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## Natural History Notes

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### Introduced Reptiles in the Addo Elephant National Park

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On 16 November 1986 an adult (56 mm snout – vent, 61 mm tail) gravid female tropical house gecko *Hemidactylus mabouia* Moreau de Jonnes, 1818, was collected by M.J. Malloch-Brown. The specimen was observed catching insects attracted to a wall light in a workroom at the rest camp in the Addo Elephant National Park (AENP). It is preserved and deposited in the herpetological collection of the Port Elizabeth Museum (PEM R4388). Colour: dorsum, irregularly blotched in light buff and pale grey; ventrum uniform dirty yellow; tail with 5 – 6 faint vestiges of dark brown-black bands. Scalation: preanofemoral pores, 31; loreals, 16; supralabials, 11 – 12; infralabials, 10 – 11; dorsal scale rows in a caudal verticil, 8; rows of enlarged body tubercles, 10. It is referable to the nominate race, *H. m. mabouia* (Broadley 1977, *Arnoldia (Rhod.)* 8(19): 1 – 15).

*Hemidactylus mabouia* is not endemic to the Cape Province, normally occurring throughout tropical Africa, from Somalia and Sierra Leone to Durban, Natal. However, its commensal habits have resulted in it being translocated to many of the islands in the Indian Ocean (Mauritius, Seychelles) and to the east coast of South America and the Antilles (Kluge 1969, *Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich.* 138: 1 – 167).

It was not recorded in the AENP during an intensive survey of the park's herpetofauna (Branch & Braack 1987, *Koedoe* 30: 61 – 111). The species is common in the Kruger National Park (KNP), and it may have been translocated to the AENP in the belongings or equipment of staff or tourists travelling between the KNP and the Addo Elephant National Park. Another specimen of this species was collected in the harbour facilities at Port Elizabeth (29 May 1980, PEM R1881) having been discovered in goods recently shipped from Durban.

The previous finding of a Cape day gecko *Lygodactylus capensis* (A. Smith, 1849) in the AENP (Branch & Braack 1987) was similarly attributed to transportation between the KNP and AENP, as the species does not normally occur in the eastern Cape being restricted in the province to the extreme north-western region. However, the recent discovery of two well-established and vigorous introduced colonies of this small gecko in two Port Elizabeth suburbs (Branch *unpubl. obs.*) indicates the existence of other, even more devious routes. Both introductions into the AENP, however, emphasise the dangers and ease of the unwitting spread of commensal species into conservation areas.