



Rediscovery and redescription of the Andean earth-snake *Atractus wagleri* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae)

PAULO PASSOS^{1,3} & JUAN C. ARREDONDO²

¹Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Museu Nacional, Departamento de Vertebrados, Quinta da Boa Vista, 20940-040, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. E-mail: ppassos@mn.ufrj.br

²Museo de Herpetología Universidad de Antioquia, Instituto de Biología, Universidad de Antioquia, Apartado 1226, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Abstract

Atractus wagleri was described based on a single specimen from Humbo, Department of Boyacá on the western Cordillera Oriental of Colombia, and since its original description there is no further record for the species. In the course of examination of Colombian collections the holotype of the *Atractus wagleri* could not be found and it is probable that it was lost, but we found three additional specimens of this poorly known snake from localities relatively close to the type locality. In this paper, we describe these specimens, and report data on meristics, morphometrics, and hemipenial variation for the species.

Key words: *Atractus wagleri*, Colombia, Cordillera Oriental, hemipenis, taxonomy

Introduction

The fossorial colubrid snake genus *Atractus* Wagler is distributed widely in the Neotropical region, occurring from Panama to Argentina (Giraudo & Scrocchi, 2000; Myers, 2003). *Atractus* is the most diverse Alethinophidian snake genus, with nearly 120 valid species, most of them known only from their type localities (Passos, 2008). The taxonomic status of several species remains unclear and there are many misidentified specimens in many herpetological collections (Passos et al., 2005; Passos et al., 2007a, b; Passos & Fernandes, 2008). The trans-Andean *Atractus wagleri* was described by Prado (1945) based on a single specimen from Humbo in Boyacá Department of Colombia, and since its original description, there are no further records for the species. While examining Colombian collections, we found three specimens of *A. wagleri* from localities close to the type locality that we report herein.

Our aim in this study is to provide a new description of *Atractus wagleri* on the basis of new specimens found in the field and already present in herpetological collections, reporting data on meristics, morphometrics, and hemipenis variation for the species. In addition, we provide a new diagnosis, and comparisons between *A. wagleri* and congeners occurring parapatrically in the Cordilleras Central (*A. sanguineus*) and Oriental (*A. crassicaudatus*).

Material and methods

We examined *Atractus* specimens in the following collections: USA—United States National Museum (USNM), Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Venezuela—Colección de Vertebrados de la Universidad