

ELAPIDAE

Naja nivea (Linnaeus, 1758)

Cape Cobra

JUVENILE MARKINGS

On 8 November 2005, at about 15h00 on a perfect summer's day, I caught a cobra in Tamboerskloof, Cape Town, South Africa (Western Cape; 33°55'43"S, 18°24'32"E). I was not sure, at first, due to the double dark bands, if the snake was a *Naja nivea*. It was confirmed as being a juvenile *Naja nivea* by Sean Thomas and Gary Montague-Fryer (SARCA record 999).

Branch (1988) mentions that juvenile *Naja nivea* have a single prominent black throat band, and Marais (2004) also mentions that the juveniles have a single broad dark band on the throat. In this instance, however, the snake had two prominent dark bands on the throat. It has also been noted that in some individuals the black band may extend the whole width of the hood, or that it may be indistinct or entirely absent (T. Phelps, *pers. obs.*).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Tony Phelps of the Cape Reptile Institute for scrutinising the format and content of this note. Thanks also to Sean Thomas and Gary Montague-Fryer for the confirmation of the identification of snake.

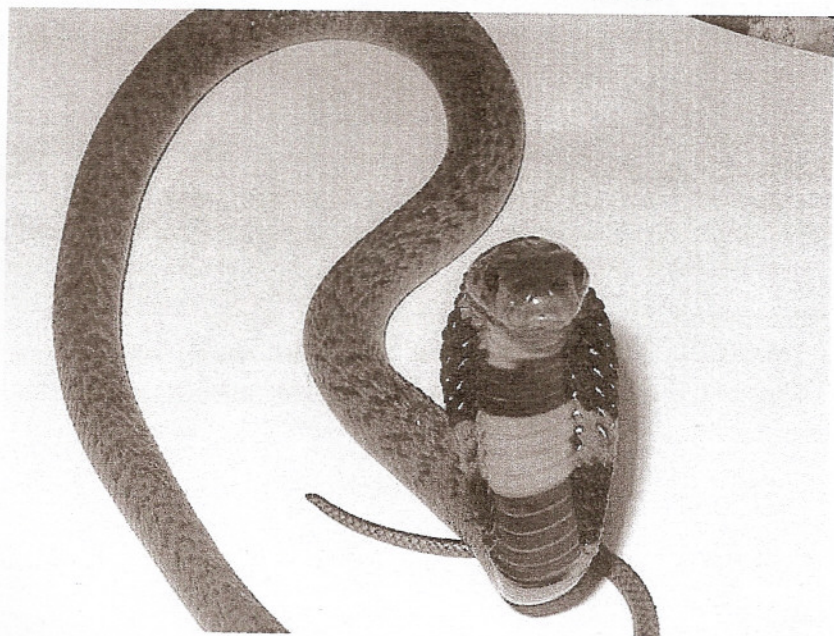
SARCA record number 999. Comment by Marius Burger: "The double barring is atypical" – www.saherps.net

References

- BRANCH, W.R., 1988: *Field Guide to the Snakes and Other Reptiles of Southern Africa*. First edition, Struik, Cape Town.
- MARAIS, J., 2004: *A Complete Guide to Snakes of Southern Africa*. Second edition, Struik, Cape Town.

Submitted by

MARCEL WITBERG, 5 Marion Street, Stellenberg, Bellville, Cape Town, 7530, South Africa. E-mail: witbergm@absamail.co.za



Juvenile *Naja nivea* showing double throat bands. Photos: Marcel Witberg.