

*Naja nivea* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Cape Cobra

MAXIMUM SIZE

The Cape Cobra, *Naja nivea*, is usually described as a small to medium-sized cobra with males growing to a maximum SVL of 1510mm (Branch, 1998). The largest recorded known specimen was from Aus, and measured 1867mm TL (Marais, 2004). However, it has also been stated that this species can sometimes grow to two metres (Broadley, 1983).

On 5 November 2006, at around mid-day, I was called to a staff house at DeHoop Nature Reserve (South Africa; Western Cape; 34°45'50"S, 20°41'06"E) where a large snake had been spotted entering a wall in the garden. Part of the wall had to be dismantled to reveal the snake and affect a safe capture. The cobra was a male and obviously large. It was restrained and placed in a container. Shortly afterwards the cobra was tubed and measured, and other data recorded as follows:

SVL 1921mm, TL 2313mm. (This represents mean values of five measurements taken and is thought to be accurate within  $\pm 20$ mm.) The mid-body girth was 280mm, and the snake weighed 1.8kg. Mid-body dorsal scale rows 21; ventrals 232; subcaudals 74. The colour of this male was golden brown with some dark speckling on the foreparts, particularly on the rear of the hood. Several wounds were also noted; but these were old and well healed; and perhaps the result of an encounter with a predator, or another conspecific!

Other large Cape Cobras have been recorded at DeHoop and in the general area. A male DOR at Ouplas measured 1850 TL; and another male caught by the offices at DeHoop in September 2004 measured 1860mm TL. More recently, a large pale speckled male was taken from a garden at DeRust in the Little Karoo, and measured 1720mm TL.

**Acknowledgements**

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**References**

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