

A new species of hood-displaying *Thamnodynastes* (Serpentes: Colubridae) from the Atlantic forest in southeast Brazil

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Abstract

A new species of *Thamnodynastes* (Serpentes: Colubridae) from the Atlantic forest in southeast Brazil is described herein. The new species is diagnosed by the following set of characters: slender body; very long tail (about 50% of body length); 19 scale rows in the mid-body; high subcaudal scale count (101–109); and a series of 5–6 black blotches in the fore-body, shown during defensive displays. The new species is known from moderate elevations of the Serra do Mar range and its features indicate that it is one of the most arboreal species within the genus.

Key words: Serpentes, Tachymenini, *Thamnodynastes longicaudus*, new species, Atlantic forest, defensive behaviour

Introduction

The species of the colubrid genus *Thamnodynastes* (Xenodontinae: Tachymenini) are small to medium-sized viviparous snakes, with opisthoglyphous dentition, and elliptic vertical pupils (Bailey 1967; Franco and Ferreira 2003). This South American genus is distributed from about 10°N in Colombia (Perez-Santos and Moreno 1989) to about 37°S in Argentina (Bellagamba and Vega 1996).

Twelve species of this genus are presently regarded as valid: *Thamnodynastes almae*, *T. chaquensis*, *T. chimanta*, *T. corocoroensis*, *T. duida*, *T. gambotensis*, *T. hypoconia*, *T. marahuaquensis*, *T. pallidus*, *T. rutilus*, *T. strigatus*, *T. yavi* (Franco and Ferreira 2003). These authors reevaluate the taxonomic status for these and several additional species