



## A new species of the natricine snake genus *Amphiesma* from the Indochinese Region (Squamata: Colubridae: Natricinae)

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### Abstract

A new species of the natricine snake genus *Amphiesma* is described from Central Vietnam and possibly Thailand. *Amphiesma leucomystax* **spec. nov.** is distinguished from other species of the Indochinese Region by the combination of a bright, broad white stripe extending below the eye from the tip of the snout to posterior supralabials and the neck, dorso-lateral series of aligned, transversally elongated or divided spots, 19 dorsal scale rows at midbody, two first rows of dorsal scale rows smooth, moderately sized eyes, a high number of ventral scales (at least 154), and 1 anterior temporal. Its relationships with other *Amphiesma* species with 19 dorsal scale rows are discussed. *Amphiesma leucomystax* **spec. nov.** seems to be close to *A. boulengeri*. A key to the species of *Amphiesma* from the Indochinese Region is provided.

**Key words:** Vietnam, Indochinese Region, Serpentes, Natricinae, *Amphiesma*, *Amphiesma leucomystax* **spec. nov.**, morphology, taxonomy, natural history

### Introduction

As part of a recent description of a new species (*Amphiesma andreae*) of the natricine genus *Amphiesma* Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854, Ziegler & Le (2006) summarized the composition and the taxonomic controversies of this genus in Vietnam. Currently, ten species of *Amphiesma* (natricine species with lateral or dorso-lateral nostrils, subequal small teeth followed by two moderately enlarged posterior teeth and large eyes with a round pupil) are known from the country: *Amphiesma andreae* Ziegler & Le, 2006; *Amphiesma atemporale* (Bourret, 1934), *Amphiesma bitaeniatum* (Wall, 1925), *Amphiesma boulengeri* (Gressitt, 1937), *Amphiesma craspedogaster* (Boulenger, 1899), *Amphiesma deschauenseei* (Taylor, 1934; a valid species, distinct from *Amphiesma modestum* Günther, 1875 according to Taylor [1965]), *Amphiesma optatum* (Hu & Zhao, 1966), *Amphiesma popei* (Schmidt, 1925), *Amphiesma sauteri* (Boulenger, 1909), and *Amphiesma stollatum* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Nguyen *et al.*, 2005; Ziegler & Le, 2006; David *et al.*, in prep.). Furthermore,