

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

SCOTT, NORMAN J., JR., AND ROY W. McDIARMID. 1984. *Trimorphodon tau*.

Trimorphodon tau Cope
Mexican Lyre Snake

Eteirodipsas biscutata: Jan, 1863:105 (part).

Trimorphodon tau Cope, 1870:152. Type-locality, "western part of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico," in error; Sumichrast (1882) stated that the holotype came from near Quiotepec, Oaxaca, between Tehuacán and Oaxaca. Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 30338, juvenile, collected by Francois Sumichrast, date of collection unknown (examined by authors).

Trimorphodon upsilon Cope, 1870:152. Type-locality, "Guadalajara, West México." Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 31358, male, collected by J. J. Major, date of collection unknown (examined by authors).

Trimorphodon collaris Cope, 1875:131. Type-locality, "Orizaba, Vera Cruz," México, in error; Sumichrast (1882) stated that type came from Tuxpango, near Orizaba. Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 26499, juvenile, collected by Francois Sumichrast, date of collection unknown (examined by authors).

Sibon biscutatum: Garman, 1884a:16 (part).

Sibon upsilon: Garman, 1884a:134.

Sibon biscutata: Garman, 1884b:22 (part).

Trimorphodon upsilon var. *collaris*: Mocquard, 1908:pl. 74.

Trimorphodon fasciolata Smith, 1941:160. Type-locality, "near Zazaracua Falls, 6 kilometers southeast of Uruapán, Michoacán," México. Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 110400, male, collected by Hobart M. Smith, 12 March 1939 (examined by authors).

Trimorphodon forbesi Smith, 1941:163. Type-locality, "near San Diego (about 5 miles south of Tehuacan), Puebla," México. Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 110402, male, collected by Hobart M. Smith, 17 December 1939 (examined by authors).

• CONTENT. Two subspecies are recognized: *tau* and *latifascia* (McDiarmid and Scott, 1970).

• DEFINITION AND DIAGNOSIS. *Trimorphodon tau* differs from *T. biscutatus* by having a broad light band on the nape of the head and neck with a straight or slightly indented posterior border. *T. tau* also has most dark saddles confluent with dark markings on ventrals; rarely exceeds 1 m total length; ventrals (201–231 in males, 210–243 in females); subcaudals (61–85 in males, 55–80 in females); supralabials (7–10); infralabials (9–14); midbody scale rows (17–25); anal divided in all except one male.

• DESCRIPTIONS. Descriptions of *Trimorphodon tau* other than those of types are found in Boulenger (1896), Cope (1900), Taylor (1939), Smith (1941, 1943a), Schmidt and Shannon (1947), Davis and Smith (1953), Davis and Dixon (1957, 1959), Duellman (1958, 1961), Hardy and McDiarmid (1969), and McDiarmid and Scott (1970). Underwood (1967) studied scales. Hatchlings were studied by McDiarmid and Scott (1970).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Taylor (1939) has photographs of specimens of *tau* and *latifascia*, Cope (1900) published head diagrams, Mocquard (1908) illustrated the head and neck, and Jan and Sordelli (1872) illustrated the whole snake and several detailed studies including the maxillary arch, under the name *E. biscutata*. McDiarmid and Scott (1970) presented 13 diagrams of the variable head pattern.

• DISTRIBUTION. *Trimorphodon tau* is widely distributed along the slopes and foothills of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Oriental, and Sur. Specimens are known from the coastal plain and from the central plateau in the foothills of the Balsas and Tepalcatepec basins. The distribution is summarized by McDiarmid and Scott (1970) with no records from Querétaro; this gap was filled by Dixon et al. (1972). The species is present in all states north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec except Coahuila, Nuevo León, and the Baja California peninsula. Cope's (1900) record for Chihuahua, Chihuahua, is almost certainly a misidentification of a specimen of *T. b. wilkinsoni*, the only *Trimorphodon* reported by Cope (1886) from Wilkinson's collection and the only one known from the area. The species is nocturnal and occurs between 100 and 2600 m elevation, usually in rocky areas of irregular relief.

• FOSSIL RECORD. None.

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. McDiarmid and Scott (1970) summarized the nomenclatural history, biology, and zoogeography of the species. Bowler (1977) included a longevity record.

• ETYMOLOGY. Cope (1870, 1886) used Greek letters to describe the patterns on the head and nape of three forms of *Trimorphodon*. *Tau* refers to the T-shaped mark that extends transversely between the orbits and longitudinally to the end of the snout. The term *latifascia* probably refers to the characteristic broad, dark dorsal bands.

1. *Trimorphodon tau tau* Cope

Trimorphodon tau Cope, 1870:152 (see species synonymy).

Trimorphodon tau tau: Smith and Darling, 1952:85.

Trimorphodon tau upsilon: Smith and Darling, 1952:85.

• DEFINITION. Head cap usually pale to medium gray, with a light snout or prefrontal bar, complete interocular bar and variable light parietal markings.

2. *Trimorphodon tau latifascia* (Peters)

Dipsas biscutata var. *latifascia* Peters, 1869:877. Type-locality, "Puebla, México" [restricted to Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, México, by Smith and Taylor (1950)]. Syntypes, Zool. Mus. Humboldt Univ. Berlin 6652a and 6652b. Lectotype, ZMB 6652a (McDiarmid and Scott, 1970) male, collected by Berkenbusch, date of collection unknown (examined by authors).

Sibon biscutatum var. *latifasciatum*: Garman, 1884a:16.

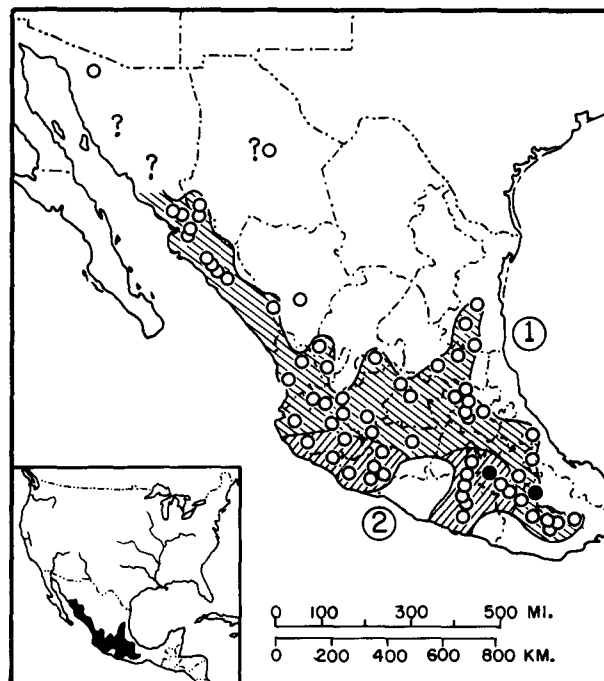
Trimorphodon biscutatus: Günther, 1895:174 (part).

Trimorphodon latifascia: Taylor, 1939:364.

Trimorphodon latifasciata: Smith, 1943b:341. Unjustified emendation.

Trimorphodon tau latifascia: McDiarmid and Scott, 1970:32.

• DEFINITION. Head cap is dark gray, generally lacking prefrontal and interocular bars, without discrete parietal marks. Snout is usually dark.



MAP. Solid circles mark type-localities, hollow circles other localities. Question marks indicate a questioned record (see DISTRIBUTION) and uncertain areas of occurrence.

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