

First record of the colubrid snake *Rhadinaea anachoreta* Smith & Campbell from Honduras

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ABSTRACT — The colubrid snake *Rhadinaea anachoreta* is reported from Honduras for the first time, based on a specimen from the northern foothills of the Sierra de Omoa.

RESUMEN — El colúbrido *Rhadinaea anachoreta* está registrada por la primera vez de Honduras, basado en un espécimen del pie de la montaña norteña de la Sierra de Omoa.

RHADINAEA Cope is a species-rich genus of colubrid snakes that occurs in the coastal plain of the southeastern United States and from mesic areas of Nuevo León and Sinaloa, Mexico, southward through Central America to southwestern Ecuador (Savage, 2002). Seven species of *Rhadinaea* have been reported to occur in Honduras: *R. godmani*, *R. kinkelini*, *R. lachrymans*, *R. montecristi*, *R. tolpanorum* (Wilson & McCranie, 2002), *R. decorata* (McCranie, 2004), and *Rhadinaea* sp. (McCranie & Castañeda, in press). In Honduras, members of this genus are known to inhabit elevations from 180 m (*R. decorata*; McCranie, 2004) to 2530 m (*R. montecristi*; Wilson & Meyer, 1985). *Rhadinaea decorata* is the only lowland-inhabiting representative of the genus in Honduras, with the other six species occurring in upland pine-oak forest or upland rainforest.

On 22nd July 2005, a single specimen of *Rhadinaea anachoreta* (UF 144825) was recovered from a pitfall trap at 130 m elevation in the El Paraiso Valley Ecological Reserve (15°40'36.0"N, 88°06'02.7"W), Departamento de Cortés, Honduras. El Paraiso Valley Ecological Reserve is a privately owned reserve on the northern slope of the Sierra de Omoa, protecting secondary broadleaf forest in the steep sided

valley of a small river, the Río Piedras de Muclé. The pitfall trap was part of a drift fence array placed below a steep slope leading down to a dry streambed. This area was located in a patch of 15–20 year old secondary rainforest containing a moderately dense under-story characterized by an abundance of cacao, banana, and *Heliconia* sp. Unfortunately, the snake died the night it was collected and became desiccated before it was preserved. Subsequent examination of UF 144825 using a stereomicroscope showed it to be in complete agreement with the description of *R. anachoreta* provided by Smith & Campbell (1994). Relevant data for UF 144825 is presented as follows, with ranges from Smith & Campbell (1994) given in parentheses where pertinent: 17 dorsal scales rows, ventrals 145 (139–147), subcaudals 75 (74–80), supralabials 8–8, infralabials 8–8, postocular 1, preocular 1, temporals 1+1, snout-vent length approximately 160 mm (164–182 mm), tail length approximately 70 mm (72–74 mm).

The dorsal colouration and pattern in preservative of UF 144825 are described as follows: dorsal ground colour brown; two brown ventrolateral stripes present on edge of ventrals and lower edge of first dorsal scale row and on lower edge of second dorsal scale row and upper

edge of first dorsal scale row; black stripe present on upper half of third and lower half of fourth dorsal scale rows; thinner black stripe visible on upper edge of sixth and lower edge of seventh dorsal scale rows; black vertebral stripe completely covers vertebral scale row and proximal edges of paravertebral rows; ventral colouration is cream, with some brown flecking present towards posterior portion of body; dorsal surface of head brown with some paler mottling, two irregular pale spots forming partial nuchal band posterior to parietals; supralabials 1–3 mostly brown with cream spot in upper anterior corner; supralabials 4–5 cream on anterior half, brown on posterior half; supralabials 6–7 with brown with pale stripe from lower back corner of orbit to angle of jaw; supralabial 8 brown, blending it to dorsal colouration; mental scale with cream ground colour and two brown spots on outer anterior edges; infralabials and chinshields cream. Smith & Campbell (1994) first described *R. anachoreta* on the basis of three specimens collected between about 500 m and 1180 m elevation in the Sierra de Santa Cruz and the Sierra de Caral in northeastern Guatemala. The Sierra de Caral is a name used for the northern Guatemalan portion of the Cordillera de Merendón, and the type locality is 0.2 km from the border of Depto. Santa Barbara, Honduras. The Sierra de Omoa in northwestern Honduras is also part of the Cordillera de Merendón, and though the locality where UF 144825 originated is on the northern Caribbean slope of the Sierra de Omoa and at a lower elevation than had previously been reported for this species, it is not surprising that *R. anachoreta* occurs in northwestern Honduras. All three specimens reported by Smith & Campbell (1994) were collected in secondary vegetation in rainforest areas, as was UF 144825.

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