Zootaxa 1849: 59–66 (2008)
www.mapress.com/zootaxa/

ISSN 1175-5326 (print edition)
ZOOTAXA
ISSN 1175-5334 (online edition)

A new species of the colubrid snake genus *Atractus* (Reptilia: Serpentes) from the central Amazon of Brazil

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Abstract

A new species of *Atractus* is described from upper Cururu River in the Amazon Basin of Brazil. The new species differs from all currently recognized *Atractus* by having a dorsal colour pattern reddish brown, with first two dorsal scale rows creamish white, hemipenis slightly bilobed, with alary spines at intrasulcar region, and lateral projections of the lobes depressed in their basal portions. In addition, a discussion concerning putative close relative taxa is provided.

Key words: Brazil, central Amazonia, hemipenis, taxonomy, new species

Introduction

The fossorial colubrid snake genus *Atractus* Wagler is distributed widely in the Neotropical region, occurring from Panama to Argentina (Giraudo & Scrocchi, 2002; Myers, 2003). *Atractus* is the most speciose alethinophidian snake genus, having nearly 120 valid species, many of them known only from type localities (Passos, 2008).

The taxonomic status of several *Atractus* species remains unclear, and there are many misidentified specimens in herpetological collections (Passos et al., 2005, 2007a, b). In the course of a taxonomic revision of the genus (Passos, 2008), we found a specimen that did not match any previously described *Atractus*, and which has an unusual combination of characters for the genus. The aim of this paper is to describe this as a new species, and comment on its affinities with putative closely related species.

Material and methods

Terminology for *Atractus* cephalic shields follows Savage (1960) and ventrals were counted following Dowling (1951). Nomenclature regarding the loreal condition follows Passos et al. (2007b). Terminology for the hemipenis follows Dowling and Savage (1960), as augmented by Myers and Campbell (1981) and Zaher (1999). Hemipenes were examined in the everted condition; when necessary they were everted using the techniques described by Pesantes (1994). Sex was determined by the presence or absence of hemipenes through a ventral incision at the base of the tail. Measurements were taken with an analogue caliper to the nearest 0.1 mm under a binocular microscope, except for snout-vent (SVL) and caudal lengths (CL), which were taken with a flexible ruler to the nearest 1 mm.

Accepted by D. Gower: 18 Jul. 2008; published: 13 Aug. 2008