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THE BURROWING TOAD, *RHINOPHRYNUS DORSALIS*,
ON THE CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

WILLIAM E. DUELLMAN

THE distribution of the fossorial toad *Rhinophrynus dorsalis* Duméril and Bibron has been poorly documented in Central America. Stuart reported the species from La Libertad, El Petén, Guatemala (1934) and Tikal, El Petén, Guatemala (1958). Additional records in the Yucatan Peninsula are: Chichén-Itzá, Yucatán, and Xcopén, Quintana Roo (Kellogg, 1932); Champoton and Tuxpeña, Campeche (Gaige, 1936); Encarnación, Campeche (Smith, 1938); Dzibalchén, Escárcega, and Laguna Alvarado, Campeche (Duellman, 1965); Gallon Jug, British Honduras (Fugler, 1960); and Benque Viejo, British Honduras (Neill, 1965). The species is known from the Pacific lowlands of Central America from only four localities: (1) Hacienda Casa Blanca, Depto. Retalhuleu, Guatemala; (2) San Salvador, Depto. San Salvador, El Salvador; (3) Hacienda Mojica, Prov. Guanacaste, Costa Rica (Nelson and Hoyt, 1961); and (4) Finca Taboga, Prov. Guanacaste, Costa Rica (Univ. Kansas Mus. Natur. Hist. 101950-60). The distribution of the species has been mapped by Fouquette (1969).

Two noteworthy specimens from the Caribbean lowlands of Central America extend the known distribution of the species. Through the courtesy of Oscar M. Lowrey, I examined a specimen in the collections of the University of Miami from La Lima, Prov. Atlantidad, Honduras; this uncatalogued specimen was obtained by John D. Dickson III in 1960. A specimen in the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels (No. 2773) was examined by me at the California Academy of Sciences through the courtesy of Gaston F. deWitte and Alan E. Leviton; this specimen was obtained by E. Taylor in May, 1960, at Waspán, Comarca de el Cabo, Nicaragua.

Although in general the Caribbean lowlands of Central America support tropical rainforest or quasi-rainforest, some areas are notable exceptions. The area around La Lima, Honduras, is lowland dry forest (Stuart, 1966), whereas that at Waspán, Nicaragua, is pine savanna (Parsons, 1955). According to Duellman (1966), the herpetofauna in the lowland dry forests in the interior valleys of Guatemala and Honduras and in the savannas on the Atlantic lowlands of México and Guatemala is composed largely of species belonging to the arid tropical assemblage. Members of this assemblage are distributed principally on the Pacific lowlands from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in México to the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica.

Rhinophrynus dorsalis is a fossorial inhabitant of subhumid en-

vironments, principally arid tropical scrub forest. The presence of this species in the coastal lowland dry forest in northern Honduras and especially in the pine savannas of eastern Nicaragua is additional evidence that these isolated non-rainforest areas are relicts of formerly more widespread and continuous, or nearly continuous, non-rainforest habitats in which isolated populations of many species of the arid tropical herpetofaunal assemblage have survived.

The herpetofauna of the pine savannas in Nicaragua is poorly known. In addition to *Rhinophrynus*, characteristic members of the arid tropical assemblage known from the savannas include *Hyla staufferi*, *Phrynohyas venulosa*, *Ameiva undulata*, and *Leptodeira annulata*.

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