

# NOTES ON FOUR SMALL HERPETOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FROM MEXICO. I. INTRODUCTION, TURTLES AND SNAKES

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**ABSTRACT.** This is the first of 3 reports on 4 herpetological collections made in México in 1951, 1954, 1957 and 1958 and concerns only 3 taxa of turtles and 23 taxa of snakes. Seven taxa are added to the known herpetofauna of Nuevo León.

The present paper is the first of three reports on collections I made in 8 states of México November 19-22, 1951, July 6-13, 1954, July 13-22, 1957, and July 26-August 5, 1958. The bulk of the material is from Nuevo León. Aquatic areas visited were dipped for larvae. The method of collecting culverts at night described by Conant (1951) was employed whenever possible. Road patrolling at night yielded most of the snakes and adult amphibians. Most of the material is deposited in the Herpetological Collections of Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana to which the TU catalogue numbers refer and the remainder in the personal collections of the author to which the EAL catalogue numbers refer. Specimens without catalogue numbers were discarded.

## TURTLES

The turtles add nothing to the known distributions. The specimens belong to the following taxa: *Trionyx spinifer emoryi* ((2), Nuevo León), *Kinosternon hirtipes hirtipes* ((3), Guanajuato), *Gopherus polyphemus berlandieri* ((7), Nuevo León and Tamaulipas).

## SNAKES

The snake taxa collected but not commented on further in this paper are *Constrictor constrictor imperator* ((1), San Luis Potosí), *Ficimia olivacea streckeri* (1), Tamaulipas), *Leptodeira septentrionalis septentrionalis* ((1), Nuevo León), *Masticophis taeniatus ruthveni* ((4), Nuevo León and San Luis Potosí), *Pituophis deppei deppei* ((2), San Luis Potosí), *Pituophis deppei jani* ((6), Nuevo León and San Luis Potosí), *Pliocercus elapoides hobartsmithi* ((1), San Luis Potosí), *Thamnophis marcianus marcianus* ((14), Nuevo León), *Thamnophis proximus* ((2), Nuevo León and Tamaulipas) and *Crotalus atrox*

((2), Nuevo León and San Luis Potosí). All measurements below are in millimeters.

**Arizona elegans arenicola** Dixon. This specimen fits the description of *arenicola* except for fewer ventrals and caudals, the fewest recorded for the subspecies. On the other hand the ventrals are more numerous and the caudals fewer than for *elegans*. Apparently this specimen is an intergrade. Dixon (1959) recorded intergrades of *elegans* and *arenicola* farther northwest in the Río Grande Valley of Texas and México. Scale data are as follows: Dorsal scale rows 29–31–21; ventrals 215; caudals 40; body blotches 50; tail spots 17; infralabials 13–13; supralabials 8–9; postoculars 2–2; preoculars 1–1; temporals 2+4–2+4; loreals 1–1; body length 461; tail length 83.

TAMAULIPAS: TU 17485 (ad. ♀ DOR) 20 mi SW Reynosa on Reynosa-Monterrey Highway, July 13, 1957.

**Arizona elegans expolita** Klauber. Williams, Chrapliwy and Smith (1961) described *Arizona elegans australis* and separated it from *expolita* on the basis of tail-LOA ratio and a reduction in the size and position of the dorsal blotches. The present specimens agree well with their description except for the tail-LOA ratio. *A. e. australis* has a tail-LOA ratio of .124–.136. Dixon, Sabbath and Worthington (1962) placed *australis* in the synonymy of *expolita*, opining that the key characters are not sufficiently important to warrant recognition.

TU 17561 was collected at 9:14 PM AOR and TU 17572 was collected at 9:45 PM DOR on the highway. The night was clear but windy. The scale data are as follows, with TU 17561 being first. Scale rows 25–25–17, 29–27–17; ventrals 191, 192; caudals 50, 49; supralabials 8–8 (2); infralabials 11–12, 11–11 (6th largest); preoculars 1–1, 1–2; postoculars 2–2 (2); temporals 2+3–2+3, 2+3–3+4; body blotches 37, 44 (dorsal blotches may vary by two when counted laterally due to the fusion of the posterior blotches); tail spots 15, 13; total length 510, 747; tail length 78, 109; tail-LOA .153, .149. In coloration the larger specimen (TU 17572) would appear to be lighter (faded) where the smaller (TU 17561) is darker. The blotches are 3–3.5 scales long with a bordering of a blackish brown, the centers lighter brown. The interspaces are cream with one to two scales separating the blotches. In the smaller specimen the lateral blotches are more distinct than in the larger. The venters are immaculate.

SAN LUIS POTOSÍ: TU 17561 (ad. ♂) 1 mi N of El Carmen, August 4, 1958. TU 17572 (ad. ♂) 2.5 mi S Matehuala, August 4, 1958.

**Drymarchon corais erebennus** (Cope). This is the first record that I am aware of for this form in the state of Nuevo León. It was to be ex-

pected since the species occurs in the adjoining states of Coahuila, Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 17591 (ju. ♀) 10 mi S Monterrey, July 28, 1958.

**Hypsiglena torquata dunklei** Taylor. The collection of this fifth specimen extends the range northward from Hda. la Clementina near Forlón and C. Victoria, Tamaulipas and westward from San Fernando, Tamaulipas. At the time of collection the weather was clear and sunny, but cold. The animals were under rocks and seemed to be in a stupor except the snakes which were quite agile, attempting to burrow upon exposure.

The present specimen agrees well with the review of *dunklei* as given by Dixon (1962) except that the throat, chin and infralabials are not profusely spotted with black as in the additional three specimens described by Dixon (1962). In this character the present specimen agrees with the type. Scale data are as follows: Snout-vent length 170; tail length 33; dorsal scale rows 21-21-17; ventrals 160; caudals 50; dorsal blotches 52; anal divided; supralabials 8-8 (4th and 5th entering orbit); infralabials 10-10; loreals 1-1; preoculars 2-2 (lower very small); postoculars 2-2; temporals 1+2+3; posterior chin shields separated and the mental and chin shields not in contact. The rostral is projected backward between the internasals about half their length. A light nape band with a large nuchal blotch follows. The postocular stripe is separated from the nuchal blotch by two scale lengths. There is a dark brown spot at the junction of the parietals on the dorsal scales within the light band. One dorsal scale separates the spot from the nuchal blotch. The nuchal blotch is 7-7.5 scales in length and starts laterally on the dorsal edge of the second row of dorsal scales. The postocular stripe and nuchal blotch is dark brown. Some dorsal blotches are separated dorsally. Two series of lateral spots alternate with the dorsal blotches. The dorsal blotches and lateral spots are light brown. The ventrals and caudals are immaculate.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 14944 (ad. ♀) 20 mi N of Monterrey, November 19, 1951.

**Hypsiglena torquata ochrorhyncha** Cope. A single specimen was found under a rock on the side of a shallow ravine. This is the first record of this subspecies from Nuevo León. Scale data are as follows: Snout-vent length 216; tail length 62; dorsal scale rows 21-21-17; ventrals 157; caudals 55; supralabials 8-8; infralabials 10-10; body blotches 46; temporals 1+2+3. There is one dorsal scale between the dorsal spots. Nuchal blotch begins on dorsal scale row three and a medial stripe extends to first scale behind parietals. Postocular stripe is not interrupted and connects to the nuchal blotch. Anterior edge of

blotch is edged in white with nuchal blotch having six to eight scales in length. On the right side the 7th supralabial is divided horizontally.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 16433 (ad. ♂) 3 mi N Galeana, July 11, 1954.

**Lampropeltis mexicana alterna** (Brown). This is the third record of this rare snake from México and a new record for Nuevo León. The previous two records are for the adjoining state of Coahuila. The head of this specimen is badly damaged and several ventrals are missing. Scale data are as follows: dorsal scale rows 23–21–19; ventrals 201?; caudals 65 (because of the condition of the head the scales on one side only were counted); supralabials 7; infralabials 9; preocular 1; postoculars 2; temporals 2+4; apical pits present; black body bands 39 (anterior 27 broken in center by red and posterior 12 not broken); black tail bands 11.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 16483 (ad. ♀) 5 mi SE Galeana, July 11, 1954.

**Masticophis mentovarius mentovarius** (Dumeril, Bibron, Dumeril). A single badly mashed adult was found DOR. This specimen appears to be the first record for western San Luis Potosí.

SAN LUIS POTOSI: TU 17573 (ad. ♀) .5 mi S Iturbide, August 4, 1958.

**Masticophis taeniatus schotti** Baird and Girard. This specimen was collected in the yard of a motel. The young of this subspecies has not been adequately described. A description of this specimen is as follows: Dorsal scale rows 15–15–13; ventrals 190; caudals 147; supralabials 8–8; 4th and 5th supralabials in contact with the eye; infralabials 9–9; preoculars 2–2; postoculars 2–2; temporals 2+2–2+3; body length 400; tail length 128. There are two lateral light lines on each side, the first covering one half of the first dorsal scale row and the edge of the ventrals and terminates at the anus; the second lateral light line covers one half of the third and one half of the fourth dorsal scale rows from the head to approximately two thirds of the body length. In formalin the anterior part of the body is a darkish gray-brown tapering to lighter brown posteriorly, the end of the tail being light brown; ventrals bluish; caudals cream; preoculars and postoculars light blue; the posterior end of the fifth and sixth and the anterior end of the seventh supralabials is a cream colored blotch; dorsal edge of the supralabials are edged in brown except under the eye where the cream blotch is present; dorsal part of the rostral is brown edged with the ventral part immaculate. On the side of the neck are two light bands; the anterior one begins at the posterior edge of the seventh supralabial and touches the parietals; the posterior band is separated by five dorsal scales and is at the angle of the jaw.

This subspecies previously has been recorded in México only from



Coahuila and Nuevo León. Martin (1958) reports a single specimen from La Joya de Salas, Tamaulipas, which he states "is definitely not *ruthveni* and exhibits several of the characters of *schotti*." Mine is the second specimen recorded for Nuevo León. Shannon and Smith (1949) recorded the first specimen for Nuevo León.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 17547 (ju. ♀) 4 mi S Monterrey, July 22, 1957.

**Rhinocheilus lecontei tessellatus** Garman. Three specimens were collected at night DOR. Werler and Darling (1950) and Martin (1958) reported the first two collections of this snake in Tamaulipas. My TU 17492 is the third.

NUEVO LEÓN: TU 16505 (ad. ♂) 1 mi W La Ceja, July 6, 1954. TU 17465 (ad. ♀) 18 mi S Sabinas Hidalgo, July 13, 1957. TAMAULIPAS: TU 17492 (ad. ♀) 27 mi SW Reynosa, July 13, 1957.

**Sonora semiannulata blanchardi** Stickel. A single specimen under a rock with a specimen of *Hypsiglena torquata dunklei* may be the first to be collected in Nuevo León. Stickel (1943) said that a Nuevo León specimen of Boulenger (1894) listed under *episcopa* was incorrectly counted, was an odd *blanchardi*, or was an intergrade between *blanchardi* and *episcopa*. Thompson (1955) collected a single specimen in the state of Coahuila. Previously the taxon was known only from Chihuahua.

Scale data are as follows: Total length 208; tail length 45; tail 21.5% of total length; ventrals 154; caudals 46; dorsal scale rows 15-15-14-14; temporals 1+1-1+2; supralabials 7-7; infralabials 6-7. Supraoculars with slight notch on posterior edge; anterior chin shields in contact with first three infralabials; posterior chin shields in contact with fourth infralabial; a single scale between posterior chin shields; eight rows of small scales between posterior chin shields and first ventral, excluding the scale between the posterior chin shields; anal divided.

The head is dark dorsally and extends to and including the third dorsal scale row and extends laterally to upper edge of supralabials. The dorsum is light brown. The venter is yellowish to brownish.

NUEVO LEON: TU 14945 (ad. ♀) 20 mi N Monterrey, November 19, 1951.

**Thamnophis cyrtopsis cyrtopsis** Kennicott. A single specimen was collected from under a rock at the edge of a creek. Many metamorphosing *Bufo punctatus* may have attracted the snake. Milstead (1953) gives the Mexican range from Sonora and Sinaloa to the eastern edge of the Chihuahuan desert in extreme western Nuevo León. However, he does not cite a specific Nuevo León locality. I believe mine is the first credible record for the state.

Scale data are as follows: Total length 253; tail length 63; ventrals

175; caudals 94; preoculars 1-1; postoculars 3-3; supralabials 8-8; infralabials 10-10; dorsal scale rows 19-19-17. Lateral stripes and dorsal stripe present. The spots between the lateral stripes and the dorsal stripe are two scales wide and fused in a checkerboard fashion except behind the neck between these stripes, where the first three spots are solitary.

NUEVO LEON: TU 17512 (ju. ♀) 3 mi SW Galeana, San Marcos Creek at Highway, July 16, 1957.

**Crotalus molossus molossus** Baird and Girard. Both Gloyd (1940) and Klauber (1952) record this subspecies from Nuevo León but remark that in Nuevo León it intergrades with *nigrescens*. Their two specimens were from the Galeana area. Unfortunately my specimen from 24 miles W of Linares is lost so an accurate determination cannot be made at this time but at the time of collection it appeared to be typical *molossus*. These two specimens would appear to be the third and fourth records for Nuevo León.

Scale data for the single specimen are as follows: ventrals 185; caudals 28; dorsal scale rows 30-27-21; dorsal blotches 30; tail bands 8.

NUEVO LEON: TU 17548 (ad. ♂) 2.5 mi E and 2 mi N of Pablillo in Arroyo de las Lleguas, July 18, 1957.

**Crotalus scutulatus scutulatus** (Kennicott). This subspecies has been recorded for southern Coahuila and San Luis Potosí, but Klauber (1952, 1956) states that it probably occurs in southern Nuevo León. My collections are the first from this state, including TU 17505 collected AOR and TU 17549 collected under bushes.

COAHUILA: TU 17566 (ad. ♂) .5 mi N Puerta Flores, August 5, 1948. NUEVO LEÓN: TU 17505 (ju. ♀) 10 mi SW Galeana, July 15, 1957. TU 17549 (ad. ♂) La Ascension, July 17, 1957. SAN LUIS POTOSÍ: TU 17568 (ad. ♂) 5 mi N El Refugio, August 4, 1958.

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