

Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of the UAE

Wild about Reptiles



by Marycke Jongbloed

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with J N B "Bish" Brown

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Introduction



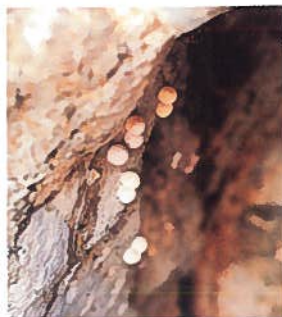
Is this lizard that I see a baby or an adult?

REPTILES ARE EMINENTLY SUITED TO EXIST IN the harsh climates of deserts. Even in areas where other wildlife has become scarce, reptiles can still be abundant.

Although many of them live so secretly that we would hardly know they exist, others live in such close proximity to us that we encounter them regularly, like geckos in our houses and snakes in our gardens.

Few people are true reptile-lovers, but all of us would like to know more about them. Are they dangerous? What do they do when we don't see them? Is this lizard that I see a baby or an adult? How large does it get? Are these eggs from that gecko?

This book tries to answer some (but not all) of those questions. It is not a textbook. It is a field guide for interested amateurs, compiled by an amateur.



Are these eggs from that gecko?

I hope that it may make local naturalists more enthusiastic and curious, so that they will start to search for answers themselves, either by observation or by literature study. Fortunately there is still much to be observed and studied, so that we will have reason to explore and investigate.

The first half of this book tells some stories while the second half is a guide with relevant data and photographs, which show characteristic features. Bish Brown's notes of observations and his measurements of specimens are interspersed with the data gleaned from scientific publications.

Each group of reptiles has a colour code for quick reference. Habitats are described for each species. If you are in the mountains and you think you have spotted the Short-nosed Lizard (*Mesalina brevirostris*), the habitat will suggest that you may be wrong. Conversely if you are in the dunes and don't know the lizard you are observing, look for descriptions of sandy habitats to find your creature.

In the text of the guide part references are given to the stories in the first half of the book which have anecdotal information about the animals depicted.



Short-nosed lizard (Mesalina brevirostris).