

***Bitis armata* (A. Smith, 1826)**

**Southern Adder**

**PREY ITEMS**

Since a study of the Southern Adder was initiated in September 2004 at DeHoop Nature Reserve a number of observations have been made with regard to prey items including actual observations of feeding in the wild.

Three records consisted of regurgitated items. All the Southern Adders were adult females of between 28 and 31cm total length. Two items were lizards; an adult Red-sided Skink, *Trachylepis homalocephala*, and a sub-adult Cape Skink, *Trachylepis capensis*. The third item was a young mouse, probably *Rhabdomys pumilio*, regurgitated by a 32cm female.

Another record for an 18cm male road-killed southern adder was a small *Pedioplanis* sp.

Two observations were made of actual feeding. The first was an adult female of 28cm feeding on an adult *Trachylepis homalocephala*; the lizard was ingested in seven minutes. The second was another female of 32cm feeding on a young *Rhabdomys pumilio*; the mouse was a large meal, and took 22 minutes to consume.

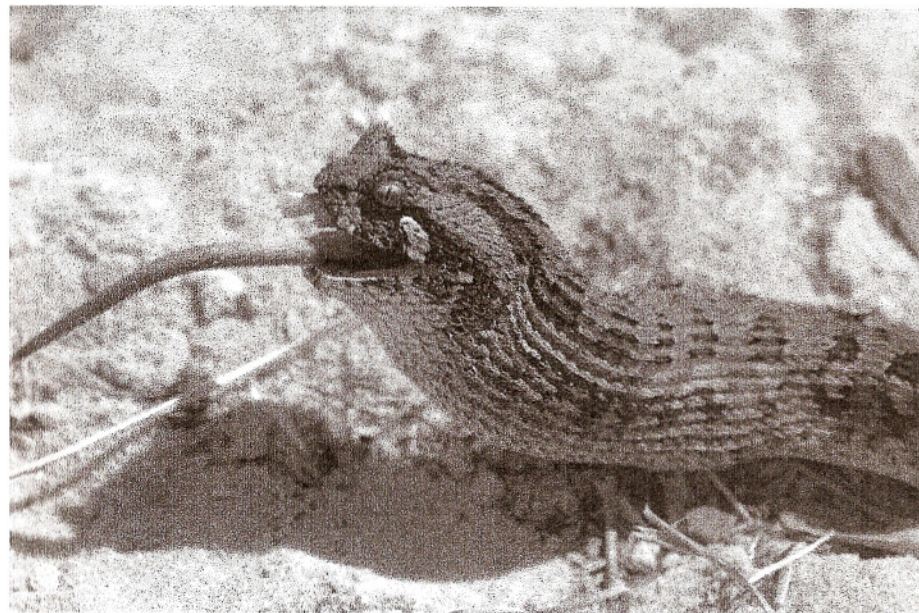
Interestingly, all feeding observations were made in the summer months and took place between 08h30 and 10h00.

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**Submitted by**

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*Bitis armata* swallowing *Rhabdomys pumilio*.

Photo: Tony Phelps