



## 2007

It is unbelievable, but another year has come and gone and 2007 is already well underway! The year started off with a highlight when SCARCE project manager, Dahné du Toit, got married to FWDCSA member, André Janse van Rensburg. This is a bonus for SCARCE, as both of them are 4x4 enthusiasts who grab every opportunity to get in the outdoors where they can go search for reptiles in hard to reach places!



Of course the wedding would have been incomplete without a lizard in the picture!

More good news is that the SCARCE project end date got extended by a year! As the project was only picking up speed, it was decided at a workshop at the beginning of last year (SCARCE talk December 2005-February 2006), to apply to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), who is funding the project, to extend the project for another year or two. CEPF granted the project extension, which means that the SCARCE project will continue till March 2008. The SCARCE project is thus still going strong! Several follow-up and hit-and-run surveys will be conducted over the next few months. The results will be written up in a report which will be made publicly available on the website.

Two new students, Johan du Plessis and Simon Capon, have also joined the herpetology lab at the Department of Botany & Zoology of the University of Stellenbosch. This is great news for SCARCE as both these guys are keen herpetologist who will make a significant contribution to the project.

The SCARCE team would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who has contributed to the project to date, whether it was by submitting photographs, accommodating the SCARCE team, or only by showing an interest in the project. Each effort is much appreciated! But don't stop now - even though SCARCE is nearing completion, your input is still much required! So go grab your camera and keep sending those photos!

## Website

The website has recently been updated again. A new "Results" link was added at the top, where one can view some of the results of the ongoing student projects. New public contributions and distributions maps are also available.



## Landdroskop 23-24 January

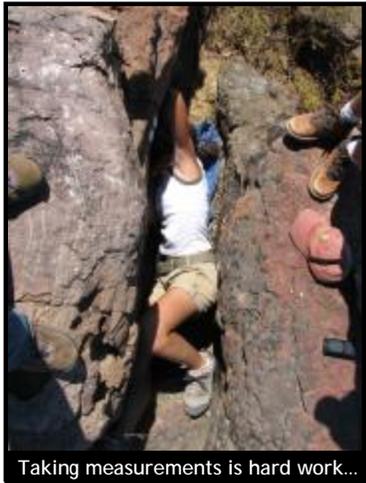
Only a week after everyone returned from holidays, Dahné, Jeannie and Anita already left on the first SCARCE trip of the year. Their destination was Landdroskop in the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve, and their aim was to collect additional data on the microhabitat selection and activity patterns of the three melanistic cordylid lizard species occurring in the area. As previously mentioned (SCARCE talk March 2006), this locality lies outside the boundaries of the GCBC, but as three species of melanistic cordylids occur here in the same area, it provides the ideal opportunity to observe these different species simultaneously, canceling out possible differences in climatic conditions between different localities. These observations made at Landdroskop will then later be related back to observations



Checking things out from the top of a large boulder

noted in the GCBC. This study is part of Dahné's Ph.D. project (SCARC talk April 2005 / March 2006) which will help to better understand how some melanistic species are able to survive in warm, hostile environments in relation to the distribution of the other species in cold environments.

### Armadillo lizard studies



Taking measurements is hard work...

Jeannie, Anita and new SCARCE member, Johan, have also conducted two field trips along the west coast. The first trip was to the Lamberts Bay area (14-17 February), and the second to the Graafwater district (28 February - 3 March). These areas were selected as study sites due to the large number of lizard groups occurring in a relatively small area at each site. Although these areas are outside the boundaries of the GCBC, they are still in close proximity of the Corridor, and the data collected here could easily be related back to lizards occurring within the corridor.

The aim of the trips was to collect data for Jeannie's project on the armadillo lizard, *Cordylus cataphractus* (SCARCE talk May-July 2006). One of the aspects she is investigating is whether lizard group size is influenced by the physical attributes of the rock they occupy. In

each area all crevices containing lizard groups were identified and several measurements were taken for each group. Both trips have been successful and Jeannie is busy analyzing the data. Thank you to Joos Engelbrecht for allowing the team to camp on his property close to the study site. Many thanks also to the De Jongh family for their hospitality and providing the team with accommodation.



...and frequent breaks are thus very important to avoid exhaustion!

### Observing melanistic lizards at Bakkrans



Base camp at Bakkrans

From 11-15 March, Dahné, Jeannie and Anita visited Bakkrans in the eastern Cederberg area. Their aim was to observe several individuals of the graceful crag lizard, *Pseudocordylus capensis*, in order to get an idea of space use in these lizards. Warm environments are considered inhospitable to melanistic lizard species, which are mostly found in cool coastal or montane environments. However, the unique morphology and the utilization of a large number of microhabitats, allow the graceful crag lizard to survive in such

hostile environments. Members of this species are expected to utilize a large space in order to include a sufficient number of microhabitats. On a previous trip, an area near the waterfall has been identified as a suitable area for observations. Binoculars were used to observe the lizards from a distance and data on movement patterns were recorded for several individuals. Dahné is currently working through the data, but more data are, however, needed before conclusions can be drawn. Many thanks to Johan van der Westhuizen, and Paul and Arrie Beukes for providing the team with accommodation and assistance.



Keeping a close eye on lizard movement

## Tankwa-Karoo National Park survey, 20-24 March



Five members of the SCARCE team recently spent a few days surveying the Tankwa-Karoo National Park. Due to the remoteness of the area, the Tankwa region was very poorly sampled in the past. SCARCE aims to change this picture and during the last few months several sampling trips were concentrated in the Tankwa and its surroundings. During the last trip, a total of 14 reptile species were recorded, including lizard, snake and tortoise species. The team would like to thank park manager Conrad Strauss, for providing them with accommodation and logistic support. Thank you also to field ranger, Hendrik Malgas, who assisted the SCARCE team with fieldwork.



### Next issue:

New student project  
General surveys

### Remember!

Don't forget to submit your photos of frogs and reptiles to the Project Coordinator!

If you wish to subscribe/unsubscribe to this newsletter, please send an e-mail to the project coordinator with SUBSCRIBE / UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

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