THE
HERPETOLOGICAL
JOURNAL
AN ABERRANT SPECIMEN OF DRYMOBIUS RHOMBIFER (COLUMBRIDAE: COLUMBRINAE): A NEW GENERIC RECORD FOR BRAZIL

MARK T. O’SHEA1 AND ANDREW F. STIMSON2

146 Buckingham Road, Pens, Wolverhampton, WV4 5TJ, UK
2Department of Zoology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, UK

* Author for correspondence

(Received 2.7.92)

The neotropical colubrid genus Drymobius contains four species of ‘racer-type’ snakes closely related to the neotropical genera Dendrophidion, Mastigodryas and Drymoluber (Stuart, 1932). Three species, Drymobius margaritferus, D. chloroticus and D. melanotropis are Central American in their distribution (Wilson, 1970: 1975a–d; Villa, Wilson & Johnson, 1988), although D. margaritferus has also been recorded from the Caribbean coast of Colombia (Pérez-Santos & Moreno, 1988). D. rhombifer is primarily a South American species, occurring to the north and west of Amazonia in a Caribbean and Pacific coastal belt extending from French Guiana (Chippaux, 1986) and Venezuela to Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia (Vaeth & Rossman, 1984); on either side of the Andes (Pérez-Santos & Moreno 1991), and into Central America as far as Nicaragua (Villa, 1983).

The first author was conducting a herpetofaunal survey as part of the intensive Anglo-Brazilian, multi-disciplinary, ecological Maracá Rainforest Project (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia; Royal Geographical Society) on the Ilha de Maracá, a forested riverine island on the Rio Uaricoera, 130 km northwest of Boa Vista, Roraima, northern Brazil (O’Shea, 1989). A single specimen of Drymobius was collected on a trail through terra-firme forest near the Cachoeira Fumaça on the northern Furo de Santa Rosa channel of the Rio Uaricoera towards the western end of the 100,000 hectare riverine island. Maracá specimen (field no. MR309): female; 740 mm SVL + 290 mm TL; dorsals (keeled) 19-17-15 rows; ventrals 156; subcaudals 91 (paired); anal plate divided; supralabials 9 (with 4th, 5th and 6th in contact with the orbit, 4th divided by a horizontal suture on both sides); infralabials 10 (with five in contact with first pair of chin shields); preocular 1; postoculars 2; temporals 2+2 (left), 1+2 (right); maxillary teeth 34 (Table 1). Dorsal coloration olive green to brown with pattern confined to scattered black speckling; ventrally off-white with two longitudinal ventrolateral rows of black spots.

Although the ventral and subcaudal scale counts of MR309 (a female) complied with those of typical D. rhombifer (Table 1) the characteristic rhomboid patterning on the dorsum was absent. The head of MR309 also appeared much narrower than that of other specimens of D. rhombifer examined. The only other Drymobius sp. with similar scale counts is D. melanotropis from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ventrals</th>
<th>Subcaudals</th>
<th>Maxillary teeth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>145-169</td>
<td>84-103</td>
<td>30-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149-163</td>
<td>91-108</td>
<td>33-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1. Ventr al and subcaudal scale counts for MR309 compared with those obtained from two specimens of D. melanotropis, seven specimens of D. rhombifer and available literature.
tors and their institutions for the loan of specimens from their collections: Ivan Ineich, Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris; Ronald A. Nussbaum and Greg Schneider, University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. Samantha Elmhurst kindly drew the figure.

REFERENCES


