

NSCF NEWS

Communication from the Natural Science Collections Facility Hub Team

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NEW SPECIES OF TARANTULA



The Mega Horned Baboon Tarantula, *Ceratogyrus attonitifer* described by Dr John Midgley and Dr Ian Engelbrecht

The new species is described in a paper published in the open-access journal African Invertebrates by Drs John Midgley and Ian Engelbrecht.

The spider was discovered by Dr John Midgley during a survey of Angola as part of the National Geographic Society's Okavango Wilderness Project.

Although the new spider belongs to a group known as horned baboon spiders, the peculiar protuberance is not present in all of these species. "No other spider in the world possesses a similar foveal protuberance," commented the authors.

You can read more about this exciting find on [National Geographic's website](#)

Sources: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2019-02/pp-nts021219.php?fbclid=IwAR335m3l-https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/02/new-tarantula-species-horn-on-back/

FROM AUDREY: COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT NEWS

We are going to have our first national meeting for Collection Management and Conservation (CMC) on 21 February, I look forward to seeing all of you in Pretoria and catching up with all of you. As always, there will be documents that will be shared on google docs as well as by email for the working group to make input. Your contributions are highly appreciated, thank you in advance.

I am mostly excited for the annual NSCF forum. I hope you all saved the date, it will take place from May 28 – 31, at Goudini Spa in the Western Cape. I am looking forward to hearing what the institutions have been up to, as well as reflecting on the NSCF impact thus far.

Later on in the year, 3rd or 4th quarter, there will be collection management training. The exact training that will be offered will be determined by collection staff needs as well as what the documents we put together in the working group meetings reveal to be necessary. We will also have to conduct collection assessments which will also ensure that we properly identify the gaps. You're also very welcome to put up suggestions. We will keep you posted on updates/developments on this as per planning progress and outcome.

FROM IAN: DATA MANAGEMENT NEWS

Data standards for collection managers:

One of the goals of the NSCF is to develop standards for data that should be applied across institutions and disciplines. The Data Working Group will be working on this in the coming months, but what is crucially important is that these standards filter back into the day to day work of collection managers and other collections based staff that work with specimens. Ideally we would like to reach a point where users of any collection will have the same, or at least very similar, datasets to work with. This is important because it would help taxonomists and other biodiversity scientists working on collections to minimize the amount of time they spend standardizing and aggregating data for their own projects. Speaking from personal experience, this can be very time consuming!

As a short example to give you a taste of what standards are all about, we can consider the dates that specimens are collected. These are represented in our databases in a range of formats. Some databases store dates as text values, as they are written on the specimen labels. For example, the value might be 'Jul 1956'. In other cases dates are stored in separate fields for year, month, and day. Some databases store date ranges. The Darwin Core provides for standard representation of dates. 'Jul 1956' becomes '1956-07'. A full date would be '1995-02-22', and a date range is expressed with a backslash, such as '1990-06-08/10', for the 8th to the 10th of June, 1990. This standard is described at the following link: <https://dwc.tdwg.org/terms/#dwc:eventDate>.

Applying these standards doesn't mean we have to change our databases, but we should strive to implement them in our queries on those databases. The work required will be to set this up in the various databases that people are currently using.

Data sharing agreements:

The NSCF is currently in the process of setting up data sharing agreements with its various partner institutions. If you're interested to know please speak to your institutional representative on the Data Working Group. The agreements are intended to clarify the relationship between SANBI and an institution in terms of their responsibilities in terms of data sharing, and exactly what data will be shared and what won't be. These agreements will be between the institution and SANBI, not the NSCF itself, and will pave the way for easier, more open data sharing in future.

IMPORTANT DATES

The **Advisory Committee** for the NSCF has finally been established and consists of representatives from partner institution governing bodies. They will have their first meeting on **26 February**, in Pretoria.

The **Coordinating Committee** (consisting of managers from partner institutions) will come together in KwaZulu-Natal from **4 to 7 March** for a strategic planning session. As mentioned in the previous newsletter please give some thought to how we can keep moving the NSCF forward, how we can have a real impact with our activities and discuss ideas and needs with your representative on the Committee so they can bring your thoughts to the meeting.

The first working group meetings for the year will take place as follows:

Collections Management WG - 21 and 22 February, in Pretoria.

Data Management Working Group - 14 and 15 March, Cape Town.

The **2019 NSCF Forum** will be held from **28 to 31 May** in the Western Cape. Registration details for the forum will be sent out in March.

The deadline for fourth quarter **report** submission is **25 March**.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NSCF COLLEAGUES



The NSCF Hub team

Although the NSCF is made up of museums, herbaria and science councils, it is the people that truly make the network. Your hard work and dedication behind the scenes are what makes the Natural Science Collections Facility something to be proud of, and its success is your success. We challenge you to share your team photos with us, or post it on social media with the hashtag **#youaretheNSCF**. We are also planning to conduct interviews with researchers and collections staff in the coming year.



The Durban Natural Science Museum team

The KwaZulu-Natal Museum team



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