

1st November 2002

A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE Z. 1869.003.147, CURRENTLY LABELLED  
AND DESCRIBED AS *Dendroaspis jamesoni jamesoni* TRAILL, AND HELD  
AT THE ROYAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, CHAMBERS STREET,  
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND.

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This Type specimen has been investigated to check the identification before entry into the forthcoming publication "A CHECKLIST FOR AFRICAN SNAKES Vol. 2 THE FAMILY ELAPIDAE (Cobras, Mambas and Allied Species) & THE FAMILY HYDROPHIIDAE (Sea Snakes)".

## INTRODUCTION

This specimen was collected by Thomas Stewart Traill (1781- July 1862). Since he was Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at the University of Edinburgh from 1832 until his death, his collection of reptiles seems to have languished in the University for some years before being transferred to the Royal Museum of Scotland in 1869 at the bequest of his family.

## MATERIALS

The specimen was entire. There was however some damage to the neck area in two places. There was a swollen area about 12 cm down the neck from the back of the head that appeared to have been inflicted by a blow to the neck with a blunt stick, to try and kill the snake. There was also further damage where the head had almost been severed from the body about 6 cm down the neck from the back of the head. A very small piece of skin held the head and neck to the rest of the body. This damage caused several problems in gathering data. The snake was firmly coiled from the time spent in the specimen jar.

## ANALYSIS

### Description

The eye appears to be smaller than expected.

The scale counts were as follows:

Midbody scale rows (midway between the back of the head and the vent) were 15. Ventrals were not counted due to the damage to the neck area.

The Clocal was divided.

Subcaudals paired at 109

Upper Labials were 8

Lower Labials were 10 on the right side and 9 on the left.

Rostral was visible from above.

Internasals were narrow and irregular shape but not unusually. They are smaller than the prefrontals.

Prefrontals were irregular shape, size and long as frontal.

Frontal was present.

Supraocular were present.

Parietal were present and were not miss-shaped.

Loreal was absent

Preoculars were 3 and in contact with frontal. Postoculars were 4 (within the range of 2-5) Prenasal or

Postnasal scales were not unusual. Large temporal.

Mental was present.

### Colouration

The dorsal colouration is somewhat faded but indicates that the colouration was green with the various dorsal scales having yellow tips.

The ventral surface is cream and clean.

The tail showed signs of being yellow with black edging to the scales.

The head again was faded but was light in colour and all scales were edged with black.

### **Size**

Due to the damage to the neck area and the tightly formed coils that the snake was in a measurement of the body was not taken for fear of causing further damage to the specimen.

The width of the head from eye to eye is 15 mm.

Tip of the snout to the back of the parietal is 34 mm. The eye is 5 mm in diameter.

### **Conclusion**

Having now seen the specimen and taken all the details into account I can confirm that the specimen Z. 1869.003.147, currently labelled as *Dendroaspis jamesoni jamesoni* TRAILL is correct as labelled.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Geoff Swinney and Sankurie Pye at the National Museum of Scotland for their assistance and for allowing me access to specimen Z. 1869.003.147.