



Description of a new species of *Xenopholis* (Serpentes: Colubridae) from the Cerrado of Bolivia, with comments on *Xenopholis scalaris* in Bolivia

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Abstract

We describe a new species of *Xenopholis* from the Chiquitano Region in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia. The new species can be identified as member of the genus *Xenopholis* by its vertebral morphology. The new species differs from the other two species of *Xenopholis* in its unique, uniform dorsal color pattern. It further differs from *X. scalaris* by having two prefrontals and a narrow septum within each neural spine and perpendicular to its long axis. For *X. scalaris* we present new records from Bolivia, including the highest altitudinal record for the species and genus (Serranía Beu in the Pilón Lajas Reserve, Department of La Paz, 1500 m).

Key words: Chiquitano Region; Department of Santa Cruz; Reptilia; San Sebastián; Snakes; Squamata; *Xenopholis werdingorum* **sp. nov.**

Resumen

Describimos una nueva especie de *Xenopholis* desde la región chiquitana en las tierras bajas del este de Bolivia. La nueva especie puede ser identificada como miembro del género *Xenopholis* por tener una singular morfología vertebral. De las otras dos especies de *Xenopholis*, esta difiere por tener un patrón de coloración dorsal uniforme. Además difiere de *X. scalaris* por tener dos prefrontales y un angosto septum en la espina neural y perpendicular a lo largo de su eje. Para *X. scalaris* presentamos nuevos registros para Bolivia, incluyendo la localidad conocida de más altitud para la especie y el género (Serranía Beu en la Reserva Pilón Lajas del Departamento de La Paz a 1500 msnm).

Introduction

The colubrid snakes of the genus *Xenopholis* lead a secretive life and are rarely encountered elements in Neotropical snake communities (Carvalho and Nogueira 1998; Cunha and do Nascimento 1978; Frota *et al.* 2005). As a result, only a few museums have specimens of these snakes in their collections. They are small to medium sized snakes (SVL about 200 to 400 mm), with their head somewhat flattened (English name: Flat-headed Snake), and relatively small eyes. The most distinctive character of *Xenopholis*, however, is their dorsally-expanded vertebrae (Boulenger 1896; Hoge and Federsoni 1975). Cunha *et al.* (1985) presented a key to the species of *Xenopholis* and Lehr (2002) provided a photograph of *X. scalaris*. The photograph in Campbell and Lamar (2004) labeled *X. scalaris* actually illustrates *X. undulatus* (according to Vitt 2004).

The absence of remarkable external morphological characters means that specimens of *Xenopholis* have often been considered as *incertae sedis* or even misidentified (e.g., Carvalho and Nogueira 1998; França and