The genus *Sordellina* Procter, 1923 is monospecific, including only *Sordellina punctata* (Peters, 1880; Figure 1), an uncommon snake in scientific collections. There is little available data in the literature about this species. Its taxonomic history was presented by Hoge (1958), Peters & Orejas-Miranda (1970) and Hoge & Romano (1978); the systematic position of the genus as a Xenodontinae incertae sedis was discussed in Ferrarezzi (1994) and Zaher (1999); some data on natural history and habitat was presented by Procter (1923), Amaral (1977), Cadle & Greene (1993), Marques (1996; 2001), Marques et al. (2001) and Marques & Sazima (2004); illustrations of the species are available in Hoge (1958), Hoge & Romano (1978) and Amaral (1926; 1977), Marques et al. (2001) and Marques & Sazima (2004). Apart from a study by Hoge & Romano (1978), information relating to its distribution is still lacking. This is the first study providing information about habitat use in *Sordellina punctata*.

To assess the distribution of *S. punctata* we examined the literature and checked the collections of the following institutions: Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (MNRJ), Instituto Butantan, São Paulo (IBSP), Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo (MZUSP), Museu de História Natural da Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo (ZUEC), Museu de História Natural Capão da Imbuia, Paraná (MHNCI), University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Michigan (UMMZ) and National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington (USNM).

**Distribution and occurrence**

*Sordellina punctata* is known from the Atlantic Forest domain in south and southeast Brazil (Amaral 1977; Hoge & Romano 1978; Marques et al. 2001; Marques & Sazima 2004) with confirmed specimens from the states of São Paulo, Paraná and Santa Catarina. A single record from western Mato Grosso do Sul and all literature citations for Rio de Janeiro are questionable.
It is possible that records from State of Rio de Janeiro (see Peters & Orejas-Miranda 1970) were equivocated, as previously stated by Hoge & Romano (1978), although as recently indicated by Marques et al. (2001) and Rocha et al. (2004), the occurrence of *S. punctata* in Rio de Janeiro is not without basis. In spite of this, there is no voucher specimen which confirms its presence in the state.

The extremely western record from Porto Esperança, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, should also be interpreted with caution. It’s based on a single old specimen (from 1943) of the Instituto Butantan herpetological collection, which arrived by a railway line (Linha Férrea Bauru) and could be kept by mistake into a box sent from other locality. Porto Esperança lies into a very distinctive environmental and geographical region, and it is about 900 km far from all confirmed records of *S. punctata* – more than the extremes of the remain known range of the species.

**Literature revisited**

Some localities showed in the literature associated with *S. punctata* need repair. The type locality of *Sordellina brandon-jonesii* Procter, 1923 – a junior-synonym – is “The campos [sic] near Castro, on the R. de Tibeira, Paraná, S.E. Brazil” (Procter 1923), but Peters & Orejas-Miranda (1970) mentions as “Near Castro, Rio de Tibeira, Paraná, Brazil”. The unintentional use of “Tberia” instead of “Tibeira” difficult its recognition as the Rio da Ribeira (or rio Ribeira), an important river in the border area between Paraná and São Paulo states – which in fact has its source near the city of Castro, Paraná.

The specimen MZUSP 3481 (currently USNM 200693) was cited by Hoge & Romano (1978) as sent from “Camboriú SC” (Camboriu municipality, in the state of Santa Catarina), but in the MZUSP archives this record clearly refers to the railway station of Camboriu, Itanhaém municipality, State of São Paulo.

Hoge (1958) wrongly cites “São Bento, Staat São Paulo, Brasi lien” as the type locality of *Sordellina pauloensis* Amaral, 1923 – a junior-synonym of *Sordellina punctata* (Peters, 1880). São Bento (now São Bento do Sul) is a city in the state of Santa Catarina, given by Afrânio do Amaral as the type-locality of *Atractus trihedrurus*, a species described as new in the same paper (Amaral, 1926) where a description (in

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**Figure 1.** Adult example of *Sordellina punctata* (female from São Paulo-SP). Photograph © O. A. V. Marques.

Portuguese) of *Sordellina punctata* was presented. The correct type locality of *Sordellina pauloensis* Amaral, 1923 was presented in the original description and in Peters & Orejas-Miranda (1970) and Hoge & Romano (1978) as Poá, State of São Paulo, Brazil.

Finally, Amaral (1926) and Hoge & Romano (1978) made one more mistake. They both cited the specimens MZUSP 1578 and 1579 as paratypes of *Sordellina pauloensis*. However, an examination of the MZUSP collection shows that the true paratypes, respectively from “Rio Grande” and “Conceição de Itanhaém” (both in State of São Paulo), are MZUSP 1577 and 1578. MZUSP 1579 is not a *Sordellina*, but an *Atractus pantostictus* from São Paulo (C. Castro-Mello, in litt.). Today, “Conceição de Itanhaém” is only called Itanhaém; in the same way, Rio Grande da Serra is the current name of the locality given by Amaral (1923) as “Rio Grande, near Serra de Cubatão”.

**The new record**

We present here a new record: Piraju municipality (23º11’S, 49º23’W, 646 m), southwestern region of the state of São Paulo. Eight specimens were collected during fieldwork at the Usina Hidrelétrica de Piraju (a hydroelectric power station), between March 2002 and September 2003. Of these, four were marked with microchips and released (method in Nogueira et al., 2003), and the remaining four were sent to Instituto Butantan (IBSP 67661, IBSP 67695, IBSP 67696 and IBSP 67818). A search of herpetological collections indicated this record was new, increasing its distribution further to the west as well as to the north of its confirmed range (Figure 2).
The area of the reservoir is covered by open formations (agricultural and cattle raising areas, with remnants of scrubland) and forest fragments (riparian vegetation and semi-deciduous broadleaf forest) with multiple serial stages of succession. The individuals of *S. punctata* were found in the nearby of Paranapanema river, a vast water course with 929 km long and maximum width 800 m.

Near the western bank, five snakes were found and from these, two were encountered at a site named Brejo do Jacaré (meaning “caiman wetland” or “caiman bog”), a humid and muddy area, with movable and slimy soil covered with hydrophilic Cattail plants (*Typha domingensis*; Typhaceae). Another specimen was captured in riparian vegetation, with the same soil conditions as a cattle path. The other two were found in distinct formations of riparian vegetation, but with the same physical characteristics as low humid, forest, and with a high level of human distrubance.

On the eastern bank, three individuals were found, one of them in riparian vegetation with movable and ‘slimy’ soil on a cattle path, and another by a pitfall trap line 300 m from the river’s edge, and 50 m from a small disturbed fragment of semi-deciduous forest. The last snake was found 30 m from the river in a small, disturbed and in regenerating forest with herbaceous plants.

At other localities in the state of São Paulo, like Estação Ecológica Júria-Itatins (Iguape municipality) and Parque Estadual Carlos Botelho (Sete Barras municipality), individuals of...
Sordellina punctata were found in the same humid soil near water bodies (O. A. V. Marques and R. A. Moraes, pers. comm.).

Habitat use
Since Procter’s (1923) description of Sordellina punctata, this species has been associated with aquatic environments in various forms. Discussing the habitat where his unique specimen was caught (by another person), Procter mentions “probably in moist places”; however, he didn’t justify his suspicions. Amaral (1977: p. 90) gives “várzea do Rio Pinheiros” (floodplains of Pinheiros river) as the origin of the IBSP 6791 specimen, but he did not make any other comment about environments inhabited by the species.

Habitat use of S. punctata were published first in Marques (1996), following Marques (2001), Marques et al. (2001) and Marques & Sazima (2004). Based mainly in field observations of the authors, these affirmations, on the other hand, do not specify how and which “aquatic” environments the species in fact inhabits. Our data, conjugated with other field observations indicates that Sordellina punctata is not a truly aquatic species. It seems more associated with wetlands and other soak soils, surrounding lakes or rivers, than water bodies itself.

Procter (1923) corroborates our statement of muddy and soaked soils in floodplains as habitat for S. punctata. This author found the burrowing limbless amphibian Chthonerpeton indistinctum (Gymnophiona, Typhlonectidae) in the stomach of his unique specimen of S. punctata. Typhlonectidae is a family of caecilians known for its secondarily aquatic habits (Taylor 1968), but this species, in particular, is much more common in riverside muddy environments, floodplains or wetlands, than water bodies – where it was seen only occasionally (Ihering 1911; Serié 1915; Liebermann 1939; Lema et al. 1983; Gudynas et al. 1988).

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Appendix: Examined specimens