



SNR FACT SHEET

KNYSNA DWARF CHAMELEON (*Bradypodion damaranum*)

This dwarf chameleon is only found in the Knysna area where its normal habitat is in the dense Knysna forests, although it has adapted to living in gardens. It is about 12cm long and well adapted to living in trees, where it blends in with the gentle movement of leaves and catches insects with its amazing elastic tongue.

The males are green with streaks of yellow, red or pink, particularly in the mating season. The females are grey or brown.



Like other chameleons they can rotate their eyes independently and change the colour of their skin. This is not done to match their background, but is influenced by temperature, light intensity and emotional state.

Unlike other chameleons they give birth to live young, in litters of 5-15, rather than laying eggs. The newborn babies are immediately completely independent.

The main predators of chameleons are snakes, birds (like the Fiscal Shrike and Burchell's Coucal) and humans. The use of garden and agricultural pesticides kills or contaminates the insect prey of chameleons causing them to die of poisoning or starvation.



As the tree copses in the Steenbok Nature Reserve become more established and replicate their natural forest habitat, the numbers of Knysna Dwarf Chameleons should increase.