

PHRYNOMERUS ANNECTENS (WERNER),
A RARE FROG IN THE
AUGRABIES FALLS NATIONAL PARK

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During a visit (1977.01.28) to the Augrabies Falls National Park, Republic of South Africa, a heavy shower of rain brought relief to prevailing hot, dry conditions. A specimen of the rare South West African Red-banded Frog *Phrynomerus annectens* (Werner) was collected that evening, on the lawn of the administration block. These very flat and interesting frogs are known from South West Africa, southern Angola and the north-western Cape Province (presumably). As far as could be ascertained, this is the first record within the boundaries of South Africa since the species was originally described in 1910 by Werner from the type locality i.e. 'Aar river area', Cape Province. *Phrynomerus annectens* is the congener of the more common *P. b. bifasciatus* (Smith) of northern Zululand, Transvaal, Mozambique and southern Rhodesia and of the even rarer *P. affinis* (Boulenger) from northern South West Africa, northern Botswana and Zambia.

According to Channing (1976) *P. annectens* populations in South West Africa (central Namib) are confined to granite inselbergs. These populations, which Channing considered to be at the edge of their range, are apparently restricted to the inselbergs because the granite provides a suitable habitat. The exfoliations provide cracks and crevices within which the adults shelter, while the typical rock depressions are filled by run-off water from the surrounding areas after very little rainfall. These water-filled depressions attract insects and serve as breeding pools. If granite inselbergs with flake-like exfoliation provide ideal habitat conditions one could expect the Augrabies Falls National Park with its abundance of these inselbergs and other suitable cover to harbour substantial populations of this uncommon frog species, and more intensive nocturnal surveys should reconfirm the occurrence of the taxon within the borders of South Africa.

REFERENCE

- CHANNING, A. 1976. Life histories of frogs in the Namib Desert. *Zool. Afr.* 11(2): 299-312.