

A NOTE ON TAIL REGENERATION IN A SAMPLE  
OF Meroles cuneirostris FROM THE CENTRAL  
NAMIB DESERT

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The incidence of tail regeneration in lizards, particularly gekkonids, has received fairly extensive attention worldwide (Bustard and Hughes 1966, Cagle 1946, Werner 1964, 1968 and others). Brain (1958) has reported on this phenomenon in some southern African geckos. However, the author has been unable to trace any literature on the regeneration of tails in other southern African lizard groups.

A sample of 181 Meroles cuneirostris was collected over a twelve month period during 1974/1975, to the east of the Kamberge in the central Namib Desert (23° 37' S, 15° 45' E) in low fairly stable sand dunes. Those lizards with broken (not as a result of collecting) and regenerating tails - ranging from virtually invisible regrowth to well regrown tails were recorded. Regenerated tails were externally distinguishable from original tails by their different scalation, colouration and their usually smaller size. Of the 181 lizards, a total of 46 had regenerating or regenerated tails (20,4% of the males and 32,8% of the females had tails in various stages of regeneration).

The following table gives a breakdown of material collected and the number of animals with regenerated or regenerating tails through the months of the year.

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
MALES	regen.	1	-	3	3	1	3	1	5	2	1	2	-	22
	total	7	-	8	12	7	17	10	14	14	11	8	-	108
FEMALE	regen.	2	-	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	5	-	24
	total	6	-	5		7	9	3	5	6	11	12	-	73

Table: Breakdown of tail regeneration by sex and month.

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References

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