

New reptile records from three southern national parks

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Introduction

In recent years the Herpetology Department at the Port Elizabeth Museum has been actively involved in surveys of the reptiles and amphibians in a number of the southern national parks. The results of these surveys have been published elsewhere, e.g., Addo Elephant National Park (Branch, 1987; Branch & Braack 1987), Tsitsikamma Coastal and Forest National Parks (Branch & Hanekom 1987) and Karoo National Park (Branch & Braack 1989; 1990). During subsequent trips to these national parks and their environs, a number of new reptile distribution records have been noted that add to our knowledge of the respective parks' herpetofauna. These are documented below.

Reptilia
Serpentes
Colubridae

Lamprophis fiskii Boulenger, 1887
Fisk's house snake

This rare house snake is currently known from approximately 12 specimens from a few widely-scattered localities in the western karroid regions (e.g. Touwsrivier, Boulenger 1887; Hutchinson, Visser 1968; and Steinkopf, Marais 1981). On 12 October 1991 a subadult specimen (PEM R6543) was

found DOR on the Molteno Pass road, 1 km from the junction with the N2 highway, on the eastern boundary of the Karoo National Park (3222Bc; 33°20' S, 22°35'E; alt 870 m; W.R.Branch). The snake measured 230 (204+26) mm. Scutellation: ventrals 179 and sub-caudals 31. This is the first record of the species for the Karoo National Park and the first record from below the escarpment mountains on the southern plain of the Great Karoo.

Sauria
Cordylidae

Chamaesaura anguina anguina (Linnaeus, 1758)
Common grass lizard

On 8 March 1992 the recent remains of a grass lizard (PEM R6998) were found on the road on the western shore of the lagoon at Nature's Valley, at the western end of the Tsitsikamma National Park (3323Dc; 33°33'S, 23°58'E; alt. 2 m; D. Vlok). The remains, which comprise the main body region, have both forelimbs (absent in *C. macropholis*) and hindlimbs, with 2 clawed digits on the greatly reduced forelimbs (forelimb with five digits in *C. aenea*). The specimen is thus referable to *C. anguina*. This is the first record for the Tsitsikamma National Park. The species is known to inhabit grassy

and fynbos-covered slopes through the southern and eastern coastal regions of South Africa (Branch, 1988).

Varanidae

Varanus albigularis albigularis (Daudin, 1802)

Rock monitor

At 11:20 on 18 December 1991 an adult (cf. 1.2 m total length) *Varanus a. albigularis* was observed from a distance of 17 metres near Caesar's Dam, Addo Elephant National Park (3324DA; 33°32'S; 25°43'E; alt. 150 m; G.V. and A.J.F. Haagner). The lizard was observed for approximately 15 minutes whilst scavenging amongst elephant dung. The lizard was identified on the basis of the following characteristics: snout-vent : tail length ratio approximately 1 : 1; head robust; and body with five pale yellow blotches along the back. Monitors are uncommon vagrants in the park. Branch & Braack (1987) recorded the sighting of a subadult Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) in the park, and an old varanid nest site in a termite nest on Suurkop was also attributed to this species (Branch & Erasmus 1982). The above sighting of the rock monitor is the first confirmed record for the park.

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