

Appendix

Specimens of *Sphenomorphus* from Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea examined from BPBM.

Sphenomorphus granulatus ($n = 14$) Cloudy Mountains, along Upaelisafupi Stream, April 2002: BPBM 15617, 15618, 15620-15625; Owen Stanley Mountains, Mt. Pekopekowana, Wailahabahaba Creek, May 2002: 15628, Fergusson Island, Oya Tabu, August 2002: BPBM 16007, 16010; Fergusson Island, Oya Waka, September BPBM 2002: 16013-16015.

Sphenomorphus jobiensis ($n = 36$) Cloudy Mountains, along Upaelisafupi Stream, April 2002: BPBM 15645, 16909-16911, 19006, 19009-19014; May 2002: BPBM 15650-15652, Fergusson Island, August 2002: BPBM 16017, 16020, 16022; Fergusson Island, Oya Waka, September 2002: BPBM 16025; Fergusson Island, Oya

Tabu, August 2002: BPBM 19016, 19017; September 2002: BPBM 19019; Siyomu Village, February 2003: BPBM 19025-19027, 16906, 16907, 16918, 16920-16922; Bunisi Village, February 2003: BPBM 16905, 16914-16916, 16923; Gasu Village, February 2003: BPBM 16917.

Sphenomorphus minutus ($n = 18$) Cloudy Mountains, along Upaelisafupi stream, April BPBM 2002: 15655, 15657; Fergusson Island, Oya Tabu August 2002: BPBM 16031-16036; Fergusson Island, Oya Tabu, August 2002: 16037; Fergusson Island, August 2002, BPBM 16038; Fergusson Island, Oya Waka, September 2002: BPBM 16039; Normanby Island, Samoa, September 2002: BPBM 16040; Misima Island, January 2003: BPBM 16840-16842; Normanby Island, Saidowai. January 2003: BPBM 16843, 16844; Sudest Island, SW slope Mt. Rio, April 2004: BPBM 20057.



Ecogeographical notes on a rare species of false coral snake, *Oxyrhopus doliatus* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854

LUIS FELIPE ESQUEDA ^{1,5}, MARCO NATERA-MUMA ², SANTOS BAZÓ ³
and ENRIQUE LA MARCA ⁴

^{1,5} *Investigador Asociado, Laboratorio de Biogeografía, Escuela de Geografía, Facultad de Ciencias Forestales y Ambientales, Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida 5101, Venezuela.*

luisfesqueda@gmail.com [corresponding author]

² *Museo de Vertebrados, Centro de Estudios del Llano, Universidad Rómulo Gallegos. Apartado 205, San Juan de Los Morros 2301, estado Guárico, Venezuela. mnateram@yahoo.com*

³ *Investigador Asociado, Laboratorio de Biogeografía, Escuela de Geografía, Facultad de Ciencias Forestales y Ambientales, Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida 5101, Venezuela.*

cocodriolextremo@hotmail.com

⁴ *Laboratorio de Biogeografía, Escuela de Geografía, Facultad de Ciencias Forestales y Ambientales. Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida 5101, Venezuela. enrique.lamarca@gmail.com*

PREVIOUSLY known as *Oxyrhopus venezuelanus* Shreve, 1947, this snake is a colubrid species belonging to the subfamily Xenodontinae, originally described on the basis of a single specimen from the population 'El Paují', Acosta municipality, Falcón State, Venezuela. A recent revision revealed that this name is a junior synonym of *Oxyrhopus doliatus* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854 (Zaher & Caramaschi, 2000); however, these authors did not specify the type locality of the species, which will be necessary to ascertain in the future, although Brazil is assumed

to be the locality. The taxon is known from the Aragua, Carabo, Miranda, Vargas and Yaracuy States, and Capital District (Roze, 1966; Peters & Orejas-Miranda, 1970; Manzanilla *et al.*, 1996; Kornacker, 1999; Rivas, 2002). Until the present time, its known distribution was restricted exclusively to the premontane forest, between 10–500 m asl, in the Coastal Range and Serranía of San Luis, respectively. The species was reported for first time in the Venezuelan Andes, specifically in the region of Escuque, Trujillo State, by Esqueda *et al.* (2007:92). Seven

additional specimens previously catalogued confirm its presence in the Mérida, Lara and Trujillo states, as follows: EBRG 4383, coming from El Guape, Crespo municipality, Lara State, 10°17'N, 69°08'W, approx., 715 m; CVULA 3150, La Azulita, 2000 m, Andrés Bello municipality, Mérida State; CVULA 2426, 9 Km SW Quebrada Azul (road La Azulita), 1000 m asl; CVULA 3661, La Azulita, Cuchilla de San Rafael, 1400 m asl; ULABG 2952, La Azulita, 915 m asl; ULABG 6827, Candelitas, road Escuque, Escuque municipality, Trujillo State; ULABG 5694, between Escuque and Las Palmas, 1436 m, Escuque municipality, Trujillo State (Figure 1).

Unlike the Andean populations, where the species occur at higher elevations in environments corresponding to cloud forests and montane semicaducifolious forest, snakes from northern Venezuela occur at lower elevations. This taxon is ecologically sympatric with other false coral snakes that exhibits a mimetic coloration (batesian mimicry), such as *Erythrolamprus bizona* Jan, 1863, *Erythrolamprus pseudocorallus* Roze, 1959, *Oxyrhopus petola* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Lampropeltis triangulum andesiana* Williams, 1978 (Roze, 1966, 1996; Barrios & Navarrete, 1999; Esqueda & La Marca 1999; Mijares-Urrutia & Arends, 2000; Navarrete & Rodríguez, 2003; Campbell & Lamar, 2004; La Marca & Soriano, 2004; Lotzkat, 2006). Nonetheless, *Oxyrhopus doliatus* is easily distinguished from its congeners by having a color pattern with bands clearly arranged in two designs (Figure 2). The anterior third of the body has black bands wider than white bands, similar to the pattern exhibited by *Micrurus mipartitus* (Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854). The remaining portion of the body has red bands wider than black bands, these limited to both sides by narrow white bands,

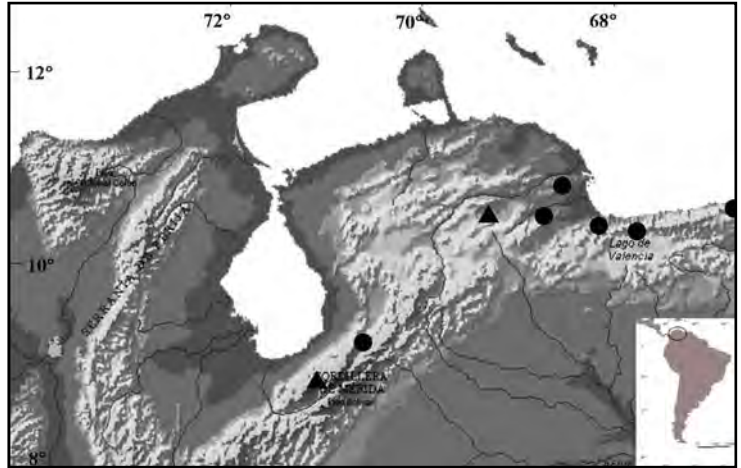


Figure 1. Distribution ranges of *Oxyrhopus doliatus* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854. Black circles are literature records (Roze 1966, Rivas 2002, Esqueda et al., 2007) and black triangles are examined museum records (EBRG and CVULA).

similar to that exhibited by *Micrurus dumerilii* (Jan, 1858). Both of these venomous species are sympatric with *O. doliatus* throughout its distributional range.

This is the third species of false coral snake known to occur at elevations above 1800 m asl; only *E. pseudocorallus* and *L. triangulum andesiana* reach similar altitudes (Roze, 1966; La Marca & Soriano, 2004; Navarrete & Rodríguez, 2003). As other authors have already indicated

Figure 2. *Oxyrhopus doliatus* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854, from Lara State, Venezuela (EBRG 3150). © Marco Natera.



(Manzanilla *et al.*, 1996; Mijares-Urrutia & Arends, 2000), the species is uncommon. Actually our Andean environments are being subjected to strong impacts from human activities, principally on forested ecosystems. In consideration of its apparent scarcity, mimetic coloration, and the threats that exist to its habitats, we recommend including this species on the red list of Venezuela as an endangered species.

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