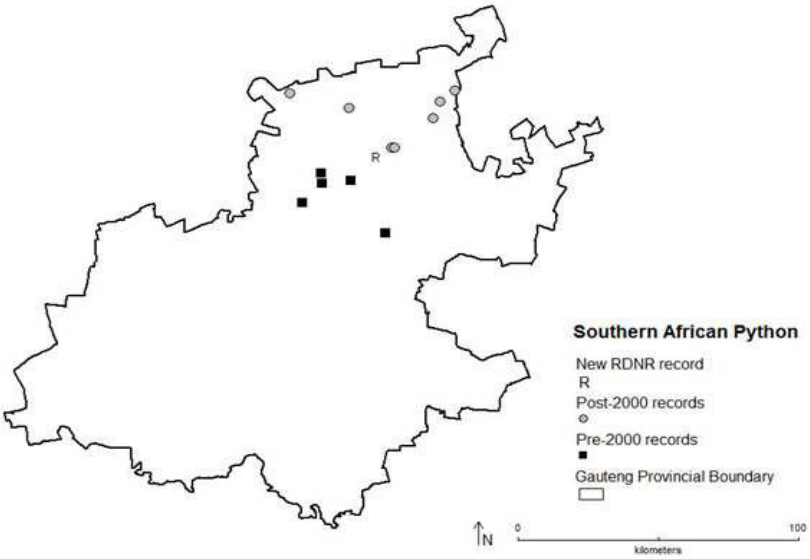

Figure 2: Historical and recent records of Southern African Python (*P. natalensis*) in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The new record of *P. natalensis* in Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve is also shown. Data for the pre- and post-2000 records of *P. natalensis* are provided by Whittington-Jones et al. (2008) and reprinted with permission.

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GEKKONIDAE

***Chondrodactylus bibronii* (Smith, 1846)**
Bibron's Thick-toed Gecko

ENDOPARASITES

Chondrodactylus bibronii occurs mainly in the Cape Provinces of the Republic of South Africa, barely extending into the adjacent Free State and Namibia (Branch 2004). They are gregarious and often live in dense colonies on rocky outcrops, but also under loose tree bark and around houses (Branch 2004). The following helminths: Cestoda, cyclophyllid metacestodes; Nematoda, *Skrjabinelazia ornata*, *Spauligodon smithi*; Acanthocephala, cystacanth were previously reported in *C. bibronii* (as *Pachydactylus bibronii*) by Goldberg and Bursey (2002a). The purpose of this note is to add to the helminth list of *C. bibronii*.

Twenty *C. bibronii* (mean SVL = 71.8 mm ± 5.0 mm, range: 60—79 mm) collected in 1970 from Botswana (n = 16), Kgalagadi District, 1 km W Tsabong and the Republic of South Africa, (n = 4) Northern Cape Province, 121 km N, 16 km E Upington and deposited in the herpetology collection of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (LACM), Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. (Republic of South Africa LACM 82828-82831; Botswana LACM 82848, 82850-82854, 82857, 82858, 82861, 82862, 82864, 82868-82871, 82896, 82897) were examined for intestinal helminths. The stomachs had been previously removed and were not available for examination.

The body cavity was opened and the digestive tract was removed, opened longitu-