

LAMPROPELTIS RUTHVENI (SERPENTES: COLUBRIDAE) FROM THE STATE OF HIDALGO, MEXICO

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ABSTRACT—*Lampropeltis ruthveni* is recorded for the first time from four localities in the Mexican state of Hidalgo. This expands the known range northeastward by 84.6 km (by air) from the nearest locality in the state of Querétaro.

RESUMEN—Se registra por primera vez la especie *Lampropeltis ruthveni* para cuatro localidades en el estado de Hidalgo de México. Esto amplía su distribución 84.6 km (en línea recta) al noreste de la localidad más cercana en el estado de Querétaro.

In Mexico, the genus *Lampropeltis* is comprised of 11 species (Bryson et al., 2005; Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad, 2009) grouped into two complexes, the *triangulum* complex and the *mexicana* complex. The *mexicana* complex includes *L. alterna*, *L. mexicana*, and *L. ruthveni* (Gartska, 1982; Bryson et al., 2007). This complex ranges from southeastern New Mexico and western Texas southward to the Sierra Madre Oriental and Mexican Plateau in the state of Michoacán; the species inhabits a wide range of habitats including desert prairie, xeric scrub, and deciduous forests (Blanchard, 1921; Bryson et al., 2007).

Within the *L. mexicana* complex, there are two species endemic to Mexico. One of these, *L. ruthveni*, was described by Blanchard (1920) from a specimen collected in Michoacán. The documented range of this species includes the states of Michoacán, Jalisco, and Querétaro. However, it is believed that the distribution of this species includes the entire Mexican Plateau (Gartska, 1982; Mara, 1995) despite the lack of published records from other states. This species has been listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Red List of Threatened Species as near threatened, partly because its range probably is <20,000 km² (Ponce-Campos and Flores-Villela, 2007; www.iucnredlist.org). In addition, *L. ruthveni* is listed on the Mexican red list as threatened (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, 2010).

During a year of fieldwork in the municipality of Nopala de Villagrán, Hidalgo, we collected two specimens and observed one *L. ruthveni* in xeric scrub. These specimens represent the first records of this species from the state of Hidalgo and have been deposited in the collection of the Museo de Zoología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (MZFC). The first specimen, an adult male (MZFC 23645; snout-vent length, 510 mm; total length, 630 mm), was collected on 26 August 2008 from El Sendo (20.275°N, 99.706944°W, 2,245 m elevation). The second specimen, an adult female (MZFC-ID-5), was observed on 16 September 2008 near Francisco I. Madero Dam (20.3002778°N, 99.721944°W, 2,179 m elevation). The third specimen, an adult female (MZFC 23646; snout-vent length, 530 mm; total length, 610 mm), was donated to us by inhabitants of El Pedregoso (20.2721389°N, 99.6472778°W, 2,450 m elevation). The record from El Pedregoso represents the farthest locality in our study from Amealco, Querétaro, and extends the geographical range 53 km (by air) northeastward from this locality (Bryson et al., 2007).

While reviewing the literature, we identified another record of *L. ruthveni* from Hidalgo. The specimen, a female (uncatalogued and in care of R. García-Collazo Facultad de Estudios Superiores Iztacala, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; snout-vent length, 370 mm; total length, 500 mm) from Rancho El Durazno

(19.9018611°N, 99.3763056°W) in the municipality of Tepeji del Río de Ocampo, Hidalgo, had been reported as *L. mexicana* (Gómez-Mendoza, 2007). However, examination of the specimen revealed that it actually is *L. ruthveni*; thus, extending the known range by 84.6 km (by air) northeastward from Amealco, Querétaro (Bryson et al., 2007). All specimens conform to the description of *L. ruthveni* (Blanchard, 1920), differing from *L. mexicana* in that the snout of *L. ruthveni* is uniformly black to the middle of the parietals or beyond, and with or without a red infusion (Gartska, 1982).

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