

## New records of Gaboon viper (*Bitis gabonica*) in Angola

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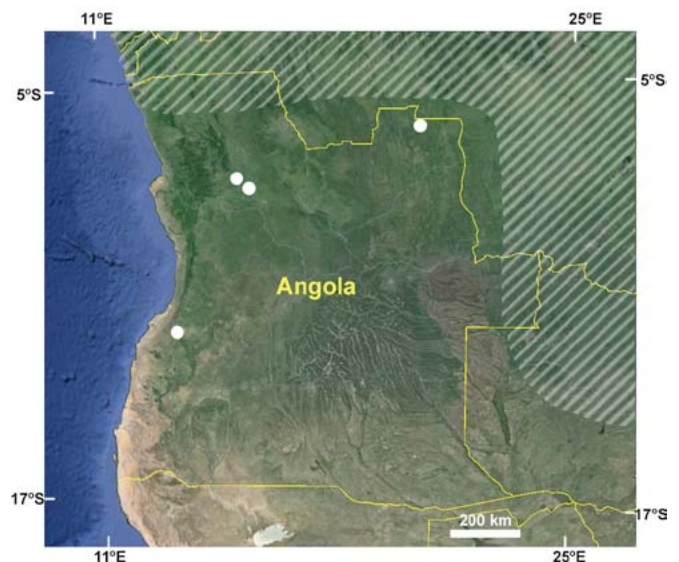
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The Gaboon viper (*Bitis gabonica*) is a sedentary snake distributed across the tropical and subtropical forests, woodlands and savannas of sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Angelici et al., 2000; Warner, 2009). The geographical distribution ranges from Nigeria to southern Sudan, through Uganda, western Kenya, southeastern Tanzania, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, the extreme north of Angola (Zaire and Cabinda provinces), northern Zululand, and South Africa (Spawls et al, 1995). Between April 2015 and May 2015 a search was made for *B. gabonica* through four provinces of Angola (South Kwanza, Benguela, Huila and Malange). This included requesting local people to deliver newly-captured individuals (dead or alive). Subsequently eight specimens of *B. gabonica* were found and added to the CIMETOX collection (Table 1, Fig. 1 & 2). All snakes encountered were sent to the Medical Faculty of Malange, Lueji N'konde University. Live snakes were housed in a serpentarium; dead animals were fixed in formalin and placed in the Snake Collection of the Centre for Research and Information on Drug and Toxicology (CIMETOX) in the same department.

These collections expanded our knowledge of the distribution of this species in Angola, to include south into Benguela Province and Malange (Fig.1). The *B. gabonica* from Benguela was collected in a woodland thicket environment, while those in Malange were in a forest of tall bushes and savanna mosaic. According to Marsh and

Whaler (1984) *B. gabonica* occupies mostly woodland thicket habitats and this type of vegetation can be found between Malange and Benguela (República de Angola, 2006). More inventories in Angola are needed to confirm these assumptions.



**Figure 1.** Geographical distribution of *B. gabonica*. The cross hatched area corresponds to the previously known distribution. The white spots indicate locations of new specimens.

**Table 1.** Dates of collection, location, geographical coordinates, size and sex of *B. gabonica* collected in Angola. F = Female; M = Male; SVL = Snout-vent length; nd = not deposited

Date of collection	Municipality (Province)	Sex	SVL (cm)	Geographic coordinates		Catalogue number
				Latitude	Longitude	CIMETOX
April 2014	Cacuso (Malange)	F	115	-9.4994°S	16.1613 °E	0010
25/3/15	Caimbambo (Benguela)	F	125	-13.1677 °S	13.7663 °E	0013
29/3/15	Kalandula (Malange)	F	118	-9.1956 °S	15.9026 °E	0015
30/3/2015	Kalandula (Malange)	M	108	-9.1956 °S	15.9027 °E	0016
01/04/2015	Kalandula (Malange)	M	109	-9.1956 °S	15.9027 °E	0018
02/04/2015	Kalandula (Malange)	F	150	-9.2097 °S	15.8906 °E	0019
02/04/2015	Kalandula (Malange)	F	121	-9.1907 °S	15.9159 °E	0020
04/05/2015	Kalandula (Malange)	M	119	-9.3872 °S	15.9441 °E	0021
30/05/2015	Dundo (Luanda Norte)	M	195	-7.3667 °S	20.8167 °E	nd



**Figure 2.** Sample of *B. gabonica* collected in Kalandula, Angola (29/03/2015)

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