

## Description of a new *Geodipsas* snake from northern Madagascar (Squamata: Colubridae)

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### Abstract

We describe a new species of the colubrid snake genus *Geodipsas* from the rainforests of the Anjanaharibe-Sud and Tsaratanana massifs, northern Madagascar. *Geodipsas fatsibe* n. sp. differs from the other described species of the genus in the following characteristics: 21 rows of dorsal scales at midbody, high number of ventral (198) scales and by the presence of very large hooked spines on the hemipenis. *Geodipsas fatsibe* is most similar to *Geodipsas infralineata*. Most likely they are sister species, with a vicariant northern vs. central southern distribution.

**Key words:** *Geodipsas*; Colubridae; new species; Madagascar

### Introduction

The colubrid snake genus *Geodipsas* Boulenger was before a recent taxonomical change the only genus shared between Africa mainland and Madagascar. Cadle (1996) in his review of the genus *Geodipsas* recognised five Malagasy species: *G. zeny* Cadle, *G. boulengeri* (Peracca), *G. vinckei* Domergue, *G. infralineata* (Günther), and *G. laphystia* Cadle. Moreover, he also quoted a possible sixth (still undescribed) species (*G.* “species inquirenda”) from Montagne d’Ambre (Raxworthy & Nussbaum, 1994). The species from mainland Africa, and formerly ascribed to the genus *Geodipsas*, were moved to the distinct genus *Buhoma* on the basis of the deeply bifurcate *sulcus spermaticus* (Ziegler et al., 1997): *B. depressiceps* (Werner), *B. procterae* (Loveridge) and *B. vauerocegae* (Tornier). Therefore, the species belonging to *Geodipsas* genus are today endemic and restricted to Madagascar.

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