



A new highland species of *Arthrosaura* Boulenger, 1885 (Squamata: Gymnophthalmidae) from Maringma tepui on the border of Guyana and Brazil

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Abstract

A new species of *Arthrosaura* (Squamata: Gymnophthalmidae) is described based on a female specimen obtained at 2112 m above sea level on Mount Maringma, a poorly known sandstone flat-topped table mountain (tepui) located in the eastern Pakaraima Mountains, at the Guyana-Brazil border. *Arthrosaura hoogmoedi* **sp. nov.** is mainly distinguished from its known congeners by the following combination of characters: four supraoculars, prefrontals in contact with loreals, lower eyelid opaque, 32–33 smooth temporal scales, middorsal scales distinctly narrower than adjacent dorsal scales, and a dark brown dorsum with a black middorsal stripe from nape to tail, and a tan ill-defined dorsolateral line from nape to midbody.

Key words: *Arthrosaura hoogmoedi* **sp. nov.**, Guiana Shield, microteiid, Pantepui, taxonomy, tepuis

Introduction

The phytogeographic province of Pantepui (Mayr & Phelps 1967) forms part of the biologically and geographically distinct unit called the Guiana Shield (GS) [see fig. 5 in Ávila-Pires (2005) for boundaries of the GS]. Pantepui includes all upper slopes and summits of the Guiana Shield highlands. The region, the well-known “Lost World” of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1912), probably still shelters many undiscovered species.

Although some of the characteristic flat-topped table mountains found in the area (the famous tepuis) received more attention and were repeatedly visited by scientists (see McDiarmid & Donnelly 2005; MacCulloch *et al.* 2007), many remain very poorly known and their fauna virtually undocumented. Arranging and conducting scientific expeditions in this mountainous region is very expensive and time-consuming due to the remoteness of the area, which partly explains that few tepuis have been extensively surveyed. A recent expedition to Mount Maringma (*ca.* 5° 13' N, 60° 35' W—Malaima tepui in local Akawaio language), a sandstone tepui located about 17 km (airline) east of Mount Roraima, resulted in the discovery of several new species of amphibians and reptiles (Kok, unpublished data). Mount Maringma (Fig. 1–2A) is one of the highest tepuis in Guyana (*ca.* 2147 m asl according to the GPS unit) and shares part of its southwest slope with Brazil.

Summit vegetation on Mount Maringma (Figs. 2B–4) is typical and similar to that of other tepuis in the area. It consists of a mixture of very dense low vegetation (the “tepui meadow”) with plants of the families Bonnetiaceae (*e.g.* *Bonnetia roraimae*, some of these small trees being much higher than the surrounding vegetation), Bromeliaceae (*e.g.* *Brocchinia tatei*), Clusiaceae (*e.g.* *Clusia* spp.), Orchidaceae, Rapateaceae (*e.g.* *Stegolepis guianensis*), Sarraceniaceae (*e.g.* *Heliampora nutans*), Xyridaceae (*e.g.* *Orectanthe spectrum*), large areas of quaking peat bog, and patches of dwarf forests largely dominated by *Bonnetia roraimae*, which have their branches covered with a slimy mass of algae. Rocky outcrops are small and very limited in number.