The Madagascar ground boa *Acrantophis madagascariensis* (Duméril & Bibron, 1844) is the largest snake in Madagascar, to which it is endemic (Raxworthy, 2003). It is widespread throughout northern Madagascar where it inhabits a range of native and anthropogenic habitats (Glaw and Vences, 2007). Adults can reach a total length of 320 cm (Brygoo, 1982), though most individuals do not exceed 250 cm (Glaw and Vences, 2007). In captivity adults reach sexual maturity at a weight of 4.3-5.0 kg (Glaw and Vences, 2007), though the maximum weight is not recorded. Here we present an observation and weight record of an adult *A. madagascariensis* (Fig. 1) from northwest Madagascar, which we believe to constitute the heaviest record of this species, and thus the heaviest snake hitherto recorded in Madagascar.

On 02.07.2013 we measured and weighed a specimen of *A. madagascariensis* known as ‘Big George’ in the grounds of Anjajavy l’Hôtel, Sofia Region, northwest Madagascar (14°59.3 S, 047°13.4 E). The snake is well known to staff at the hotel, where it has been resident since 2004, and has been observed predating brown lemur (*Eulemur fulvus*) (Fig. 2) and Coquerel’s sifaka (*Propithecus coquereli*), diurnal primates which can attain a mass of 1.7-2.1 kg and 3.7-4.3 kg respectively (Mittermeier et al., 2010). The snake is free-living within the hotel gardens, presumably attracted by the resident troops of both diurnal lemur species. We estimated the length of the snake using a strip of cloth, which generated a conservative estimate of 270 cm total length, and weighed it using a set of electronic kitchen scales sensitive to the nearest 100 g. The snake weighed 8.2 kg.

No obvious swelling could be felt or seen along the length of the boa, suggesting that it had not recently eaten. It therefore seems logical that the species could attain weights of over 10 kg immediately following consumption of a prey item such as an adult Coquerel’s sifaka.

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**Figure 1.** Adult *Acrantophis madagascariensis* ‘Big George’ photographed at Anjajavy l’Hôtel on 02.07.2013. Photo C. Gardner.
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References


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