



A new species of *Dendrophidion* (Serpentes: Colubridae) from the Atlantic Rain Forest of Northeastern Brazil

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Abstract

A new species of *Dendrophidion* belonging to the *D. dendrophis* species group is described from Mata do Engenho Coimbra (08°59'S, 35°53'W; 526 m above sea level), Municipality of Ibataguara, in the Atlantic Rainforest remnants of the State of Alagoas, northeastern Brazil. *Dendrophidion atlantica* **sp. nov.** is characterized by having 154–163 ventral scales, 140–160 subcaudal scales, tail length 62.2–74.8% of snout–vent length, collar absent, head uniformly brown and dorsal ground color brown, paler on anterior third, with cream transversal lines (one half a scale long), bordered anteriorly and posteriorly by dark brown lines (one half a scale long), distributed from the neck to the tail; hemipenis single, subcylindrical, uncapitate, and unicalyculate; calyces large, well defined, papillate; a series of 12 large spines just below the *capitulum*, on the asulcate and lateral sides; a series of four spines, two large laterals and two small between them, in the basal region of the asulcate side of the organ body; two large spines on the lateral distal areas of the sulcate side of the hemipenial body; *sulcus spermaticus* centrolineal, bifurcating at the tip of the *capitulum*.

Key words: Serpentes, Colubridae, *Dendrophidion atlantica* **sp. nov.**, Atlantic Rain Forest, taxonomy

Introduction

The colubrid genus *Dendrophidion* Fitzinger, 1843 consists of a group of eight described species of racer-like snakes distributed from southern Mexico to northern Brazil and Bolivia (Lieb 1988). These eight species were placed into three species groups, including the *dendrophis* and *percarinatum* groups, as well as a single-species *incertae sedis* group (Lieb 1988). Lieb (1988) placed three species [*D. dendrophis* (Schlegel, 1837), *D. nuchale* (Peters, 1863), and *D. vinitor* Smith, 1941] in the *dendrophis* group. This group occurs throughout the region occupied by the entire genus, with *D. vinitor*, the northernmost species occurring from southern Mexico to western Colombia, *D. nuchale* ranging from Belize and central Guatemala to northwestern Ecuador, with disjunct populations in Venezuela, and the southernmost species *D. dendrophis* inhabiting the northern Amazonian region from eastern Ecuador and Peru through northern Brazil to the Guianas (Lieb 1988; Köhler 2008). Lieb (1988) allocated four species [*D. bivittatum* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854), *D. brunneus* (Günther, 1858), *D. paucicarinatum* (Cope, 1894), and *D. percarinatum* (Cope, 1893)] to the *percarinatum* group. Collectively, these species range from northern Honduras to southwestern Ecuador (McCranie *et al.* 2006). Lieb (1988) placed a single species (*D. boshelli* Dunn, 1944) in his *incertae sedis* group, which is distributed in central Colombia.

Lieb (1988) also recognized an “undescribed complex of populations in the southern Amazon Basin and adjacent areas” as related to *D. dendrophis* and *D. nuchale*, indicating that the status of these populations was “the subject of work in progress.” Inasmuch as this work appears to have never been completed, we take this opportunity to describe as a new species one of the members of this complex from the Atlantic Rainforest remnants of northeastern Brazil.