

TACHYMENIS AFFINIS BOULENGER, 1896 (SQUAMATA: COLUBRIDAE): DISTRIBUTION EXTENSION IN PERU

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Abstract: A new distribution record for the snake *Tachymenis affinis* (Squamata: Colubridae) is reported in this article. The new locality is located at northern Peru, Amazonas region, considerably far to the most northern place known for this species, in the montane forests at central Andes of Peru.

Key Words: Serpentes, record, snake, new locality, Amazonas region, montane forest, central Andes.

Resumen: G. Chávez. “*Tachymenis affinis* Boulenger, 1896 (Squamata: Colubridae): extensión de distribución en Perú” Un nuevo registro para la distribución de la serpiente *Tachymenis affinis* (Squamata:Colubridae) es reportado en este artículo. La nueva localidad esta ubicada al norte de Perú, región Amazonas, considerablemente alejado del lugar mas al norte conocida para esta especie, en los bosques montanos de los andes centrales de Perú.

Palabras Clave: Serpentes, registro, serpiente, nueva localidad, región Amazonas, bosques montanos, Andes centrales.

INTRODUCTION

Tachymenis sensu stricto, was established by Weigmann (1835) based on a Peruvian specimen, named *Tachymenis peruviana*. In addition, Boulenger (1896) completed the job in his catalogue and defined *T. peruviana* distribution range from central Peru, through Bolivia, to southern Chile and *T. affinis*, which was also described in that article, with a distribution range restricted to Central Peru. Several years later, Amaral (1930) followed Boulenger, and recognized *T. affinis* for Central Peru. Ortiz (1973), who was working with Chilean specimens, concluded that probably several polymorphic species were involved under the name *Tachymenis peruviana*, giving clear evidence of the strong variation in this taxon. Certainly, Walker (1945) reviewed a specimen collected at southern Peru (Machu Picchu, Cusco) in an expedition of the United States National Museum under the auspices of Yale University and National Geographic Society, and defined this material as *T. affinis* and not as *T. peruviana*, the name previously recognized for this specimen by Barbour and Noble (1921). In conclusion, *T. affinis* is distributed from type locality (Muña, Huanuco Region) at central Peru to Machu Picchu (Cusco Region, southern Peru). Walker (1945) also proposed the overlapping of the ranges of *T. peruviana* and *T. affinis*; however, their habitat preferences show a clear ecological difference: *T. peruviana* is usually recorded in highlands from 3500 to 5000 meters of elevation, at puna habitats, while *T. affinis* occurs at montane forests (J. Chaparro, pers. com.; G. Chávez, unpublished data) which coincides with the habitats present at Machu Picchu and Muña, respectively.

A field trip to montane forests in Amazonas region, northern Peru, resulted on a new locality for *T. affinis* and, in consequence, a new distribution extension.

THE NEW RECORD

On 23 June 2011 a male specimen of *Tachymenis affinis* (Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad, CORBIDI 10889, Fig. 1) was found in a grassland at the vicinity of Ocol Community, Molinopampa District, Chachapoyas Province, Amazonas region, northern Peru (6°14'23.8"S; 77°35'35.0"W) at an elevation of 2520 m. The specimen agrees with Boulenger (1896), having a dorsal scale account of 17-17-15 and smooth scales on dorsum, and with Walker (1945) having a semidivided nasal scale, 1 preocular, 2 post-oculars and temporal 2-2 (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the color pattern on dorsum is reduced in comparison with *Tachymenis peruviana*, and the background color in life is reddish brown, unlike the dark brown in *T. peruviana*. This record corresponds to the northernmost known locality for this species, and extends its distribution in 449.8 Km airline. Additionally, the new locality is separated 945.7 Km airline from the southernmost known site for *Tachymenis affinis*: the Machu Picchu ruins.

The specimen was found sympatric with the lizard *Stenocercus orientalis* (Fritts, 1972) in a habitat of fragmented montane forest, mainly composed by trees of the Fabaceae family, some bromeliads, lichens, orchids and epiphytes. The rock communities in this area could give shelter to this snake, and the presence of *S. orientalis* could indicate some predatory relationship between each other; however there is no evidence to test this hypothesis.

Finally, this species was considered rare by Walker (1945), but in some localities at central Peru, it is captured frequently (G. Chávez, unpublished data), where the snake is commonly known as “La chacarera” (Spanish name for inhabitants of farms and agricultural zones), and often confused with vipers of the genus *Bothrops* and killed for being considered dangerous.

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FIG. 1. *Tachymenis affinis* (male), CORBIDI 10889, from vicinity of Ocol, Amazonas Region, Peru.
Tachymenis affinis (macho), CORBIDI 10889, de los alrededores de Ocol, Región Amazonas, Perú.

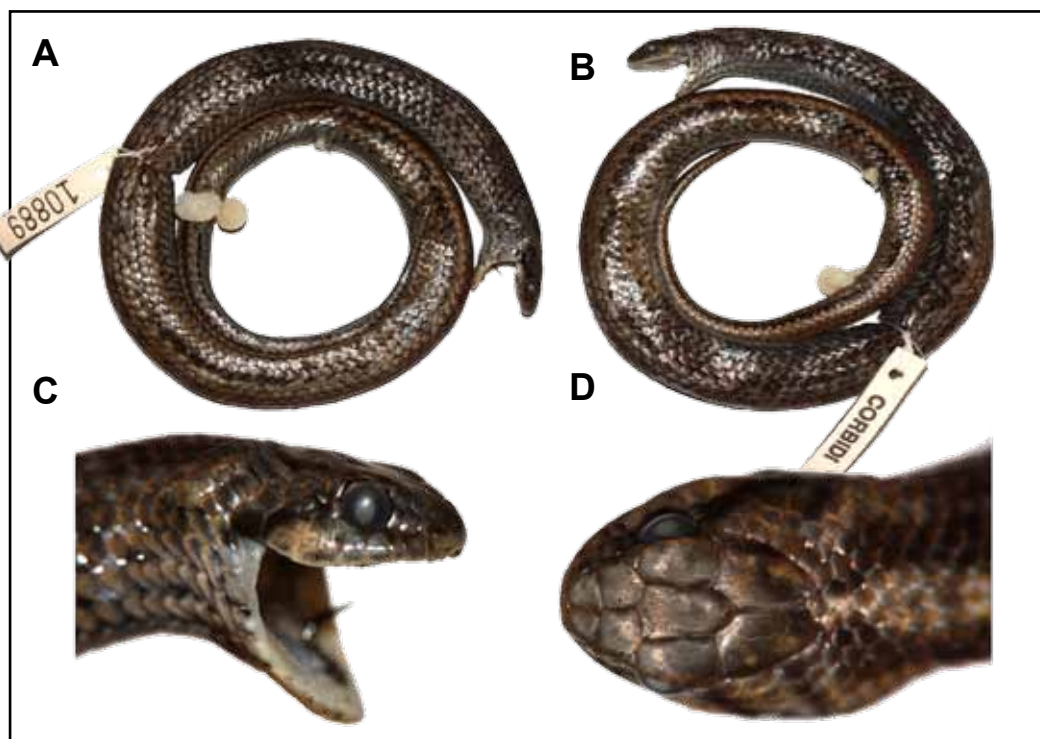


FIG. 2. *Tachymenis affinis* preserved specimen (CORBIDI 10889): A) Dorsal view, B) Ventral view, C) Lateral view of the head, D) Dorsal view of the head.
Tachymenis affinis, espécimen preservado (CORBIDI 10889): A) Vista dorsal, B) Vista ventral, C) Vista lateral de la cabeza, D) Vista dorsal de la cabeza



FIG. 3. Map showing the type locality and the new locality record for *Tachymenis affinis*.
 Mapa que muestra la localidad tipo y la nueva localidad de registro para *Tachymenis affinis*.

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