New record and comments on the distribution of the Mexican colubrid snake *Coniophanes melanocephalus* (Peters, 1869)

The colubrid snake *Coniophanes melanocephalus* is a brightly colored species characterized by the following pattern: a nearly uniform black cape covers the top and sides of the head and anteriormost portion of the body, and extends onto the lateral portion of the anterior ventrals; a dark-edged pale collar extends about four scales in length posterior to the black cape; and a white bar is present across throat just anterior to the first ventral (Smith and Grant, 1958; Fig. 1). This poorly known species is endemic to Mexico, where it has been recorded from only a few localities. Described by Peters (1869) from “Puebla, Mexico” (type-locality restricted to Matamoros, Puebla, by Smith and Taylor, 1950), other definite localities include: 12 miles S of Puente de Ixtla (EHT 5198; Bailey, 1939; see below); Cuernavaca, Morelos (UTA-R 56408; Flores-Villela and Smith, 2009; see below); and Hoyo del Aire, Taretan, Michoacán (UAA-CV 0323; Carbajal-Márquez et al., 2011). The specimen from 12 miles south of Puente de Ixtla originally was designated as a neotype of *C. lateritius*, but later was shown to be *C. melanocephalus* (Smith and Grant, 1958; Wellman, 1959).

The holotype of *C. melanocephalus* (ZMB 6656) apparently is lost (Bauer et al., 1995; Ponce-Campos and Smith, 2001). Thus, the only specimens available to science are the ones from the three localities mentioned above.
Information regarding some of the localities for *C. melanocephalus* is uncertain. The exact locality for specimen UTA-R 56408 is “Calera Chica, Jiutepec, Morelos” (C. Franklin, pers. comm.) and not “Cuernavaca, Morelos,” as stated in Flores-Villela and Smith (2009). Also, some confusion exists about the exact locality of the first specimen reported from Guerrero (EHT 5198). Bailey (1939) mentioned the locality as “12 miles south of Puente de Ixtla,” but did not indicate the state. Taylor (1941) further stated that the locality was “near Huajintlán (km 133), about 12 miles south of Puente de Ixtla, Morelos,” whereas Smith and Taylor (1945) stated that the specimen was from “north-central Guerrero (Huajintlán, south of Puente de Ixtla, Morelos).” Wellman (1959) assumed, however, that the exact locality was “Huajintlán, Morelos,” and Ponce-Campos and Smith (2001) and Ponce-Campos (2007) additionally stated this locality as 12 miles SW of Puente de Ixtla.

In order to confidently infer the geographic origin of specimen EHT 5198, we used Google Earth™ to measure 133 km along Mexican Federal Highway 95 from Mexico City, passing through Huajintlán, Morelos, and heading toward Taxco, Guerrero, and also 12 miles along the same road from Puente de Ixtla, Morelos, passing through Huajintlán, and heading toward Taxco. Both measurements indicated almost the same locality in the state of Guerrero, about 1.5 km (airline) W of the Morelos-Guerrero border and about 4.8 km W of Huajintlán. This information confirms that the exact locality is in Guerrero, as Bailey (1939) and Smith and Taylor (1945) previously stated, although Puente de Ixtla and Huajintlán are in Morelos. Furthermore, the locality is west, not south or southwest, of Puente de Ixtla.

On 11 September 2013, we collected a juvenile female (ISZ 946) ca. 400 m along the turnoff to Tecolapa from the Olinalá-Papalutla road, municipality of Olinalá, Guerrero, Mexico (17.9992222°N, -98.8378333°W, WGS 84; elev. 1,542 m). The specimen was found under a rock on the edge of a dirt road surrounded by remnants of *Quercus* dry forest. The specimen was deposited in the herpetological collection of the Museo de Zoología “Alfonso L. Herrera”, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (MZFC 28840). This record represents the fifth for the species, and the second for the state of Guerrero (see above), extending the known distributional range ca. 95.5 km (airline) SE of the previous record from Guerrero (Bailey, 1939), ca. 77.7 km (airline) SW of the record from Matamoros, Puebla (Smith and Taylor, 1950), and ca. 102.5 km (airline) SSE of the record from Calera Chica, Jiutepec, Morelos (Fig. 2).

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Fig. 2. Geographic records for the snake Coniophanes melanocephalus. Circles represent the previous records, and the star the new record.

LITERATURE CITED


New distributional records for amphibians and reptiles from the department of Choluteca, Honduras

The herpetofauna of Honduras is an example of the diversity found throughout the Mesoamerican biodiversity hotspot (Townsend and Wilson, 2010a; Wilson and Johnson, 2010; Wilson et al., 2012). Presently, 396 species of amphibians and reptiles have been recorded from the country, of which 107 are endemic (Solís, et al. 2014). Most of the 123 herpetofaunal species recorded from subhumid forest are terrestrial, and their distributions are widespread in eight ecophysiographic regions (Townsend and Wilson, 2010b). Some areas of Honduras remain poorly sampled in terms of biological diversity, reflective of the regularity in which new species of amphibians and reptiles are being discovered (Townsend et al., 2013).

During the months of November 2013 and March–April 2014 we conducted herpetofaunal surveys in the department of Choluteca. All of the collecting sites were located on the Pacific slope of Honduras, primarily in areas of moderate relief (1,000–1,600 m). We deposited all but one of the specimens collected (see below) in the reference collection of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CM).

Amphibia: Anura
Family Hylidae

*Dendropsophus microcephalus* (Cope, 1886). CHOLUTECA: Municipio de San Marcos de Colón, Jícaro Largo (13°24'07"N, 86°54'12"W, WGS84); elev. 1,011 m; 22 April 2014. Mario R. Espinal, Carlos M. O’Reilly, and Rony Valle. We found three frogs (CM 157698–157700) at night, calling from vegetation near a small stream in a disturbed riparian habitat. These specimens represent a new departmental record, with the closest localities in the departments of Francisco Morazán and El Paraiso (McCranie and Castañeda, 2007).

*Tlalocohyla loquax* (Gaige and Stuart, 1934). CHOLUTECA: Municipio de San Marcos de Colón, Laguna de Caire (13°25'50.0"N, 86°55'59.4"W, WGS84); elev. 1,067 m; 29 July 2012. We captured a specimen (deposited in the Museo de Historia Natural, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras; UNAH 5672) in a bush at night, in a seasonal roadside pond. CHOLUTECA: Las Moras (13°21'29.3"N, 86°45'37.8"W: WGS84); elev. 1,634 m; 18 November 2013. We collected a single specimen (CM 157698–157700) at night, calling from vegetation near a small stream in a disturbed riparian habitat. These specimens represent a new departmental record, with the closest localities in the departments of Francisco Morazán and El Paraiso (McCranie and Castañeda, 2007).

Reptilia: Squamata (lizards)
Family Dactyloidae

*Norops laeiventrins* (Wiegmann, 1834). CHOLUTECA: Municipio de San Marcos de Colón, La Cahuasca (13°19'26"N, 86°42'39"W, WGS84); elev. 1,396 m; 5 April 2014. Mario R. Espinal, Carlos M. O’Reilly, and Rony Valle. We collected two specimens (CM 157702–157703) in a tree at night, in bromeliads about two meters off the ground. These frogs represent a new departmental record, with the closest localities in the department of Francisco Morazán (McCranie and Castañeda, 2007).