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

It appears that the *Psammophis* attempted to ingest the *Pachydactylus* tail first, yet was only able to progress midway. The crack between the two rocks where these specimens were found was both narrow (<5mm) and firmly attached to the surrounding rock, requiring modest effort to remove, and the head of the gecko was found resting at the deepest, shallowest part of the crack. Farquharson (2006) reported finding an expired colubrid in his garden with a Mousebird lodged in the snake's buccal cavity. He proposed that the stiff barbs on the bird's tail feathers prevented successful regurgitation. In this case, it is evident that the gecko tried to avoid predation by wedging itself in a crack and we posit that both the shallow depth of the crack and the snake's slightly recurved teeth conceivably prevented abortion of the feeding attempt, ultimately leading to the death of the grappling pair. This is the first recorded incident of a gecko causing the death of a colubrid via an anti-predation behavior that caused an inability to abort the feeding attempt.

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SCINCIDAE

***Trachylepis spilogaster* (Peters, 1882)**
Kalahari Tree Skink

PREDATION

On 2 August 2011 at 13h30 I observed a dead juvenile *Trachylepis spilogaster*, approximately 30 mm in total length, being presented as food to the chicks of a Familiar Chat (*Cercomela familiaris*) in a Windhoek garden, Namibia (22° 33' 52.7" S; 17° 05'

50.6" E). The juvenile *T. spilogaster* was missing its tail indicating that it was probably actively caught and killed (although not confirmed) by the Familiar Chat and that tail autotomy did not assist it in this case.

Familiar Chat's feed mainly on invertebrates although fruit and human household waste are also taken (Maclean 1985, Hockey et al. 2006). The common Afrikaans name "Spekvreter" was due to it being observed eating the grease from wagon axels, indicating its generalist diet. Although Familiar Chat diet is highly varied I could find no reference to reptiles being included, indicating that the juvenile *T. spilogaster* individual was probably opportunistically taken.

No reference on avian predation of *T. spilogaster* was located and although skinks probably fall prey to a variety of raptors and other predatory birds (See Clauss & Clauss 2002 – *T. wahlbergii* predated by Lilac-breasted Roller) this sighting of Familiar Chat as predator expands the known predators of *T. spilogaster* and skinks in general.

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AGAMIDAE

***Agama planiceps* (Peters, 1862)**
Namibian Rock Agama

DIET

The diet of the Namibian Rock Agama (*Agama planiceps*) is very broadly described by Branch (1995) as "leaves and seeds as well as beetles and insects" while Alexander and Marais (2007) highlight the importance of ants in the diet of various *Agama* spp.