



A new species of worm salamander (Caudata: Plethodontidae: *Oedipina*) in the subgenus *Oeditriton* from the highlands of northern Nicaragua

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Abstract

We describe a new species of *Oedipina* (subgenus *Oeditriton*) from the highlands of north-central Nicaragua. The new species is most closely related to *Oedipina kasios*, a premontane species from north-central Honduras, and *O. quadra*, a lowland species from northern and eastern Honduras. It differs from *O. kasios* and *O. quadra* in molecular characters and by having a more slender habitus and fewer vomerine teeth. We also discuss the status of the additional populations of *Oedipina* from Nicaragua.

Key words: *Oedipina nica* sp. nov., mtDNA, cyt *b*, 16S, Reserva Natural Cerro Datanlí-El Diablo, Reserva Natural Cerro Kilambé, Reserva Natural Macizos de Peñas Blancas

Resumen

Describimos una nueva especie de *Oedipina* (subgénero *Oeditriton*) de las tierras altas del centro–norte de Nicaragua. La nueva especie está estrechamente relacionada con *Oedipina kasios*, una especie de las zonas premontanas situadas en el centro–norte de Honduras, y con *O. quadra*, una especie de las tierras bajas del norte y este de Honduras. La nueva especie se diferencia de *O. kasios* y *O. quadra* tanto genéticamente como por tener una apariencia más esbelta y un número menor de dientes vomerinos. También discutimos acerca del estatus de las poblaciones adicionales de *Oedipina* de Nicaragua.

Introduction

Worm salamanders (Caudata: Plethodontidae: *Oedipina*) are among the least known Nicaraguan amphibian taxa, probably as a result of their fossorial behavior. Confusingly similar in morphology, few specimens are deposited in museums worldwide and most of them lack fresh tissue samples for molecular analysis. Currently, 28 species of *Oedipina* are recognized, collectively distributed from southeastern Mexico to northwestern South America (AmphibiaWeb 2010). Although Nicaragua is the largest and most centrally located country in Central America, only three species of *Oedipina* have been reported (Brame 1968), i.e., *O. collaris*, *O. cyclocauda*, and *O. pseudouniformis*, species otherwise known to occur in Costa Rica (all three species) and Panama (*O. collaris* and *O. cyclocauda*). Recently, populations of *Oedipina* from Honduras