

**Geographical variation and taxonomy of the snail-eating snake
Dipsas albifrons (Sauvage, 1884), with comments on the systematic
status of *Dipsas albifrons cavalleiroi* Hoge, 1950
(Serpentes: Colubridae: Dipsadinae)**

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Abstract

The taxonomic status of *Dipsas albifrons* is revised and geographic variation of external morphology and hemipenis are described. Multivariate analyses suggest that the pattern of geographical variation is correlated with gap sampling, probably indicating a northernward cline in segmental counts (mainly ventral and subcaudal scales). Quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal that the island population (*Dipsas albifrons cavalleiroi*) is not divergent from mainland populations and, herein, is considered a junior synonymy of *Dipsas albifrons*. A lectotype of *Dipsas albifrons* is designated.

Key words: Serpentes, Dipsadinae, *Dipsas albifrons*, intraespecific variation, population status, taxonomy

Introduction

The gastropod-eating dipsadine snakes constitute a monophyletic group characterized by a series of morphological features (Brongesma 1958; Peters 1960; Fernandes 1995). Peters (1960) provided a comprehensive taxonomic revision of these snakes and recognized seven species groups for *Dipsas* Laurenti, 1768, placing *D. albifrons* (Sauvage, 1884) in the *D. variegata* group with *D. variegata* (Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854) and *D. incerta* (Jan, 1863). This group was defined by Peters (1960) to include species with 15