

(Natural History), and to Dr. Danny Meirte (MRAC/KMMA, Tervuren) for constructive discussions.

### Submitted by

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## **GRAYIA ORNATA (Bocage, 1866)**

### **Ornate Water Snake**

#### DIET

The African Ornate Water Snake is distributed in the swamps and rivers of Equatorial Africa. Very little data on its biology and food habits are available in the literature. Chirio (1998. *Les serpents du Cameroun*. C.R.P. Bafoussam, Projet Paseca, A.F.C. Dschang, Yaounde, pp. 1-37) mentioned that *Grayia ornata* is aquatic and piscivorous and goes on land only for basking and egg laying. Moreover Chippaux (1999. *Les serpents d'Afrique occidentale et centrale*. IRD Editions, Paris, pp 1-278) specified that the species is also "arboreal" in that it hunts from branches overhanging the water. Due to the lack of precise data on the diet of *G. ornata*, we think appropriate to provide hereafter two cases of ichthyophagy for the species.

The stomach of the young male MNHN 1995.9386 (SVL 288 mm, tail length 110 mm, ventrals 150, subcaudals 85) from Equatorial Guinea, Monte Alen National Park, donated by Carlos Lasso, contains a *Parauchenoglanis* sp. (Siluriformes, Claroteidae (ex Bagridae) (total length 78 mm).

The stomach of the adult female IRSNB 11193 (SVL 800 mm, tail length 260 mm, ventrals 156, subcaudals 76) collected by natives on 22 March 1950 in Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo), Parc

National de la Garamba, Bagbele area, contains a juvenile headless *Clarias* sp. (Siluriformes, Clariidae). This snake specimen was already cited by de Witte (1966. Reptiles. Exploration du Parc National de la Garamba. Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo, Brussels, pp. 108 + 5 pl.).

These two documented cases of predation on Siluriformes confirm the apparently mainly aquatic habits of *G. ornata*.

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