

Chersina angulata

Angulate Tortoise

OBSERVATIONS ON NATURAL DIET

During a recent stay in Springbok, Namaqualand on September 16 - 19, I was able to observe this species feeding on one occasion.

On 19 September, 1999 an adult female specimen (straight carapace length = 157 mm, plastron length = 153 mm, shell width = 111 mm, mass = 597 g) was observed feeding on *Grielum humifusum* Thunberg (see above). She was found at 11:05 hours in full sun where the temperature measured 95° Fahrenheit (35° C). It was a clear day. The relative humidity was 15%.

This may be an important food source for tortoises in the area as *Homopus s. signatus* was observed during this study period feeding on this plant as well (see above).

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Submitted by

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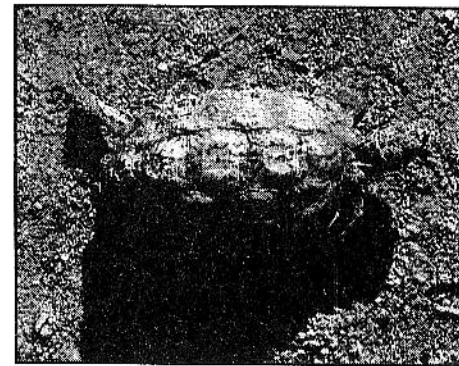
Homopus signatus signatus

Speckled Padloper

MAXIMUM SIZE

Currently, a research project on the population dynamics and behavior of *H.s.signatus* is in preparation through the Studbook Breeding Programme Homopus.

During a preceding stay in Springbok, Namaqualand (2917DB) September 16 -19, 1999, I was able to capture and record statistics on a specimen that sets a new size parameter for *Homopus s. signatus*. A large female specimen (straight carapace length = 103 mm, plastron length = 93 mm, shell



Homopus signatus signatus (female)

width = 70.5 mm, mass = 199 g) was captured a few hundred meters south-east of Springbok on 17 September, 1999.

Previous maximum straight carapace length (SCL) recorded for this species is 96 mm (Branch 1998). Only Patterson (1991) mentions a maximum SCL of "slightly more than 100 mm", but without referring to published details of this finding. The specimen concerned is currently alive, kept in captivity, and registered in the Studbook Breeding Programme Homopus, as studbook number 0021.

References

- Branch, W.** 1988. Field Guide to the Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa; Struik: 399pp.)
Patterson, 1991. Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa; Struik: 128pp.

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