

Field Guide to the **Scorpions** of **NAMIBIA**

The Proposal

There is no complete identification guide available for Namibia's scorpion species.

Building on from my first book, a **Field Guide to Scorpions of South Africa**, published by Struik Nature in 2023, I aim to produce such a guide. It will cover all 70 species known from the country, including their varieties and habitats, and will include comprehensive descriptions, distribution maps, and treatment of stings. Such a book will be of use to citizens, tourists, the hospitality industry, conservationists, researchers, medical practitioners and educators alike. Struik Nature has agreed to publish this book, and it would be a key contribution to the suite of field guides celebrating the incredible biodiversity of this country.

Namibia's astounding scorpion richness is due to its arid climate and rich geological diversity producing ideal habitats such as the Namib sand sea, the gravel plains, Naukluft mountains, and Koakoveld. Some species are incredibly rare and seldom seen by humans. Forty Namibian species do not occur in South Africa and are not covered in the first book. Namibia is home to the largest thicktail scorpion species in the world, and a whole scorpion family, the Bothriuridae, is considered a Gondwanan relic found only in Namibia and marginally in Angola. One species is known from just two specimens found on the summit of the Brandberg mountain, and one rock scorpion species is limited to a small mountain range surrounded by the dunes of the Namib.

Surveys for scorpions will be guided by sophisticated models to optimise the number of species obtained for time and funds spent. This fieldwork will also provide the opportunity to search new areas for undescribed species, aided by satellite imagery for locating isolated and unsampled habitats, thus contributing to broader knowledge of biodiversity and conservation efforts.



The funds needed to create a comprehensive guide are estimated at around R500,000.

Any contributions towards this amount will be greatly appreciated.

Sponsorship of a suitable vehicle for fieldwork is also being sought.

Sponsorship

Funds will be used for

- Travel to obtain photographs
- Accommodation during fieldwork and writing
- Necessary photographic, outdoor, and other equipment
 - Permits from NCRST
- Other logistical and administrative costs

Sponsor Benefits

Sponsors' logo will be printed on the inside and back cover of the book, with the option to include a short corporate message in the front matter.

Sponsors making significant contributions will be offered a dedicated foreword page.

This book will showcase one of Namibia's most remarkable and least understood components of biodiversity to both local and international audiences. It is intended for naturalists, tourists, researchers, students, conservation practitioners, and anyone interested in Namibia's unique wildlife.

Sponsors will be helping to

- Promote Namibian science, biodiversity, and natural heritage
- Improve public understanding of an often misunderstood group of animals
- Support the documentation and conservation of Namibia's unique fauna
 - Encourage nature-based tourism and interest in the country's wildlife
 - Create educational resources for future generations of Namibians
- Help develop local scientific expertise and research capacity in Namibia
 - Demonstrate a commitment to scientific research, conservation, and environmental stewardship in the country.

Unlike many forms of advertising, a high-quality reference book remains in circulation for many years, providing sponsors with an enduring association with a positive and worthwhile scientific endeavour.

The Author

Ian Engelbrecht is an expert on scorpions and mygalomorph spiders in southern Africa. Prior to authoring the first complete identification guide to South African scorpions he obtained a PhD in Zoology from the University of Pretoria for his work on trapdoor spiders. He coordinates the Baboon Spider Atlas project and has worked for several biodiversity and conservation organisations. He has described several species new to science and has a spider species, *Lepthercus engelbrechti*, named after him.



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The story behind the
first book is available
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