Macarthur Herpetological Society

P.O. Box 235 Narellan 2567

Monthly Newsletter.

Issue # 40; August 2003

FEES

NEWSLETTER

Members - Free

Non-Members - $2.00

ENTRY FEE

Members $1.00

Non-Members $2.00

Drinks – cans $1.00 Hot drinks .50c

Meetings held the third Friday of each month. (Excluding December)
Bradbury Community Centre
The Parkway
Bradbury

 # Due to the unpredictable nature of reptiles the Macarthur Herpetological society will not be held responsible for any injury sustained whilst observing or handling any animals

 # Venomous snakes are not to be brought to meetings – the committee wishes to make it clear that if a member so chooses to bring venomous reptiles to our meetings they are personally responsible for any consequences of their doing so.

 # Articles written in this newsletter are not the opinions of the Macarthur Herpetological Society or it's Committee members. Articles published, as written by the authors, are attributed to the author. Where Information or direct quotes are used in articles written for this newsletter, the author is named in the reference section at the bottom of the article.

This month we have Steve Liesk from Kellyville pets as our guest speaker. Steve will be talking to us about breeding Childrens Pythons. **O**nce again we ask that **whilst our speakers are talking you remain quiet**, if you want to chat or catch up with someone; either wait or take it outside.

Due to the unexpected events last month, that prevented the July Meeting from taking place, your committee was unable to make the very important announcement that the committee elections are once again due.
Therefore our election will be delayed by a month. This will allow any interested parties the opportunity to nominate or self nominate.

To become a committee member you must be a current financial member with a minimum two years membership. Nomination forms are available at the front desk.

At the beginning of the September meeting all positions will be declared vacant, the election shall then take place and the meeting will continue as usual after that.

If you feel you would like to take on any of the following positions PLEASE NOMINATE YOURSELF.

President: Vice President: Editor: Secretary: Treasurer:
General Committee (min 4 persons):

CHILDRENS PYTHON *Liasis childreni*

Also known as a Northern brown python.

These smallish pythons were named after J.G.Children, an English naturalist. Not because they make good children's pets.

Average length is about 1.1mtrs with a slender body, thinner neck. The body colouration may range from pale yellowish brown to dark brown, with dark brown to black variegated markings, which are usually roundish but may be elongated. A dark stripe is usually seen running from the nostril, through the eye, to the temple. The head scales are symmetrical & large.

They are normally found across the northern parts of Queensland, the Northern Territory & Western Australia & occur in a variety of habitats. From grasslands to rocky outcrops, they are mostly nocturnal & often found sheltering in rock crevices, termite mounds, hollow timber, abandoned burrows and under bark. Whilst not arboreal they are good at climbing rough, rocky surfaces.

They often enter caves, feeding on roosting bats, or pluck them from the air as they fly past. They have one of the most varied diets of our pythons, feeding on frogs, lizards, snakes, birds & small mammals.

Children's have a gestation period of 117 days and will bask during gestation. Eggs are generally laid around September – October, but can be laid as late as December. The female will coil around her clutch of about 15 eggs to aid with incubation and to protect them from predation. The young of this species are approximately 250mm long at hatching.

Children's have been observed in captivity showing overt aggression, with males biting each other or using their spurs to gouge each other. As this behavior has not been observed in the wild, it is not know if it is a by-product of captivity or occurs naturally, which is suggested by wild caught specimens having bite-like scars.

Written by Julia Carr

Reference: Pythons of Australia by Geordie Torr.
Snakes of Australia by Graeme F. Gow

TRANSFERS / inclusions ~ Please check that your new babies are feeding before you purchase them.

The following article was submitted for publication and is printed entire, as received.

FIVE NEW AUSTRALIAN PYTHONS

RAYMOND HOSER
488 Park Road, Park Orchards, Victoria, 3134, Australia.
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Originally published in the *Newsletter of the Macarthur Herpetological Society* July 2003

ABSTRACT AND PREAMBLE

Following are descriptions of five new Australian python taxa. Similar descriptions of these species were incorporated into a much larger paper that was originally scheduled to be published more than a year ago.

The publication has been beset by numerous delays out of my immediate control as author and remains unpublished.

There has been considerable agitation by others, who are eager to see some of these descriptions published.

Included here is reference to the numerous posts on the internet by Richard Wells of Cowra, NSW, including that of 1 August 2003 at: http://forums.kingsnake.com/view.php?id=109929,109929 posted at: 03:35:06.

There have also been (unjustified) criticisms that the delaying of publication has led to a perception that I have attempted to "monopolize" the species and subspecies and thereby prevent others from working on them.

This is not the case, but in fairness to my critics, the ICZN's rules do call for minimal delays for description of taxa.

Appendix 2 of the current code reads as follows:

> 2. A zoologist should not publish a new name if he or she has reason to believe that another person has already recognized the same taxon and intends to establish a name for it (or that the taxon is to be named in a posthumous work). A zoologist in such a position should communicate with the other person (or their representatives) and only feel free to establish a new name if that person has failed to do so in a reasonable period (not less than a year).

Hence, due to the continuing interest in these reptiles and the provisions of Appendix 2 (above) the descriptions of five Australian taxa as earlier incorporated in the larger paper (still yet to be published) are given here in full and in this paper.

This paper is not to be interpreted as an abstract or similar, but rather as a full paper and published as such in it's own right, so as to make these names available to other researchers. The later paper (in press) has (or will) be/been amended to incorporate the names as given here and citing this publication as the original source.

General information on Australian pythons can be derived from Hoser (2000) and sources cited therein, which are not cited by name here again. Those publications and the information contained within are relied upon as part of this relatively short paper, save for the taxonomic and nomenclatural conclusions and acts in this paper. The taxonomy of Hoser (2000) is followed here and herein includes brief notes on other species of relevance in terms of name only.

Full diagnosis of these taxa are in Hoser (2000) or sources cited therein and are relied upon here as part of these descriptions as well as the original descriptions of the taxa as named and identified in this paper (including author and date after the name of given taxa) and Hoser 2000.

GENUS *ANTARESIA* WELLS AND WELLINGTON 1983

***Antaresia childreni* (Gray 1842) (N. Australia)**

***Antaresia maculosus* (Peters 1873) (NE Australia along coast and ranges south of about Cairns, Qld)**

***ANTARESIA MACULOSUS BRENTONOLOUGHLINI* SUBSP. NOV.**

HOLOTYPE

A specimen at the Australian Museum from 16 km east of Coen, Queensland (R16772) (Lat. 13° 55' S, Long. 143° 11' E).

PARATYPE

A specimen at the Australian Museum, Sydney from Hammond Island, Queensland (R74895) (Lat. 10° 34'S, Long. 142° 11' E).

DIAGNOSIS

Known in herpetoculture as “Blonde *maculosus*” this subspecies is the (usually) large light coloured form from far north Queensland.

In the absence of reliable locality data and DNA data, both of which separate *Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini* subsp. nov. from *Antaresia maculosus maculosus* this newly described subspecies can be readily separated from other *Antaresia maculosus* by it’s greater preponderance of light colouration relative to dark blotches on the dorsal surface. Normal *Antaresia maculosus maculosus* have roughly half to half (50%:50%) dark versus light blotches. For *Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini* subsp. nov. the ratio is generally at least 60% light colour to 40% or less darker blotches.

Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini subsp. nov. is also on average a larger subspecies, with specimens attaining 150 cm being fairly common. This size is relatively rare in normal *Antaresia maculosus.*

Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini subsp. nov. is known only from Cape York in Queensland to about as far south as just north of Cairns. In the region from about Cairns to Townsville and inland from here, specimens are in many respects intermediate in form between *Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini* subsp. nov. and *Antaresia maculosus maculosus*, but are probably best assigned to the form *Antaresia maculosus maculosus* on the basis of their smaller adult maximum sizes and the fact that their dorsal patterning is generally more like that of normal *Antaresia maculosus maculosus.*

Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini subsp. nov. is a hardy captive and common in captivity in Australia. A number of NSW breeders of snakes breed large numbers of *Antaresia maculosus brentonoloughlini* subsp. nov. (as of 2001-2002). Husbandry requirements for all *Antaresia maculosus* subspecies appears to be identical in terms of how cages are set-up, incubation of eggs and treatment of common ailments.

ETYMOLOGY

Named in honour of Mr Brenton O'Loughlin formerly of Access Lawyers in Melbourne, who with his legal partner Mr. Gabriel Kuek, have taken on a number of important public interest legal cases on a "pro bono" basis at a time when not one other Melbourne lawyer would take on such matters for fear of reprisals from the authorities. These two men have also been harassed by police and others as a result of their taking a stand on behalf of truth, honesty and against corrupt and dishonest people in the state Police, parliament and their mates they improperly appointed to the judiciary..

Honest and decent lawyers appear to be rare on the ground and these two men have made an important contribution to Australia and have been improperly attacked by others with vested and corrupt interests in the legal system. As the Australian government's honours system has been so severely debased in that corrupt and vested interests seem more pre-occupied with honouring drug dealers and pedophiles rather than decent people, this author takes the opportunity here to honour someone who should be honoured and recognised.

***Antaresia perthensis* (Stull 1932) (Pilbara, West Australia)**

***Anteresia saxacola* Wells and Wellington 1985 (Central Australia)**

***Antaresia saxacola campbelli* Hoser 2000 (SE Inland Australia)**

***Antaresia saxacola stimsoni* (Smith 1985) (Western Australia)**

GENUS *ASPIDITES* PETERS 1876

***Aspidites melanocephalus* (Krefft, 1864) (NE Australia)**

***Aspidites melanocephalus adelynensis* Hoser 2000 (Kimberleys, West Australia)**

***Aspidites melanocephalus daviei* Hoser 2000 (Pilbara, West Australia)**

***Aspidites ramsayi* (Macleay, 1882) (SE inland Australia)**

***Aspidites ramsayi panoptes* Hoser 2000 (SW West Australia)**

***Aspidites ramsayi richardjonesi* Hoser 2000 (NW West Australia)**

GENUS *AUSTRALIASIS* WELLS AND WELLINGTON 1983

***Australiasis amethistina* (Schneider 1801) (Southern New Guinea)**

***Australiasis amethystinus clarki* (Barbour 1914) (NE Australia)**

***Australiasis clastolepis* (Harvey et. al. 2000) (Mollucan islands, Indonesia)**

***Australiasis duceboracensis* (Gunther 1879) (Bismark Archipelago)**

***Australiasis nauta* (Harvey et. al. 2000) (Tanimbar Islands, Indonesia)**

***Australiasis timorensis* (Peters 1877) (Timor)**

***Australiasis tracyae* (Harvey et. al. 2000) (Halmahera island, Indonesia)**

GENUS *CHONDROPYTHON* MEYER 1874

***Chondropython viridis* (Schlegel 1872) (Aru Islands, Indonesia)**

PREAMBLE TO THE DESCRIPTION OF *CHONDROPYTHON VIRIDIS SHIREENAE* SUBSP. NOV.

Hoser (2000) did not make any new taxonomic arrangements or name changes for any Green Pythons (*Chondropython viridis*) including Australian specimens, for several reasons including pending further research on this species and sighting of further specimens from both New Guinea, Aru and other Islands and North East Australia.

Since Hoser (2000) was published, this author has been fortunate enough to make cursory and detailed observations of preserved specimens from both New Guinea and Australia held at both the Queensland Museum (QM) and National Museum of Victoria (NMV) as well as numerous live specimens in private collections in Australia.

Furthermore this author has obtained photos and other data for specimens held in captivity outside of Australia.

Notwithstanding this, a major problem for research into this species has been the relative paucity of specimens from within Australia to compare with specimens from elsewhere as well as generally unreliable locality data for many of the specimens seen.

There has also been an increased interest by other herpetologists in terms of separating Australian specimens from those from elsewhere.

This interest has also been shared by the relevant wildlife authorities, in particular the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS) who have launched at least one major prosecution against a herpetologist who alleged he had Queensland *C. viridis*, when the QNPWS in turn alleged that his snakes derived from stock smuggled to Australia and of origins outside Queensland.

That case, involving, Queensland snake breeder Bob Buckley has now been resolved. The early stages of that case were covered in detail in the book *Smuggled-2: Wildlife Trafficking, Crime and Corruption in Australia* (Hoser 1996).

It was a reluctance to be drawn into the Buckley case as a witness or to prejudice proceedings and be in "contempt of court" that also made this author decide to postpone formally naming the Australian subspecies of *C. viridis* until after the conclusion of the case.

The Australian subspecies of *C. viridis* formally named and recognised here for the first time has already been recognized by many herpetologists both within Australia and elsewhere as different and this paper merely formalizes that arrangement.

It had originally been hoped to publish a complete revision of the *C. viridis* species group with detailed information on all regional variants, however the scope of this ongoing project is exceptionally large and may take an indeterminate time frame due to the inherent difficulties in this project and other competing time and resource demands, so this partial reclassification of the species group, incorporating Australian specimens only has been published now in this paper.

One of the reasons for the earlier publication of this paper is the ongoing interest by local herpetologists and authorities in maintaining the genetic purity of Australian specimens in captivity in Australia.

A similar situation occurred for the other three Australian taxa formally named in this paper and those descriptions are published for the same reasons. Further data has confirmed their status as distinct from related forms.

GENUS *CHONDROPYTHON* MEYER 1874

This is the Green Python (the common name applied to the snakes of this genus). There is only one species within the genus. That is *Chondropython viridis*.

The type locality is the Aru Islands, Indonesia, south of New Guinea. Some recent workers, including Kluge (1993) and Underwood and Stimson (1990) have made synonymous this genus and *Morelia*, the latter name taking precedence. This author did not accept that arrangement in Hoser (2000) and still does not accept it. While it is clear that the two genera derived from the same ancestral stock, it is believed that the two have been separated long enough to warrant being placed in separate genera.

Furthermore, this author views the placement of *Chondropython* into *Morelia* as an inconsistent move, bearing in mind the widespread splitting off of other similar genera viz *Antaresia* and *Leiopython*, both names of which were in general usage prior to publication of Hoser (2000).

The lack of a distinct dorsal pattern of blotches and stripes that typifies all *Morelia* (except *spilota*) or a black and yellow dorsal pattern as in *spilota* separates *Chondropython* from all snakes in *Morelia.* There are no iridescent green *Morelia*. This is the usual dorsal colouration for adult *Chondropython*. The absence of labial pits in *Chondropython* is frequently cited as a characteristic that separates the genera *Chondropython* and *Morelia.* That is not so. In fact both genera have distinct labial pits. See the photos published on page 118 bottom left for *M. variegata* and page 123 bottom left for *C. viridis* in Barker and Barker (1994), or photos published in Hoser (1989) and O'Shea (1996) to view the labial pits in both genera.

Green Pythons are separated from all *Morelia* by their far greater number of small scales on the dorsal surface of the head, giving the snake an almost granular appearance. Comparative photos of the heads as shown in Barker and Barker (1994) and Hoser (1989) readily illustrate this point.

The Green Pythons are readily distinguished from all other Australian pythons. Refer to Hoser (1981a) McDowall (1975) and O'Shea (1996) for further diagnostic information. Australian Green Pythons (as cited by Thomson (1935)) are more likely than the New Guinea specimens to have markings in a thin line along the spine to form some sort of vertebral line or pattern.

This is corroborated by other authors including the photos in Greer (1997). However the same trait is also seen commonly in south New Guinea and Aru Island specimens and thus the trait cannot be seen to be consistent in terms of identification. Also see the subspecies description below.

Specimens from the north of New Guinea are likely to have spots in a more irregular pattern.

Specimens from around the high country of Wamena in Irian Jaya are often a very dark green with buttercup yellow spots on the back. The dark yellow ventral scales are commonly a grey/black in colour. As with *Morelia*, *Chondropython* is a species with considerable variation in colour, not only between locations, but even within a single location and even within a single litter of young.

Numerous other colour variants are known, including blue adults and "mite phase" which as adults are green with lots of black flecks as well as sometimes having other markings such as scattered white scales. One such animal ("Mite phase") was depicted in a post by Scott (?) on March 24, 2002 at 19:22:14: at: http://www.kingsnake.com/forum/gtpython/messages/22444.html on http://www.kingsnake.com.

Photos of Australian Green Pythons in life with exact locality data are shown in Barker and Barker (1994) and Greer (1997) and other publications.

Photos of New Guinea Green Pythons in life with exact locality data are shown by O'Shea (1996) and other publications.

***CHONDROPYTHON VIRIDIS SHIREENAE* SUBSP. NOV.**

HOLOTYPE

An adult specimen (number D51862) held at the National Museum of Victoria (NMV), from "Cape York, Queensland" (The general Lat. Long. for Cape York is: 15°00' S, 143°00' E). The snake was not accurately measured due to the fact it was hardened in tight coils, however it was about 1 metre in total length.

Dorsally the snake was dark in colour (relative for the species *C. viridis*) and a generally uninterrupted colour dorsally, save for a thin line of lighter scales along the dorsal vertebra, having been a generally dark green in life.

Ventrally the holotype of *Chondropython viridis shireenae* sp. nov. was light in colour, (having been a yellow colour in life) and with some dark flecks on some scales (probably grey, black or green flecks in life).

The sex of the holotype of *Chondropython viridis shireenae* sp. nov. was not ascertained.

There were six pits in the lower labials and three on the upper scales of the mouth, towards the front of the head (these counts being for each side of the head).

The holotype of *Chondropython viridis shireenae* sp. nov. had 233 ventrals, divided anal and 65 (all paired) subcaudals.

Most of the scales on the dorsal surface of the head were small and almost granular in appearance and somewhat irregular.

The teeth were long and sharp.

The holotype of *Chondropython viridis shireenae* sp. nov. had been in captivity prior to being lodged at the museum as evidenced by the one or more domestic mice (*Mus musculus*) found inside the stomach of the snake (undigested).

The snake was collected on 20 June 1973.

DIAGNOSIS

Chondropython viridis shireenae sp. nov. are the only Green Pythons (*C. viridis*) found on mainland Australia and can be separated from all other *C. viridis* on this basis.

In the absence of good locality data, the subspecies is best separated from other *C. viridis* by comparative DNA analysis, which has already been successfully used to separate this subspecies.

Australian *C. viridis* have as adults, white or other markings along the vertebra and few other markings, whereas those from elsewhere do not always have this trait. Hence this is a diagnostic character for Australian specimens of *C. viridis*.

As a trend, vertebral markings decline with age. General dorsal markings, sometimes in the form of blotches and mid-dorsal markings are generally far more common in juvenile *C. viridis* of all subspecies, especially those from outside Australia.

The range of *C. viridis shireenae* subsp. nov. is only in very wet habitats of the lowlands and nearby range areas on the east side of Cape York from about the MacMillan River drainage in the north to the area around the Normanby River drainage in the

south. This includes the Sir William Thompson and McIlwraith Ranges both in the general vicinity of the Iron Range National Park.

The known distribution of *C. viridis* in Australia is only on very restricted parts of the Cape York Peninsula and does not include the dry savannah habitats that adjoin Torres Strait or the islands within Torres Strait itself.

There is believed to be over 50 km (straight line measurement) between the northernmost *C. viridis shireenae* subsp. nov. and the northern tip of Cape York, bordering the Torres Strait, which includes generally unsuitable habitat for the subspecies.

In view of the lack of evidence of these snakes inhabiting this area within recent historical or recent prehistorical times, it is reasonable to infer that the Australian *C. viridis* have been separated from other populations for many thousands of years.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that other species of python inhabit these intervening areas and presumably compete with this species in the areas they coexist, it is reasonable to infer that there is not, nor has been any gene flow between the Australian and other populations of this species within recent historical or recent prehistorical times and perhaps as far back as or before Aboriginal settlement of Australia an estimated 40,000 years ago.

The 40,000 year date is significant as it is thought that habitats throughout much of Australia (including the north) may have changed significantly (become generally more open and drier) with the arrival of humans, due to the increased incidence of bushfires. Before the arrival of humans on the Australian continent, habitat may have allowed for gene flow between the Australian *C. viridis* and those populations to the north.

A search of likely habitats in the far north of Cape York and Torres Strait should be undertaken to confirm current distribution data.

Comparative DNA testing can separate Australian *C. viridis shireenae* from other *C. viridis*.

CAPTIVE HUSBANDRY

From a keeper's point of view there appears to be no known differences in terms of keeping *C. viridis shireenae* and *C. viridis* from elsewhere.

These snakes require an enclosure with at least one horizontal tree branch or fork in which to perch and they need a humid environment when sloughing.

Eggs usually take from 38-60 days to hatch (extremes given) (Barker and Barker 1994).

Detailed husbandry information for this species can be found in Barker and Barker (1994), Ross (1978) and Ross and Marzec (1990).

Papers on breeding the species have been published by numerous authors including definitive papers by Murdoch (1999), Rundquist (1993), Walsh (1979) and Zulich (1990). Copies of the papers by Murdoch, Walsh and Zulich are available in full on the internet and can be found using any decent search engine, such as "www.yahoo.com".

ETYMOLOGY

Chondropython viridis shireenae sp. nov. is named in honour of my long suffering wife.

Shireen Vanessa Hoser has had to put up with long periods without me as I have conducted the research necessary for this and other publications and done an excellent job in terms of looking after and caring for our children in my absence.

GENUS *KATRINUS* HOSER 2000

***Katrinus fuscus* (Peters 1873) (NE Australia)**

***Katrinus fuscus cornwallisius* (Gunther, 1879) (Southern New Guinea)**

***KATRINUS FUSCUS JACKYAE* SUBSP. NOV.**

HOLOTYPE

A specimen in the Western Australian Museum number 13882 from Kalumburu WA, Lat. 14°18' S, Long 126°39' E. This is a smooth-scaled Python.

PARATYPE

A specimen in the Western Australian Museum number 42796 from Kalumburu WA, Lat. 14°18' S, Long 126°39' E. This is a smooth-scaled Python.

DIAGNOSIS

Katrinus fuscus jackyae is readily identified by the following suite of characters: It is a medium to large python, averaging 2 metres in length, with occasional specimens attaining up to nearly three metres. It is an olive greyish green dorsally with no discernable pattern. Ventrally the snake is usually a bright yellow in colour, visible when the snake is viewed side-on, but this may range from cream or occasionally orangeish. The colour is most intense at the anterior part of the body. The scales are smooth and shiny.

The snakes have large teeth on the premaxilla. The head is covered by large symmetrical shields and there are pits in some of the labial scales. *Katrinus fuscus jackyae*, like others in the genus are separated from *Antaresia* by having a single loreal rather than two or more. *Katrinus fuscus jackyae*, like others in the genus are separated from *Leiopython* by having two pairs of prefrontals as opposed to having a pair. *Katrinus fuscus jackyae*, like others in the genus are separated from *Liasis* by usually having 55 or less mid-body rows (*Liasis* usually has over 60) as well as usually having a more intense colour than *Liasis*.

Katrinus fuscus jackyae and *Liasis olivaceous* are sympatric at the type locality (Kalumburu, WA).

Katrinus fuscus jackyae is separated from *Katrinus fuscus fuscus* several characteristics including the upper lips.

In *Katrinus fuscus fuscus* (from coastal Queensland) and *K. fuscus cornwallisius* from New Guinea (the only other known subspecies as recognised by Hoser 2000) the upper lips are pale with a little brown peppering. However in *K. fuscus jackyae* (from the NT and WA) the lips are usually darker with more dark brown peppering or even blotches. This is one of several diagnostic features for this subspecies.

The two Australian subspecies intergrade in the region of the Gulf of Carpentaria, but are otherwise separated by distribution.

This subspecies (*Katrinus fuscus jackyae*) is herein restricted to the region encompassed by the Kimberley Ranges of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and adjacent areas.

The subspecies *Katrinus fuscus fuscus* is herein restricted to the east coast of Queensland and adjacent areas.

The subspecies *Katrinus fuscus cornwallisius* is restricted to the landmass of New Guinea and immediately adjacent islands.

Katrinus fuscus jackyae, like others in the genus are invariably associated with watercourses and are commonly known as 'Water Pythons'. The population at Fogg Dam in the Northern Territory is particularly large and has been well-studied by students and academics at the University of Sydney, under the guidance of Dr. Richard Shine.

Shine and his team of researchers found *Katrinus fuscus jackyae* to be one of the major predators on the river floodplains in northern Australia. They fed mainly on small mammals, in particular native Dusky Rats (*Rathus colletti*), as well as bandicoots, flying foxes, and other vertebrates.

The movements of the snakes did in part correlate with that of their primary food source/s.

In the wild state, the snakes may be either ambush predators or active hunters.

In the Northern Territory mating takes place in June-August, egg-laying (usually 9-16 eggs) in August-September and hatching in November-December.

Nesting occurs in abandoned burrows and among the roots of paperbark trees. For reasons not completely known a large number of clutches are laid in unsuitable places and therefore fail to hatch.

Queensland populations of *Katrinus fuscus fuscus* have a different lifestyle in terms of foods eaten and breeding activity in that mating and egg laying occurs an average 8 or so weeks later than their top-end counterparts.

Anecdotal reports within Australia suggest that Queensland *Katrinus* are more placid (less snappy) than those from the NT and WA.

However this author's experiences suggest that the allegedly snappy nature that these snakes have, is often over-rated. Most individuals may be snappy in cages when they expect food, but usually become reasonably docile when handled. Within this profile, there are some obvious exceptions.

When photographing *Katrinus* (from any location) this author has found the snakes to be placid and after some cajoling, they tend to stay put. The only time they try to snap is usually when the author has forced them to crawl over open areas in order to tire them out, whereupon the snakes may turn and hold their ground (sometimes snapping). This is usually when the snakes are most easily moved to their 'stage' and made to sit in an appropriate photographic position. In captivity these snakes are hardy, breed readily and usually present few husbandry problems.

ETYMOLOGY:

Named after Jacky Hoser, this author's second daughter.

***Katrinus mackloti* (Dumeril and Bibron 1844) (Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia)**

***Katrinus mackloti dunni* (Stull 1932) (Wetar, Indonesia)**

***Katrinus savuensis* (Brongersma 1956) (Sawu Island)**

GENUS *LEIOPYTHON* HUBRECHT 1879

***Leiopython albertisi* (Gray 1842) (Eastern Irian Jaya)**

***Leiopython albertisi barkeri* Hoser 2000 (Mussau, PNG)**

***Leiopython albertisi bennetti* Hoser 2000 (NE PNG)**

***Leiopython hoserae* Hoser 2000 (Southern New Guinea and Southern Irian Jaya)**

GENUS *LENHOSERUS* HOSER 2000

***Lenhoserus boeleni* (Brongersma 1953) (New Guinea and Irian Jaya)**

GENUS *LIASIS* GRAY 1840

***Liasis olivaceus* (Gray 1842) (Nth Australia)**

***Liasis olivaceus barroni* (Smith, 1981) (Pilbara, West Australia)**

***Liasis papuana* (Peters and Doria 1878) (New Guinea and Irian Jaya)**

GENUS *MORELIA* GRAY 1842.

***Morelia bredli* (Gow 1981) (Central Australia)**

***Morelia carinata* (Smith 1981) (Kimberleys North West Australia)**

***Morelia cheynei* Wells and Wellington 1983 (NE Queensland, Australia)**

***MORELIA MIPPUGHAE* SP. NOV.**

HOLOTYPE

A specimen at the South Australian Museum (SAM), Adelaide, SA, Specimen number: R1665 from Moolooloo, North Flinders Ranges, South Australia, Lat: 30°59' Long: 138°35'.

PARATYPE

A specimen at the South Australian Museum (SAM), Adelaide, SA, Specimen number: R14261 from Iron Dutchess, Middleback Ranges, South Australia, Lat: 33°15' Long: 137°07'.

DIAGNOSIS

A medium to large python similar in most respects to the others in the genus *Morelia*. It is separated from one of its closest relatives *Morelia macburniei* sp. nov. (see below) by a suite of characteristics including a lower incidence of scale anomalies particularly with regards to ventral scales in the from of longitudinally split ventrals, half ventrals, transversely divided ventrals or incompletely transversely divided ventrals, remnant or partially inserted ventrals or incompletely formed ventrals (such as in two halves).

This species is differentiated from *Morelia macburniei* sp. nov. from St. Francis Island by having more rhomboidal-shaped dorsal scales as opposed to having lanceolate-shaped dorsal scales. *Morelia mippughae* sp. nov. is separated from the closely related *Morelia metcalfei* (the Murray/Darling form), (which it would have previously keyed out as using existing (pre 2002 taxonomy))by a suite of characteristics including it's dorsal colour pattern. *Morelia mippughae* sp. nov. is pale reddish brown dorsally, with broad transverse black-edged patches on the top of the back and a wide pale lateral zone for about a third of its length.

Morelia mippughae sp. nov. is restricted to the Flinders and Middleback Ranges areas of South Australia. No other *Morelia* occurs here. Numbers of this species have declined sharply since European settlement, (Ian Renton and Ted Mertens personal

communications). This author hereby calls for specimens of *Morelia mippughae* sp. nov. to be taken into captivity and bred in numbers in order to secure the survival of this taxa.

Morelia mippughae sp. nov. is separated from all other *Morelia* by colouration and patterns as seen from a comparison of specimens, comparative DNA properties and distribution.

ETYMOLOGY

Named in honour of Mrs Mip Pugh of Breakwater, Victoria for her long term contributions to herpetology. She is part of the husband and wife team, the other half being Mick Pugh (whom this species is not named in honour). Mip has over the last few decades given free of charge many hundreds of hours of useful advice and guidance to reptile keepers in Victoria, especially in relation to her favorite reptiles, which are lizard species such as Bearded Dragons (*Pogona* spp.) and other commonly kept species. Her house has often been a defacto hotel suite for countless other herpetologists who have enjoyed her hospitality.

***Morelia harrisoni* Hoser 2000 (Southern New Guinea and Southern Irian Jaya)**

***Morelia imbricata* (Smith 1981) (South West Australia)**

***MORELIA MACBURNIEI* SP. NOV.**

HOLOTYPE

A specimen at the South Australian Museum (SAM), Adelaide, SA, Specimen number: R13994 from St. Francis Island, in the Nuyts Archipelago near Ceduna in South Australia, Lat: 32°31' Long: 133°18'.

PARATYPE

A specimen at the South Australian Museum (SAM), Adelaide, SA, Specimen number: R19072 from St. Francis Island, in the Nuyts Archipelago near Ceduna in South Australia, Lat: 32°31' Long: 133°18'.

DIAGNOSIS

A medium to large python similar in most respects to the others in the genus *Morelia.* It is separated from its closest relative *Morelia imbricata* (To which it would have keyed out as using pre 2002 taxonomy) by a suite of characteristics including a higher incidence of scale anomalies particularly with regards to ventral scales in the from of longitudinally split ventrals, half ventrals, transversely divided ventrals or incompletely transversely divided ventrals, remnant or partially inserted ventrals or incompletely formed ventrals (such as in two halves).

This species is differentiated from *Morelia* from the adjacent South Australian mainland by having lanceolate-shaped dorsal scales as opposed to more rhomboidal-shaped dorsal scales. This same characteristic also separates *Morelia imbricata* from other southern Australian *Morelia.*

Morelia macburniei sp. nov. is further separated from *Morelia imbricata* by distribution (believed to be several hundred kilometers).

While *Morelia macburniei* is highly variable in individual colouration and pattern, the colouration of the species tends to look more like *Morelia* from the South Australian mainland as opposed to *Morelia imbricata*, even though *Morelia macburniei's* dorsal scales are more like those of *M. imbricata*. This species cannot be definitively separated from other *Morelia* on the basis of scalation alone as these properties (ventral counts and the like) may overlap with other *Morelia*. *Morelia macburniei* sp. nov. is separated from all other *Morelia* by colouration and patterns as seen from a comparison of specimens, distribution and DNA properties. It is the only species to occur on St. Francis Island.

It is assumed that the total population for this species is less than 1,000 individual specimens, subjected to seasonal variations. At present there are no known threats to the species, but because it is a small island population, it must be regarded as potentially vulnerable, particularly if a feral species becomes established on the Island.

This author hereby calls for specimens of *Morelia macburniei* sp. nov. to be taken into captivity and bred in numbers in order to secure the survival of this taxa.

ETYMOLOGY

Named in honour of Victorian herpetologist Cameron McBurnie for services to herpetology, including through his role with the Victorian Association for Amateur Herpetologists (VAAH).

***Morelia macdowelli* Wells and Wellington 1983 (Eastern Australia, along coast)**

***Morelia metcalfei* Wells and Wellington 1985 (Inland Eastern Australia)**

***Morelia spilota* (Lacepede 1804) (Coastal NSW and nearby areas, Australia)**

***Morelia variegata* (Gray 1824) (Northern Australia)**

GENUS *NYCTOPHILOPYTHON* WELLS AND WELLINGTON 1985

***Nyctophilopython oenpelliensis* (Gow 1977) (Arnhem Land Escarpment, Australia)**

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

It is anticipated the classification adopted in this short paper and Hoser (2000) will become widely used in the future. Hobbyists and breeders in particular should note these various taxa and try not to hybridise them as this will invariably make the offspring useless in terms of release back into the wild, if the genetic integrity of populations is to be maintained.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people assisted over the previous three decades with the provision of live and dead specimens for study, access to and copies of relevant published papers and unpublished data.

REFERENCE/S Hoser, R. T. 2000. 'A revision of the Australasian Pythons', *Ophidia Review* 1:7-27. **AND SOURCES CITED THEREIN AND SOURCES CITED BY NAME IN THIS PAPER, THE FULL CITATION DETAILS OF WHICH ARE EITHER IN HOSER (2000) AND/OR THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS:**

Cogger, H. G., Cameron, E. E. and Cogger, H. M. 1983. *Zoological Catalogue of Australia (1) Amphibia and Reptilia.* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, ACT, Australia:319 pp. Wells, R. W. and Wellington, C. R. 1985. A classification of the Amphibia and Reptilia of Australia. *Australian Journal of Herpetology* (Supplementary Series) 1:1-61.

Photographic competition results.

CHILDRENS – NATURAL SETTING; POSED; FUNNY
ADULTS – NATURAL SETTING; POSED; FUNNY
Prizes

- 1 Year subscription to Australian Geographic.
- Australian Reptile CDR from www.herpshop.com.au
- Large artificial stump from THF products
- Bag of 'reptisand' from THF products
- 2x $25.00 vouchers for rat food from D&R Stockfeeds.