



## Description of the second known specimen of *Apostolepis intermedia* (Serpentes, Colubridae, Xenodontinae)

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### Abstract

*Apostolepis intermedia* is a xenodontine colubrid snake known only from the lost holotype described in 1898 from Miranda, Mato Grosso do Sul. Here, we describe a second specimen collected in 1997 on the margins of Taquaruçu river, Anastácio ca. 66.2 km from Miranda. We present photographs and drawings of the specimen and compare it with the original description of the holotype and 11 other five-lined congeners.

**Key words:** *Apostolepis*, Elapomorphini, Pantanal, Mato Grosso do Sul, Taxonomy

### Introduction

The genus *Apostolepis* is currently recognized as containing 29 valid species of burrowing snakes. The vast majority of species were described on the basis of their color patterns, which sometimes are subject to considerable degrees of intraspecific variation (e.g. *A. dimidiata* Jan) (Lema 1993).

Among the reptiles of Central Brazil, *Apostolepis intermedia* is a small snake with a known snout-vent length of 228 mm and the body patterned in five dark stripes. Koslowsky (1898) described it on the basis of one specimen supposedly collected in Miranda, Mato Grosso do Sul. Koslowsky (1898) did not indicate the locality and museum number of the specimen but simply wrote that “recently our museum acquired a good collection of snakes from Mr. C. Bach, made at Miranda (Matto-Grosso)” (translated from Koslowsky, 1898). According to Lema (1993) and Ferraro & Williams (2006), the holotype was lost or discarded in the early 1990’s.

While examining specimens of *Apostolepis* deposited in the Coleção Zoológica de Referência da Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (ZUFMS), we encountered one specimen collected in Anastácio, Mato Grosso do Sul whose characters allow it to be unambiguously identified as *A. intermedia*. Moreover, we noted that several specimens of *A. dimidiata* were misidentified as *A. intermedia* in that collection. Therefore, given the potential for confusion between *A. intermedia* and other *Apostolepis*, we describe the new specimen and compare it with the holotype description and 11 other five-lined species of *Apostolepis*.

### Material and methods

The specimen examined (ZUFMS-REP 1269) was caught by S. B. Arruda along the margins of Taquaruçu river, Anastácio (20°31’00”S, 55°47’60”W), Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil on 16 December 1997. All measurements were made to the nearest 0.1 mm using digital calipers, except for snout-vent (SVL) and tail length, which were taken with a flexible ruler to the nearest millimeter. Bilateral variation is reported as right/left. Maxillary teeth and empty sockets were counted by removing the soft tissues of both maxillary bones *in situ*. Ventral and preventral scales were counted according to Dowling’s (1951) method. Meristic and morphometric characters of the ZUFMS specimen were compared with those from original description (Koslowsky’s data are in parentheses if different from those presented herein).