**The Kenya Reptile Atlas**

A free, downloadable atlas of Kenya’s reptiles. This is a free source of regularly updated information on Kenya’s Reptiles. Authors: **Stephen Spawls, Beryl Bwong, Patrick Malonza, Vincent Muchai, Victor Wasonga**

Obtainable under ‘downloads’ at Kenyareptileatlas.com; This project is funded by the Rufford Foundation under the auspices of the National Museums of Kenya; Department of Herpetology.



**A New Checklist of the Reptiles of Kenya: Part 2; Snakes**

Since the publication of the comprehensive Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa, by Spawls, Howell, Drewes and Ashe, in 2002, (known for short as the FGREA) the taxonomy of snakes has changed, as have a number of names. In addition, several species have been recorded in Kenya for the first time. So here is a current list of the snakes known to occur in Kenya at present; and we will update this from time to time. All other reptiles are in part 1. We’re using the nomenclature of the Reptile Database ([www.reptile-database.org](http://www.reptile-database.org)), which is also regularly updated and an excellent source of information.

The names are given thus: new scientific name, **old scientific name in brackets** (if different, if not then no second name), common name, **old common name in brackets** (if different). Species new to Kenya since the publication of the FGREA (newly described, or recorded for the first time, or elevated from the synonymy of another species) are indicated by an asterisk **\***. Where a photograph is shown, it is of the species directly above the picture (i.e. the picture is below the name).

Readers should be aware that the reptile taxonomy has undergone significant changes during the last 20 years. This stems from relationships revealed by analysis of various biochemicals, in particular the sequence of bases in nucleic acids such as DNA. Nowadays, snakes are believed to be a clade of legless lizards. Anyone wanting to familiarise themselves with the current situation should read the papers of Robert Alexander Pyron and his co-workers. The old ideas, such as that worm snakes are the most ‘primitive’ and vipers the most ‘advanced’ snakes have been superseded by a new relationship. For example, it is believed that colubrid snakes (what you might call ‘regular’ snakes) are the most recently evolved. We have used, as far as possible, the most up-to-date taxonomy, and also tried to follow the order of the FGREA, but changes mean that this isn’t always possible. So if the species you want doesn’t seem to be in order, scan up and down.

Our grateful thanks are extended to those who had a critical look at this list and made helpful comments and suggestions, and those who allowed us to use their photographs, including the Bio-Ken team (Sanda Ashe, Royjan Taylor, Anton Childs), Bill Branch and Tomas Mazuch.

#### Order Squamata; Snakes Sub-order Ophidia (also Serpentes)

#### Superfamily Typhlopoidea (Scolecophidia) Family [Typhlopidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Typhlopidae&exact%5B%5D=taxon&submit=Search) Subfamily Afrotyphlopinae African Blind Snakes

#### NB: Readers should be aware that the taxonomy of the blind snakes is in a state of flux. Recent work by Robert Alexander Pyron, Don Broadley, Van Wallach, S Blair Hedges and associated zoologists has produced conflicting evidence as to which genera are valid. Some names have changed twice inside two years. We use here the names from the reptile database, accessed in August 2014.

#### *Afrotyphlops angolensis* (*Typhlops angolensis*) Angola blind snake

#### *Afrotyphlops brevis* (*Rhinotyphlops brevis*) Angle-snouted blind snake

#### *Afrotyphlops calabresii* (*Typhlops cuneirostris*) Wedge-snouted blind snake

#### \* *Afrotyphlops kaimosae* Kakamega blind snake

#### *Afrotyphlops lineolatus* (*Typhlops lineolatus*) Lineolate blind snakeC:\Users\spawls\Pictures\atlas checklist\img310_01.JPG

#### \* *Afrotyphlops nanus* Kenyan dwarf blind snake

#### *Afrotyphlops mucruso* (*Rhinotyphlops mucruso*) Zambezi blind snake

#### *Rhinotyphlops ataeniatus* Somali blind snake

#### *Rhinotyphlops unitaeniatus* Yellow-striped blind snake/stripe-backed blind snake

#### C:\Users\spawls\Pictures\atlas checklist\img553_01.JPG(picture © James Ashe)

#### \* *Letheobia swahilica* Swahili gracile blind snake/coastal blind snake (elevated from the synonymy of *Rhinotyphlops pallidus*, now *Letheobia pallida* and confined to Zanzibar)

#### *Letheobia lumbriciformis* (*Rhinotyphlops lumbriciformis*) Worm-like blind snake

#### *Indotyphlops braminus* (*Ramphotyphlops braminus*) Flower-pot blind snake

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Superfamily Typhlopoidea (Scolecophidia) Family [Leptotyphlopidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Leptotyphlopidae&submit=Search) (Slender Blind Snakes) Subfamily [Leptotyphlopinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Leptotyphlopinae&submit=Search) worm snakes

*Epacrophis boulengeri* (*Leptotyphlops boulengeri*) Lamu worm snake

*Epacrophis drewesi* (*Leptotyphlops drewesi*) Drewes’ worm snake

**\*** *Leptotyphlops aethiopicus* Ethiopian worm snake

**\*** *Leptotyphlops howelli* Kim Howell’s worm snake

**\*** *Leptotyphlops keniensis* Mt Kenya worm snake

*Leptotyphlops macrops* Large-eyed worm snake

**\*** *Leptotyphlops nigroterminus* Black-tipped worm snake

*Leptotyphlops scutifrons* Peters’ worm snake (two subspecies *L. s. merkeri* in the southeast and *L. s. pitmani* in the far west) 

**\*** *Myriopholis braccianii* (*Leptotyphlops braccianii*) Scortecci’s worm snake

**\*** *Myriopholis tanae* (*Leptotyphlops tanae*) Tana Delta worm snake

*Myriopholis macrorhyncha* (*Leptotyphlops macrorhynchus*) Hook-snouted worm snake

Superfamily Pythonoidea (Pythons and relatives) Family [Pythonidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Pythonidae&submit=Search) Pythons

*Python natalensis* Southern African rock python

*Python sebae* Central African rock python

Superfamily Booidea Family [Boidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Boidae&submit=Search) (Boas) Family [Erycidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Erycinae&submit=Search) Sand boas

*Eryx colubrinus* Kenya sand boa



Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Lamprophiinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiinae&submit=Search" \t "_blank) African House

snakes, wolf snakes and allies

*Boaedon fuliginosus* (*Lamprophis fuliginosus*) Brown house snake

**\*** *Boaedon olivaceus* (*Lamprophis olivaceus*) Olive house snake

*Lycophidion capense* Cape Wolf snake



*Lycophidion depressirostre* Flat-snouted wolf snake

*Lycophidion ornatum* Forest wolf snake

*Lycophidion taylori* Taylor’s wolf snake(picture ©Lorenzo Vinciguerra)

*Hormonotus modestus* Yellow forest snake

*Gonionotophis chanleri* (*Mehelya capensis*, eastern *‘unicolor’* populations) Chanler’s file snake (Cape file snake)

*Gonionotophis savorgnani* (*Mehelya capensis*, western populations) ) De Brazza’s file snake/Congo file snake (Cape file snake)

*Gonionotophis nyassae* (*Mehelya nyassae*) Dwarf file snake/black file snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Pseudaspidinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Pseudaspidinae&submit=Search) mole snakes

*Pseudaspis cana* Mole snake 

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Pseudoxyrhophiinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Pseudoxyrhophiinae&submit=Search) Malagasy colubroids

*Duberria lutrix* East African slug-eater (slug eater)

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Psammophiinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Psammophiinae&submit=Search) Sand snakes, bark snakes, skaapstekers and beaked snakes

*Hemirhagerrhis kelleri* Striped bark snake

*Hemirhagerrhis nototaenia* Southern bark snake (bark snake)

**\*** *Hemirhagerrhis hildebrandtii* Kenyan bark snake 

*Psammophylax multisquamis* Kenyan striped skaapsteker

*Rhamphiophis rostratus* Rufous beaked snake

*Rhamphiophis rubropunctatus* Red-spotted beaked snake

*Psammophis lineatus* (*Dromophis lineatus*) Striped olympic snake

*Psammophis pulcher* Beautiful sand snake

*Psammophis mossambicus* Olive sand snake/Hissing sand snake

*Psammophis orientalis* Eastern stripe-bellied sand snake

*Psammophis rukwae* Lake Rukwa sand snake

*Psammophis sudanensis* Northern stripe-bellied sand snake

*Psammophis punctulatus* Speckled sand snake

*Psammophis biseriatus* Link-marked sand snake

*Psammophis tanganicus* Tanganyika sand snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Prosymninae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Prosymninae&submit=Search) Shovel-snouts

*Prosymna ambigua* Angolan shovel-snout

*Prosymna ruspolii* Prince Ruspoli’s shovel-snout

*Prosymna stuhlmanni* East African shovel-snout

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Aparallactinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Aparallactinae&submit=Search) burrowing snakes

*Aparallactus guentheri* Black centipede-eater

*Aparallactus jacksoni* Jackson’s centipede-eater

*Aparallactus lunulatus* Plumbeous centipede-eater

*Aparallactus turneri* Malindi centipede-eater

*Polemon christyi* Christy’s snake-eater

*Amblyodipsas polylepis* Common purple-glossed snake

*Amblyodipsas teitana* Taita Hills purple-glossed snake

*Amblyodipsas unicolor* Western purple-glossed snake

*Micrelaps bicoloratus* Two-coloured snake



*Micrelaps vaillanti* (*Micrelaps boettgeri*) Desert black-headed snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Lamprophiidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Lamprophiidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Atractaspidinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Atractaspidinae&submit=Search) burrowing asps/stiletto snakes/Mole Vipers

*Atractaspis bibronii* Bibron’s burrowing asp

*Atractaspis engdahli* Engdahl’s burrowing asp

*Atractaspis irregularis* Variable burrowing asp

*Atractaspis microlepidota* Small-scaled burrowing asp 

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Colubridae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Colubridae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Colubrinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Colubrinae&submit=Search) regular snakes

*Platyceps florulentus* (*Coluber florulentus*) Flowered racer

*Platyceps brevis* (*Coluber smithii*) Smith’s racer



*Meizodon krameri* Tana Delta smooth snake

*Meizodon plumbiceps* Black-headed smooth snake

*Meizodon regularis* Eastern crowned snake

*Meizodon semiornatus* Semi-ornate snake

*Philothamnus battersbyi* Battersby’s green-snake

*Philothamnus carinatus* Thirteen-scaled green-snake

*Philothamnus heterolepidotus* Slender green-snake

*Philothamnus hoplogaster* South-eastern green-snake/green water snake

**\*** *Philothamnus macrops* Usambara green-snake

*Philothamnus nitidus* Loveridge’s green-snake

*Philothamnus punctatus* Speckled green-snake

*Philothamnus semivariegatus* Spotted bush snake/spotted wood snake

*Hapsidophrys lineata* Black-lined green snake

*Thrasops jacksoni* Jackson’s tree snake

**\****Thrasops schmidti* Schmidt’s black tree snake

*Rhamnophis aethiopissa* Large-eyed green tree snake

*Scaphiophis albopunctatus* Hook-nosed snake

*Scaphiophis raffreyi* Ethiopian hook-nosed snake

*Boiga blandingii* Blanding’s tree snake (some authorities use the name *Toxicodryas* for African *Boiga,* although research indicates there are no significant differences between the African and Asian forms)

*Boiga pulverulenta* Powdered tree snake

*Telescopus dhara* Large-eyed snake

*Telescopus semiannulatus* Tiger snake

*Crotaphopeltis braestrupi* Tana herald snake

*Crotaphopeltis degeni* Degen’s water snake/yellow-flanked snake

*Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia* White-lipped snake/white lip

*Dipsadoboa flavida* Cross-barred tree snake

*Dispholidus typus* Boomslang



*Thelotornis mossambicanus* (*Thelotornis capensis*) Savanna vine snake

\* *Thelotornis usambaricus* Usambara vine snake (of doubtful validity)

*Dasypeltis atra* Montane egg-eater

*Dasypeltis medici* Rufous egg-eater/East African egg-eater



*Dasypeltis scabra* Common egg-eater/rhombic egg-eater

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Colubridae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Colubridae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Grayiinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Grayiinae&submit=Search) Central African water snakes

*Grayia smythii* Smith’s water snake

*Grayia tholloni* Thollon’s water snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family Colubridae subfamily [Natricidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Natricidae&submit=Search) Palaearctic/African water snakes

*Natriciteres olivacea* Olive marsh snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family Elapidae cobras, mambas and allies

*Elapsoidea loveridgei* East African garter snake

\* *Elapsoidea nigra* Usambara garter snake

\* *Naja ashei*  Ashe’s Spitting Cobra/Large Brown Spitting Cobra 

*Naja haje* Egyptian cobra

*Naja melanoleuca* Forest cobra

*Naja nigricollis* Black-necked spitting cobra

*Naja pallida* Red spitting cobra

*Pseudohaje goldii* Gold’s tree cobra

*Dendroaspis angusticeps* Green mamba

*Dendroaspis jamesoni* Jameson’s mamba

*Dendroaspis polylepis* Black mamba

*Hydrophis platurus* (*Pelamis platurus*) Yellow-bellied sea snake

Superfamily Colubroidea Family [Viperidae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Viperidae&submit=Search) Subfamily [Viperinae](http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/search.php?taxon=Viperinae&submit=Search) Old World vipers

*Causus defilippii* Snouted night adder



*Causus lichtensteini* Forest night adder

*Causus resimus* Velvety-green night adder

*Causus rhombeatus* Rhombic night adder

*Bitis arietans* Puff adder



*Bitis gabonica* Gaboon viper

*Bitis nasicornis* Rhinoceros viper/Nose-horned viper

*Bitis worthingtoni* Kenya horned viper



*Echis pyramidum* North-east African carpet viper/saw-scaled viper

*Atheris desaixi* Mt Kenya bush viper

*Atheris hispida* Rough-scaled bush viper

*Atheris squamiger* Green bush viper 

*Montatheris hindii* Kenya montane viper  (photo © Alex Duff-Mackay)