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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: *Bitis caudalis* from an unknown locality in South Africa. Photograph by: David McGuire. Canon EOS 60D (1/250, F18, ISO 200).

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TESTUDINIDAE

Stigmochelys pardalis Bell, 1928

Leopard Tortoise

PREDATION

During an analysis of Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) faeces to determine prey species included in the diet from north-eastern Namibia (Bwabwata National Park, BNP), the remains of an adult Leopard Tortoise (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) were discovered. Remains of parts of the telltale scutes were observed within one faecal sample – i.e. not incidentally recovered whilst collecting the faecal samples in the field – collected during 2011. Spotted hyena faeces were opportunistically collected throughout the study area (Kwando River area – i.e. the eastern core area of the BNP) with a total of 72 faecal samples analysed for prey remains which were predominantly Impala and Kudu (Hanssen 2011). This specific faecal sample was collected within the home range of the Kwando Clan which falls between the Horse Shoe bend in the Kwando River and just north of the tar road between Divundu and Kongola. This was the first Leopard Tortoise remains observed in the faeces from this area.

The eggs and hatchlings of Leopard Tortoise are the most vulnerable and fall prey to a variety of mammalian, reptilian and avian predators such as ants, jackals, dogs, mongooses, suricates, monitor lizards, puff adders, hornbills, crows, storks, secretary birds, ostriches and humans (Boycott & Bourquin 2000; Branch 1998). Except for humans, adult Leopard Tortoises have few natural predators although Verreaux's Eagle (*Aquila verreauxii*) has been known to kill smaller adult specimens (Cunningham & Nicholas 2005). Other threats include electric fences, vehicles and veld fires (Cunningham & Adank 2003; Boycott & Bourquin 2000; Branch 1998).

Although the principal food of Spotted Hyenas depends on what is available and varies between locations, they feed predominantly on large or medium-sized ungulates although a wide range of other items – e.g. small mammals, birds, fish reptiles, crabs,

snails, termites, elephant dung and fruit – are also included (Hanssen 2011; Skinner & Chimimba 2005). Spotted Hyenas have not previously been recorded to prey on Leopard Tortoise in Tanzania (B. Wachter Pers. Comm.) although tortoise remains – not identified – have been observed in the stomach contents of Brown Hyena (*Hyena brunnea*) from the Sperrgebiet in south-western Namibia (I. Wiesel Pers. Comm.).

Although unusual, but not unexpected, this confirmation of Leopard Tortoise included in the diet of Spotted Hyena from Namibia, is viewed as opportunistic foraging behaviour by Spotted Hyena and increases the known natural predators of Leopard Tortoise.

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REPTILIA: SQUAMATA

COLUBRIDAE

Pseudaspis cana Linnaeus, 1754

Mole Snake

CANNIBALISM/REPRODUCTION

On 2012/04/09 I noted that the captive gravid *Pseudaspis cana* female (F1 - TL: 1910mm: VL: 288) in my live collection had given birth. A male *P. cana* (M1 - TL: