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ON MY DOORSTEP
GREETINGS FROM THE NORTH
TRIBUTES TO ACHIM & PETER
DARK & CLEAR SKIES
FAIRY CIRCLES
WOLWEDANS RURALREVIVE
NEWS @ NaDEET



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ARACHNOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO THE CENTRAL NAMIB INSELBERGS

Lorenzo Prendini and Tharina Bird

As part of a country-wide survey of Namibia's arachnids, an expedition was undertaken to the inselbergs of the Central Namib from 12 - 16 January 2024. This was the first scientific expedition to the area since the early 1980s. The team, led by Dr Lorenzo Prendini of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, included Dr Tharina Bird of the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (formerly Transvaal Museum) in Pretoria, Dr John Irish of the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek, and Martin and Chantelle Verwey of the NamibRand Nature Reserve.

The convoy departed from Aandstêr on NamibRand and visited the Uri-Hauchab, Hauchab and Awasib mountains in the Namib-Naukluft National Park before returning to Aandstêr. In addition to sampling the rocky inselbergs, the trip's primary focus was also to sample the surrounding dunes and gravel plains. Three families, four genera and eleven species of scorpions, and two families, four genera and five species of Solifugae (romans, solifuges, sunspiders) were recorded.

One of the highlights was the rediscovery of *Hadogenes lawrencei*, a flat rock scorpion endemic to the inselbergs. This unusual species, described by

the late Dr Gerald Newlands (formerly of the Transvaal Museum) in 1972, was last collected in 1982, making this the first time it has been seen in over 40 years.

The solifuges collected during the expedition are the only records of this arachnid order from the Uri-Hauchab and Hauchab Mountains, aside from two immature specimens of the family Solpugidae collected by the late Wulf Haacke (formerly of the Transvaal Museum) in 1969.



Lorenzo finding a scorpion



From r to l: Dr Lorenzo Prendini, American Museum of Natural History; Dr Tharina Bird, DITSONG Museums of South Africa; Dr John Irish, Namibia Biodiversity Database National Museum of Namibia, and Chantell and Martin Verwey, NamibRand Nature Reserve



Hadogenes lawrencei



Blossia species



Opisthophthalmus adustus



Various landscapes of the area