

LACERTILIA

AGAMA AGAMA (Red-headed Rock Agama). **NOCTURNAL ACTIVITY.** The broadly distributed anthropophilic African agamid *A. agama* is uniformly described as diurnal (Caxton-Martins and Nganwuchu 1978. *J. Anat.* 125:477–480; Spawls et al. 2002. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa*. Academic Press, Natural World. 543 pp.). Harris (1964. *The Life of the Rainbow Lizard*. London, Hutchinson Tropical Monographs. 174 pp.) reported that the lizard's activity starts at sunrise and ends soon after sundown in Nigeria; the earliest activity time Harris reported was 0650 h. According to Ekundayo and Otusanya (1969. *Niger. Flid.* 34:83–90), activity at Lagos, Nigeria is maximal between 1000 and 1100 h, and is also high around 1800 h. Halstead (1970. *Niger. Flid.* 35:86–89) reported from Ife, Nigeria that activity starts, depending on the weather, between 0730 and 0830 h; between 1800 and 1900 h, they sluggishly retreat to rest. Here, we report activity in *A. agama* in the city of Mouila, Douya-Onoy Department, Ngounie Province, Gabon that is distinctly different from previous reports in being nocturnal.

On 15 November 2001, one of us (OSGP) noted a nocturnal activity by *A. agama* in the Quartier Dikongo near the Carrefour Barbier in the city of Mouila (01°52'07"S, 11°02'59"E; elev. 90 m). A group of 8 subadults (SVL ca. 70 mm) and adults (SVL ca. 110 mm) were observed from 2000 to 2300 h foraging for insects around the neon lights on an inhabited house. In this habitat, they were syntopic with 4 *Hemidactylus mabouia* (voucher specimen IRSNB 16211). The inhabitants of the house told us that these *A. agama* are active around the lamps year-round between dusk and 2330 h. We collected one (IRSNB 16210; subadult female; SVL 67 mm; 69 midbody scale rows) at 2300 h, when locals indicate that they are easiest to catch because they retire around that time. Its stomach was full of insects, mainly Coleoptera (Carabidae and Staphylinidae), Homoptera, Hymenoptera (Formicidae), and Lepidoptera. We observed night-active *A. agama* the same evening on 3 other lighted houses in the neighborhood.

These agamids were seen actively preying on insects, but they might also occasionally prey on *H. mabouia*. Gramentz (1999. *Salamandra* 35:193–208) reported a case of predation by *A. agama* on *Hemidactylus brookii*, but it occurred during the day. Why *A. agama* has not developed such a nocturnal activity around lamps in other and larger cities in Gabon like Libreville remains a mystery.

These observations were made as part of WWF Ecoregion Program-sponsored field surveys. We thank E. Mamfoumbi Kombila and M. Mpami (Direction de la Faune et de la Chasse, Libreville) for research and collecting permits, and J. Mayombo, R. Mikala-Mussavu and A. Pepy Boutolini (WWF-CARPO) for their kind help in the field. We are grateful to G. Lenglet and G. Coulon (Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique - IRSNB, Brussels) for processing our voucher specimens.

Submitted by **OLIVIER S.G. PAUWELS**, Department of Recent Vertebrates, Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, **DIETER GRAMENTZ**, Földerichstr. 7, D-13595 Berlin, Germany, and **ANDRÉ KAMDEM TOHAM**, World Wildlife Fund - Central African Regional Program Office, B.P. 9144, Libreville, Gabon; e-mail: osgpauwels@hotmail.com.