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On the identity of *Chironius flavolineatus* (Serpentes: Colubridae)

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Abstract

The snake genus *Chironius* Fitzinger, 1826 is endemic to the Neotropical region, occurring from Honduras to Uruguay and northeastern Argentina. Some species of the genus have taxonomic and/or nomenclatural problems, such as *C. flavolineatus* which lacks agreement in the literature about its authorship and type locality. Some researchers have been suggesting Jan (1863) as the author of the species since he first described *C. flavolineatus* based on two specimens. However, other researchers report that Jan's description is so incomplete that it is not possible to ascertain what snake he had in mind and therefore suggest Boettger (1885) as the author, since he was the first to provide a detailed description of the species. In the present study one of the syntypes of *C. flavolineatus*, supposedly destroyed in Second World War, was found. Thus, the taxonomic identity of *C. flavolineatus* was redefined, its lectotype was designated and the authorship of the taxa is attributed to Jan (1863).

Key words: taxonomy, nomenclature, authorship, Jan, lectotype

Resumo

O gênero *Chironius* Fitzinger, 1826 possui distribuição Neotropical, se estendendo de Honduras ao Uruguai e nordeste da Argentina. Algumas de suas espécies apresentam problemas taxonômicos e/ou nomenclaturais, tais como *C. flavolineatus* que apresenta divergências em relação à autoria e localidade-tipo da mesma. Alguns pesquisadores sugerem que Jan (1863) deve ser considerado autor da espécie por ter sido o primeiro a descrevê-la com base em dois exemplares. Entretanto, alguns autores sugerem que a descrição de Jan não possibilita a associação inequívoca de *C. flavolineatus* a tal descrição e sugerem que a autoria do táxon deve ser dada a Boettger (1885), pois este foi o primeiro autor a fornecer uma descrição detalhada da espécie. No presente estudo um dos síntipos de *C. flavolineatus*, que se acreditava ter sido destruído na segunda guerra mundial, foi encontrado. Desta forma a identidade taxonômica de *C. flavolineatus* foi redefinida, seu lectótipo designado e a autoria do táxon creditada a Jan (1863).

Palavras-chave: taxonomia, nomenclatura, autoria, Jan, lectótipo

Introduction

Fitzinger (1826) revised the type material of Linnaeus (1758) and proposed the genus *Chironius* to allocate some species morphologically distinct from *Coluber* Linnaeus, 1758: *Coluber exoletus*, *C. fuscus*, *C. saturninus* (= *C. fuscus*), and *C. carinatus*, the latter nominated the type species of *Chironius*.

Boie (1826) described *Erpetodryas* to accommodate the same species of Fitzinger (1826), while Wagler (1830) altered the spelling of the name proposed by Boie (1826) to *Herpetodryas*, being followed by several authors (e.g. Jan 1863; Jan & Sordelli 1869; Boettger 1885, 1898; Boulenger 1894). Dixon *et al.* (1993) highlighted that only

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