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Notes on Some Amphibians and Reptiles From Northern Mexico

ROBERT G. WEBB

The species of amphibians and reptiles herein discussed are noteworthy for taxonomic or distributional reasons. One misidentification reported in the literature (*Pituophis deppei* by Fugler and Webb, 1956, and Duellman, 1960) is rectified. All specimens are deposited in the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas (KU), or The Museum, Michigan State University (MSU). Counts of ventrals and subcaudals of snakes exclude the anal plate and cornified tip respectively. The locations of records of occurrence in Coahuila are listed in degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude by Baker (1956:158–59). I wish to acknowledge Mr. John K. Greer for aid in the field and the Sigma Xi-RESA Research Fund for financial assistance in the summer of 1959, and Dr. William E. Duellman for permission to report on specimens under his care.

Eleutherodactylus vocalis Taylor.—In the summer of 1955, a field party from the University of Kansas collected vertebrates in the southern part of the state of Sinaloa at an elevation of approximately 5000 ft., 1 mi. E Santa Lucía. This is a small village and truck stop that is not shown on most maps available; it is on the road from Mazatlán to Durango approximately 18 mi. (airline) NE Concordia, Sinaloa. Nineteen frogs (KU 41530–41, 41558–60, 44556–59) of the species *Eleutherodactylus vocalis* were collected on June 22–24 principally by Mr. Charles M. Fugler and myself. Of these, two were males (22 and 29 mm. in snout-vent length) and the rest were females (23 to 56 mm.); all females 46 mm. or larger were gravid (13 specimens). KU 41539, the largest female, has been prepared into a skeleton. On August 10, 1957, the author returned to the same locality and secured four additional specimens (MSU 2539–42), which included one female (32 mm.) and three males (26 to 29 mm.).

Most frogs were found on large rocks and boulders that bordered the edge of a fast, clear stream, having several small cataracts and pools; the general habitat resembles that in the photograph taken by Zweifel and published by Duellman (1958a:pl. 30, 1). The large number of frogs collected in June in the dry season probably were more or less

concentrated near the stream, whereas, the four small specimens collected in August in the wet season, probably were representative of a more dispersed population (one male found hopping along foot path about 100 yards from stream). The occurrence of this frog in southern Sinaloa represents a slight northwesterly extension of the known geographic range from the nearest locality in Nayarit (Zweifel, 1959:2).

The 23 specimens are characterized by having short legs, the heels not overlapping when adpressed to thighs, and tibiotarsal articulation reaching between eye and tip of snout; toes about one-third webbed (webbing between third and fourth toes extending approximately half the distance between the two metatarsal tubercles of third toe); variable development of tarsal fold, usually a pale, well-defined ridge extending $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ length of tarsus, but fold a distinct free flap (KU 41536) or barely indicated (right foot, KU 41540); ventral disk ill-defined, attached posteriorly at insertions of hind limbs; dorsum mostly smooth, only slightly pustulate, dark grayish-purple or brownish, having some reddish and buffy areas in life and no definite pattern except on some small males; pale interorbital area bounded posteriorly by dark transverse bar; barring on lips and thighs distinct or obscure or absent; well-developed supratympanic fold; posterior surface of thighs usually having reticulated pattern; yellowish tubercles on posteroventral surface of thighs on some females; venter whitish usually having dark peppering on throat, often on chest.

Two of the five males (MSU 2541-42) are different in having a distinct middorsal pale (yellowish in life) stripe. None of the males (largest, 29 mm.) has vocal sacs or slits. The sexes were distinguished by the size of the tympanum, which is larger in males than in females; the ratio of diameter of tympanum to head width averages 0.342 (0.29-0.41) in five males, and 0.170 (0.14-0.21) in 18 females.

The specimens agree essentially with the description of *E. vocalis* as given by Taylor (1940:401). But, the length and development of the tarsal fold, and the absence of vocal structures tend to ally the specimens with *E. avocalis* as diagnosed by Taylor and Smith (1945:580). The absence of vocal structures, however, may be due to ontogenetic variation (Zweifel, *loc. cit.*), or individual variation indicating evolutionary degeneration (Inger, 1958:323). The assignment of these specimens to *vocalis* must be regarded as tentative. Because the series combines characteristics of *avocalis* and *vocalis*, conspecificity of those two species is suggested. Duellman (1958:8) has indicated probable conspecificity of the three species *rugulosus*, *vocalis* and *avocalis*.

Gastrophryne olivacea (Hallowell).—To my knowledge the only

record of this species in Durango is the series of specimens reported by Taylor (1940a:529) from 5 mi. N Conejos in northeastern Durango. Individuals collected on August 6 to 8, 1959, from 4 mi. W Mapimí and 1.5 mi. NW Nazas extend the range southward near the central part of Durango.

The Mapimí specimen (MSU 2533) was trapped in a small cement irrigation tank that was partly filled with water; other amphibians trapped in the tank were *Scaphiopus hammondi*, *Scaphiopus couchi*, *Bufo cognatus* and *Bufo debilis*. The Nazas specimens (MSU 2534–38) were collected along the floodplain of the Río Nazas; the frogs were either calling at night at the edge of a quiet-water lagoon in shallow water (about two inches deep), having emergent grass, or were found in a ground cover of moist leaves and twigs in daytime.

The dorsal surfaces are pale gray or brown having small, dark, brown-black markings, sometimes on the back but concentrated mostly in the sacral region. The venter is whitish except for the darkened throat of the males, and an obscure pale brown mottling on the chest, throat and sides of body of some specimens. The snout-vent length of the largest female is 29 mm., and of the largest male, 28 mm.

Cnemidophorus tigris variolosus Cope.—The name *variolosus* has been recently revived for a population of *C. tigris* in southern Coahuila, having a reticulated dorsal pattern and a black chest and throat (Zweifel, 1958); in Durango, this subspecies was reported from two localities west of Torreón. Two specimens (MSU 2546–47) from 4 mi. N Campana (about 4 mi. W, 4 mi. N Tlahualilo), and four (MSU 831, 886, 888–89) from 3 mi. E Conejos are referable to *variolosus* as described by Zweifel. South of the above localities, a juvenile (MSU 2548), 35 mm. in snout-vent length, was obtained in a sand-dune area, 2 mi. N Horizonte, and shows a dorsal pattern resembling the adults, but the **venter is pale blue-white**; presumably juveniles of *variolosus* lack the black ventral coloration of adults. *C. t. variolosus* intergrades with *C. t. marmoratus* in northeastern Durango as evidenced by four lizards (MSU 827–30) from 6 mi E Zavalza¹. The chin and throat are evenly and coarsely marbled with black and white, suggesting intermediacy between *variolosus* and *marmoratus*, whereas the chest and anterior part of the belly are mostly black as in *variolosus*. All have vertical bars on the sides of the body as in *marmoratus*. The dorsal patterns are variable, but none shows the fine reticulum of *variolosus*; MSU 829 shows some

¹ Since these notes were written, Williams, Smith and Chrapliwy (Trans. Illinois St. Acad. Sci., 53(1–2):43, 1960) described *Cnemidophorus tigris pulcher*; the characters of *pulcher* seem to correspond to those of the four specimens herein designated as intergrades between *C. t. marmoratus* and *C. t. variolosus*.

semblance of longitudinal stripes and does not seem to differ markedly from the dorsal surface of *marmoratus* as figured by Zweifel (*op. cit.*:99, fig. 2A); MSU 827 is essentially pale brown with black spots, whereas MSU 830 has a coarse reticulum.

Coluber constrictor stejnegerianus (Cope).—The known geographic range of this subspecies is principally along the Gulf Coast extending southward from southern Texas into México. Zweifel (1954:146) recorded this snake from northwestern Coahuila, the most inland and westerly known locality. Two specimens are from another inland locality in central Coahuila, and provide additional information on variation. KU 47111, captured by Mr. Wendell L. Minckley on September 7 or 8, 1958, 16 km. S Cuatro Ciénegas, and KU 53733, captured by myself on July 30, 1959, 10 mi. S Cuatro Ciénegas, although having labels bearing slightly different sites of collection, are from one and the same locality. The general region is characterized by dry, mesquite plains, but there are several, large, clear-water ponds, and many scattered, small, marshy areas that are recognized from a distance by growths of cattails and sedges. The two snakes were taken near one of the large ponds; KU 53733 was obtained as it darted across my path and then stopped in the low shrubbery bordering the pond.

KU 47111, seemingly a female, has a body approximately 610 mm. long, and an incomplete tail 170 mm.; head scales are normal except that the temporals, usually 2-2-2, are variable because of supernumerary scales; the scale formula is $17 \frac{-4 \text{ (92)}}{-4 \text{ (86)}} 15 \text{ (172)}$; the caudals number 65 (tail incomplete). KU 53733 is a male having a body that is approximately 600 mm. long and a tail 200 mm.; head scales are normal except for three postoculars on one side; the scale formula is $17 \frac{-4 \text{ (100)}}{-4 \text{ (95)}} 15 \text{ (167)}$; the eighth ventral is transversely divided on one side; the caudals number 84. Both snakes have eight supralabials and a small, transverse, incomplete suture that extends medially from the lateral margin of each parietal.

The two specimens are not greenish dorsally, but a pale, uniform olive or gray-green to bluish, having no evidence of the juvenile pattern. The venter is yellowish having small pale bluish blotches anteriorly (especially 47111). A gray-brown, middorsal stripe incorporates three scale rows and one-half of the adjacent rows. Notes on coloration of KU 53733 taken from life are: dorsal ground color blue-gray; head and middorsal stripe brownish; belly pale yellow; underside of head whitish;

ventrolateral part of neck (edges of ventrals and suffusion onto first rows of dorsals) butterscotch yellow to gold. On the living individual, I questionably recorded the presence of two, longitudinal, dark, lateral stripes (third and fourth scale rows) that were certainly obscure and seemed evident only when the snake was held in a certain position and observed under proper conditions of light.

Masticophis lineatus (Bocourt).—On July 2, 1953, Mr. J. Keever Greer obtained a male of this species 2 mi. SE Hechicero, Chihuahua. The specimen (KU 38341) measures approximately 1420 ($1000 + 420$) mm. in total length, and has smooth dorsal scales in 17–13 rows, 187 ventrals, 116 subcaudals (extreme tip of tail lacking), eight supralabials, ten infralabials, two preoculars (lower smallest), two postoculars, 2-2-3 temporals, and two labials contacting the orbit. The head is brown having dusky mottling on the posterior supralabials; the underside of the head is immaculate. Dorsal scales are brownish (blue-gray after sloughing in preservative), having semblance of dark streaks in some places to form narrow stripes. Most dorsal scales have the anterior and posterior apices blackened, and sometimes the anterior halves of scales are narrowly bordered in black. The ventral surface is yellowish-cream (pink in some places) and lacks markings, except for the extension of the dark dorsal coloration as a fine stippling and mottling onto the lateral ends of the ventrals and subcaudals.

Hitherto, *M. lineatus* has been considered to range southward from southern Sonora on the Pacific coast. The presence of KU 38341 in extreme eastern Chihuahua is somewhat unexpected, but there is no hesitancy in referring the snake to the species *lineatus*. The record of this species tends to confirm its specific distinctness (from *flagellum*), and to bridge the geographic gap with the closely related *Masticophis mentovarius* on the east coast, which I think is conspecific with *lineatus* (see discussion by Zweifel, 1960:108–109).

Elaphe subocularis (Brown).—Dowling (1957:10) has summarized the extent of our knowledge concerning this snake. On August 7, 1959, while driving southwesterly on Mex. Hwy. 40 from Lerdo toward Pedriceña in Durango, Mr. J. Keever Greer observed two vultures feeding on a large snake carcass, about 50 yards off the highway. Parts of the body were stripped to the vertebral column, but the snake was clearly referable to *Elaphe subocularis*, thus providing the first record of occurrence for this species in Durango. The exact locality of the snake is recorded as 2 mi. NE Leon Guzman; this small village on Mex. Hwy. 40 is not shown on most maps available, and is four miles north of the

intersection of the Río Nazas and the paved highway; the site of collection is approximately 6 mi. SW Lerdo.

The female (MSU 2543), having the distinctive alternation of a striped pattern anteriorly and a blotched one posteriorly, has a body length of approximately 1145 mm. and an incomplete tail of 175 mm. (the tail now measures approximately 55 mm., a loosely attached segment having been lost). The condition of the specimen precludes counts of ventrals, subcaudals, body and tail blotches. The dorsal scale rows number 33-36-24 and are weakly keeled posteriorly; the first seven rows are smooth. The temporals are variable in number; the postoculars are 2, supralabials 12, and the lorilabials 5, 3 of which (suboculars) enter the orbit.

Elaphe obsoleta bairdi (Yarrow).—On May 8, 1954, Mr. Robert W. Dickerman obtained a snake 16 mi. E, 18 mi. N Ocampo, Coahuila, in an oak-chaparral association. The snake is slightly bruised on the head, is brittle and seemingly discolored from long or strong preservation in formalin, and is now broken into three pieces. This specimen, KU 39564, was referred to *Pituophis d. deppei* by Fugler and Webb (1956:171) and Duellman (1960:605); the most unusual feature was a lack of any pattern. A re-examination of this specimen has impressed me with the general morphological resemblance of the genera *Pituophis* and *Elaphe*. Despite the entire anal plate (entire in *Pituophis*, divided in *Elaphe*), I strongly believe that the snake is referable to *Elaphe obsoleta bairdi*.

The snake has a body approximately 1060 mm. in length and an incomplete tail 260 mm. There are 243 ventrals; 81 + subcaudals (88 presumably is the total number, Duellman, *loc. cit.*); 25-27-19 dorsal scale rows, indistinctly keeled anteriorly; 1 preocular; 2 postoculars on the left side; 2 prefrontals; and, 8 supralabials, of which the fourth and fifth enter the orbit. The top of the head is buff or gold-brown having obscure blackish marks; the ventral surface is whitish having very obscure blotching most evident anteriorly. None of those features distinguishes *Pituophis deppei* and *E. o. bairdi*. Characters that ally the specimen to *E. o. bairdi* and differentiate it from *Pituophis* are: 1) the lack of a dorsal pattern; the scales are dark purplish-gray, having narrow, buffy, posterior edges, and the dark dorsal coloration extends onto the lateral ends of the ventrals, 2) the whitish labials lacking blackish sutures, 3) the rostral just barely visible in dorsal view and wider than it is high, and 4) the high ventral and subcaudal counts.

Another specimen, KU 28092, obtained by Mr. J. R. Alcorn on April 4, 1950, from 3 mi. W Hda. San Miguel, 2200 ft., Coahuila, shows the striped pattern. Seemingly a female, it has a body approxi-

mately 780 mm. long and an incomplete tail 165 mm.; the anal plate is divided. There are 249 ventrals, 78 + caudals, 1 preocular, 2 postoculars, 27-29-21 dorsal scale rows, keeled posteriorly, and 9 supralabials (5 and 6 enter orbit). Darker marks occur on the head, the dark dorsal coloration extends onto the lateral ends of the ventrals, and the pale venter shows irregular blotching with most contrast anteriorly. To my knowledge KU 28092 and 39564 represent the second and third records of occurrence for *E. obsoleta bairdi* in Coahuila (Smith, 1938: 150).

Elaphe triaspis intermedia (Boettger).—Dowling (1960) has summarized the extent of our knowledge concerning this species. KU 35094 provides the northernmost record of occurrence for the species in eastern México, and was obtained by Mr. Gerhard H. Heinrich on August 5, 1953, in the Sierra Madre Oriental, 7900 ft., 5 mi. S, 3 mi. W Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas, México.

The specimen, seems to be a female, and has a body approximately 940 mm. and a tail 220 mm. Proportionately, there is a large eye, long snout, and narrow neck. Characters of scalation are 267 ventrals, 87 caudals, 1 large preocular, 3 postoculars, only one supralabial entering orbit because lowermost postocular extends about halfway under orbit, 8-9 supralabials (4 and 5 enter orbit, respectively), 29-35-27-23 dorsal scale rows that are only very weakly keeled posteriorly (first nine rows smooth). There are no markings on the head and no pattern on the body, the uniform slate-blue, dorsal ground color extending onto the ends of the ventrals. The dorsal scales have very narrow, buffy, posterior edges, and, posteriorly on the body, have black-margined anterior edges. The lower halves of most supralabials and the ventral surface (especially anteriorly) are whitish. Posteriorly there is a gradual increase in dark stippling that coalesces to form obscure-margined blotches on each subcaudal (confined mostly to posterior edge); narrow longitudinal lines at juncture of dorsal ground color and stippled area on lateral parts of ventrals are devoid of pigment and whitish.

Procinura aemula (Cope).—In the warm afternoon of January 23, 1959, I captured a male of this species (KU 47568) under a rock on a dry hillside, having scattered rocks and dry brush. Although the locality in southern Sonora, Arroyo Cuchujáqui (Río Alamos) about 8-9 mi. SE Alamos, is of little distributional interest, the specimen seems to be the sixth on record (Zweifel and Norris, 1955:244).

The snake measures approximately 277 (231 + 46) mm. in total length and has 15 scale rows throughout the length of body, 146 ventrals, a divided anal plate, 41 subcaudals, 7 supralabials and infralabials, a

single loreal, 1 preocular, 2 postoculars, and 1–2 temporals. Dorsal scales are smooth anteriorly but become keeled posteriorly, developing the characteristic strongly keeled condition or raised spines on each dorsal scale of the tail. KU 47568 does not have a consistent arrangement of the ringed pattern on the body. Most of the red scales have black marks. The red areas are larger than the black ones, usually alternating with them and each red and black area is flanked by narrow whitish areas; sometimes two black areas follow one another (separated by narrow white areas) without the interposition of a red one, and sometimes red and black areas are juxtaposed without the interposition of a narrow white one. The ventral surface is whitish; posteriorly the dorsal black areas extend onto the ventrals and form rings, especially on the tail. The red, extending laterally onto the first row of dorsal scales on the body, tints the ventral surface of the tail.

Gyalopion canum Cope.—A female (MSU 2544) is the second specimen of this little-known species to be recorded from México¹ and the first from Durango. It was found on August 10, 1959, about 2:30 A.M. in a light rain, DOR (seemingly recently killed), 4 mi. W Mapimí. While handling the snake, an intact cheliped and other exoskeletal remains of a scorpion were voided.

The specimen has a body 210 mm. in length and a tail 33 mm. There are 45 brown, black-edged, body blotches (including nuchal blotch) and 12 tail blotches, 32 subcaudals, 142 ventrals, 17 smooth dorsal scale rows throughout length of body, 1 preocular, 2 postoculars, 1–2 temporals, no loreal, 7 supralabials, and 7–8 infralabials. The rostral is separated from the frontal, and the anterior part of the nasal is fused with the first supralabial. The specimen agrees with the description and illustrations given in Smith and Taylor (1941); one noteworthy feature is the large number of body blotches (45), which corresponds to the number (46) in the other Mexican specimen from Nuevo León (Smith, 1944:140).

Tantilla nigriceps nigriceps Kennicott.—On August 12, 1959, a male of this species (MSU 2545) was found under a rock, 2 mi. S El Palmito (about 1.5 mi. below Presa El Palmito on the Río Nazas), 4850 ft., thus providing the first record of occurrence for the species in Durango. The specimen was taken on a hillside covered with small rocks and having a vegetational cover of grasses and flowering herbs, including ocotillo, *Opuntia*, and huazache.

The snake has a body 104 mm. in length and a tail 34 mm. There

¹ The species is reported from Chihuahua by Tanner (Herpetologica, 16:70, 1960).

are 144 ventrals, 66 caudals, 7 supralabials, 1 preocular, 2 postoculars, and 1-1 elongate temporals. The prefrontals contact the labials, the primary temporals contact the postoculars, and the mental is separated from the anterior pair of chin shields. The midventral region of the body was orange-red in life. The black head cap is obtusely convex posteriorly, extending a maximum of three scale-lengths behind the parietals, and does not extend to the labial borders except on the posterior margins of the seventh supralabials; the upper halves of the supralabials are blackish. Just behind the black head cap is a very narrow, paler area; it is indistinctly bordered posteriorly although there are flecks of pigment that are darker than the color of the back. In my field notes I recorded an "indistinct pale rim behind black cap about $\frac{1}{2}$ scale wide and buff color".

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Richard G. Zweifel

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Contribution to the Herpetology of Sonora, Mexico: Descriptions of New Subspecies of Snakes (*Micruroides euryxanthus* and *Lampropeltis getulus*) and Miscellaneous Collecting Notes

Richard G. Zweifel; Kenneth S. Norris

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