



# SNR FACT SHEET

## ANGULATE TORTOISE (*Chersina angulata*)

The Angulate tortoise, which is found mostly in the coastal regions of the Southern Cape, has been seen in the Kingfisher Creek area of Steenbok Nature Reserve. It takes its name from the light brown and black angular shell patterns on its carapace.



The males (c. 272mm) of this medium-sized tortoise are more aggressive than other southern African tortoises and spend a fair amount of time sparring with their rivals and trying to overturn them or chase them away.

Both males and females (c. 216mm) remain active throughout the year unless there is a severe cold snap during winter. Nesting – when the female selects a suitable site and digs a hole in which to lay her eggs – occurs mainly in spring. Mating takes place directly after each nesting. The incubation period varies from 94-198 days. Eggs laid in autumn or winter take longer to hatch than those laid in

spring or summer, as the colder temperatures slow down development. Hatchlings (length: 30mm; weight: 12-18g) are particularly vulnerable to predatory birds such as the crow, fiscal shrike or black-headed heron.

This tortoise has many enemies. In recent times the greatest has been man – who has destroyed their habitat for agricultural and urban development; exploited them in the international pet trade and killed them for food. Other enemies include predatory birds, mammals such as meerkats and mongooses, as well as fires.

We are delighted to be able to report that a young tortoise measuring 100mm was seen in April 2012 in Kingfisher Creek coastal thicket, indicating that there is at least one pair of breeding adults in the area.

