

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Lieb, C.S. 1991. *Dendrophidion vinitor*.

***Dendrophidion vinitor* Smith**
Barred Forest Racer

Dendrophidion vinitor Smith, 1941:74. Type locality, "Piedras Negras, Guatemala." Holotype, National Museum of Natural History 110662, a "young" female collected by Hobart M. Smith on 21 May 1939 (not examined by author).

• **Content.** No subspecies have been described.

• **Definition.** This small species of *Dendrophidion* reaches a maximum known total length of 98 cm and has 17 dorsal scale rows anteriorly and 15 posteriorly. All but the first row usually are keeled in adults. The ventral scale counts range from 148-165, subcaudals from 111-128. The cloacal scute is invariably entire. The dorsocaudal scale row reduction from eight to six scales occurs between subcaudals 29 and 57. The hemipenes are provided with basal hooked villi.

The ground color of the dorsum is typically brown or gray in life; the venter is immaculate white or yellow. Dark-edged light crossbands, more than one scale row wide, are present on the neck, and are tinged with orange or yellow in life. The dorsal coloration is otherwise crossbanded anteriorly and with crossbands, light ocelli, and/or dark longitudinal stripes posteriorly.

• **Diagnosis.** *Dendrophidion vinitor* may be distinguished from all other members of the genus by its short tail (see the subcaudal range given above), villose hemipenes, and expanded neck crossbands. Additional diagnostic character states, shared with at least one other congener (nominal taxa in parentheses), include: dorsocaudal scale row reduction from eight to six rows occurring posterior to subcaudal 29 (*D. dendrophis*, *D. nuchale*), entire anal (some *D. dendrophis*, *D. nuchale*), and immaculate venter in adults and juveniles (*D. percarinatum*).

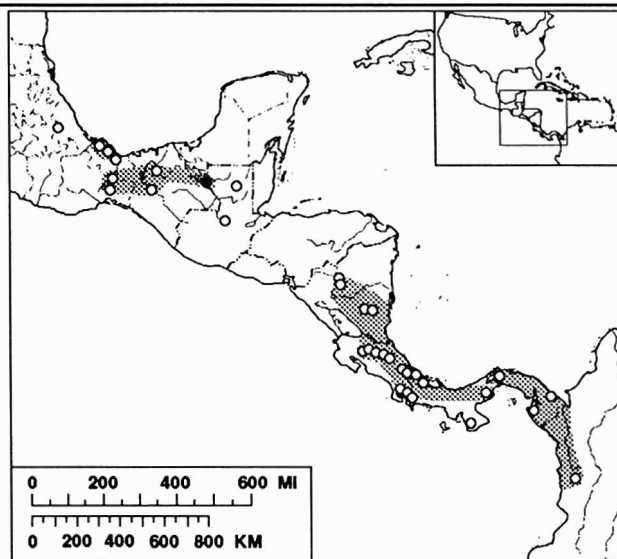
• **Descriptions.** An overall description and table of variation for the species is in Lieb (1988). Descriptive data on individual specimens are reported in Dugés (1892, as *D. dendrophis*), Smith (1941, 1943), Darling and Smith (1954), Taylor (1954), and Johnson et al. (1976).

• **Illustrations.** A line drawing of the head appears in Smith (1943), black-and-white photographs appear in Alvarez del Toro (1982) and Lieb (1988), and a colored drawing representing this species is in Dugés (1892, *vide* Smith, 1943, original not seen by author).

• **Distribution.** *Dendrophidion vinitor* is distributed disjunctly through lowland and premontane rainforests of Middle America over a known elevational range of 50-1300 m. The north-



Figure. A small adult *Dendrophidion vinitor* from Finca La Selva, Heredia Province, Costa Rica. Photograph by R. Wayne Van Devender.



Map. Solid circle marks the type locality, open circles indicate other representative localities.

ernmost extant populations are in Los Tuxtlas region of Veracruz, México, although there is an inland historical record (Dugés, 1892) for the Córdoba ("Motzorongo") area of that state. The Tuxtlas localities are separated from a second series of Caribbean versant populations restricted to (mostly defunct) lowland and premontane rainforest habitats in southern México and adjacent Guatemala; these extended from southeastern Oaxaca through southern Tabasco/north central Chiapas to the Río Usamacinta. Elsewhere in Guatemala, the species is historically known from Petén and "Verapaz" (see Comment). From these localities southward to Nicaragua a considerable distributional hiatus exists, probably an artifact of collecting and habitat destruction. On the Caribbean versant of lower Central America, an apparently continuous segment of the species distribution begins in north-central Nicaragua and extends to western Panamá. Additionally, isolated populations exist on the Pacific versant in southwestern Costa Rica, and in the Darien region of western Panamá and the adjacent Chocó of Colombia.

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** The most recent overall review of relationships, distribution and variation is by Lieb (1988). Other notes on the latter two aspects for *D. vinitor* in the northern part of its range appear in Smith (1941, 1943), Stuart (1948), Darling and Smith (1954), and Johnson, et al. (1976). The essentials of the Costa Rican distribution and variation can be inferred from Savage and Villa (1986). The relative abundance in the Los Tuxtlas area of México is indicated by Pérez-Higadera et al. (1987). Color pattern, abundance, and notes on habits in Chiapas are briefly discussed in Alvarez del Toro (1982). A bibliography for literature on this species in southern México and Central America is included in Villa et al. (1988).

• **Etymology.** The specific epithet *vinitor* is a Latin noun meaning "vinedresser," and is perhaps an oblique and somewhat misleading reference to the habitat and habits of this terrestrial rainforest snake.

• **Comment.** Guatemalan material referable to *D. vinitor* from "Petén" (e.g., Bocourt, 1890, as *D. dendrophis*) was collected by Arthur Morelet and almost certainly originated from the island city of Flores in Lago Petén, where his collectors apparently were most active (Morelet, 1871). No recent material is available from this area, and although Stuart (1948, 1950) assumed that this species occurs in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala (as *Drymobius dendrophis* in part, *vide* Bocourt 1890; Günther, 1894), no specimens have been taken there in this century.

The identification key to species of *Dendrophidion* in Peters and Orejas-Miranda (1970) will not always distinguish *D. vinitor* from other congeners (see Vanzolini, 1986). The accounts of Wilson

(1966) and McCoy (1970) describe Belize populations of *D. nuchale* (Lieb, 1988); no specimens of *D. vinitor* are as yet known from that country. The comments of Lee (1980) concerning a disjunct population of *D. vinitor* in the northeastern Yucatán peninsula of México were apparently based upon a specimen of *Mastigodryas melanolomus* (UCM 28122, examined by author). Additionally, as pointed out by Smith (1941), many published references in the early literature to *Dendrobidion dendrophis* in northern Central America refer in whole or in part to *D. vinitor*.

The common name used in this account is derived from *Culebra Barrada*, a Spanish vernacular name applied to this species by Alvarez del Toro (1982).

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