

Two New Insular Subspecies of the Natricid Snake *Tretanorhinus nigroluteus* Cope from Honduras and Nicaragua

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**ABSTRACT** — Two new subspecies of *Tretanorhinus nigroluteus* are described on the basis of their color and head scutellation. *T. n. dichromaticus* from Roatán Island, Honduras, has a dichromatism hitherto unknown in the genus. *T. n. obscurus* from the Corn Islands, Nicaragua, is the darkest known form of *nigroluteus*.

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In his revision of the continental forms of the genus *Tretanorhinus* Duméril and Bibron, Dunn (1939) divided *T. nigroluteus* Cope into two subspecies, *T. n. nigroluteus* and *T. n. lateralis* Bocourt. Smith and Gillespie (in Smith, 1965) described a third subspecies, *T. n. mertensi*. Additional material, from Roatán and Guanaja Islands, Honduras, and the Corn Islands, Nicaragua, reveals the existence of two populations that cannot be referred to the subspecies presently recognized. Specimens have been examined from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH); Jaime D. Villa personal collection, Managua (JV); the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas (KU); Los Angeles County Museum (LACM); the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard (MCZ); the Museum of Zoology at Louisiana State University (LSU); Museo de Zoología, Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) and the U. S. National Museum (USNM).

*Tretanorhinus nigroluteus dichromaticus*, ssp. nov.  
Roatán Cativo, Fig. 1

**Type material.** HOLOTYPE, LACM 44426 (originally J. R. Meyer 1873), a ♀ taken between 2 and 5 kms north of Coxen Hole, Roatán Island, Islas de la Bahía, Honduras, collected 14 July 1967 by John R. Meyer and Larry David Wilson. PARATYPES, thirty nine (LACM 44417-25, 44427-36; LSU 21160-21178) from the same locality. ASSOCIATED SPECIMENS, two (LACM 44438-39) from Guanaja Island, Islas de la Bahía, Honduras, collected 19 July 1967 by Meyer and Wilson.

**Diagnosis.** A subspecies of *T. nigroluteus* Cope that differs from all other known subspecies by the following combination of characters: dorsal rows 1 and 2 light in color (red or cream, not black as in *lateralis* and *mertensi*); normally one loreal and two preoculars; anterior dorsal markings generally paired and conspicuous; conspicuous, well-defined dorsolateral blotches on dorsals 4 and 5, never united into a stripe; a dark, diffuse lateral stripe present on dorsals 1 and 2, disappearing after anterior 1/3 of the snake's length or continuing as dispersed pigment on edge of ventrals and first row of dorsals; an irregular, sometimes interrupted, dark midventral and midcaudal stripe with little or no adjacent black pigment; ventral and caudal surfaces either cream- or pale red-colored.

**Description of Holotype.** — Dorsals in 21 rows at midbody, 17 near anus, all keeled, without apical pits. Ventrals 142, caudals 65, anal divided. Head scutellation typically colubrid, with 2 prefrontals, preoculars and postoculars, one loreal and 1 + 2 temporals. Snout-vent length 600 mm, head 29, tail 165.

In life of a light brown dorsal color that extends through the upper half of scalerow 3; dorsum with a double series of paravertebral dark (deep brown or black) blotches, each covering about 3 dorsals and interspaced by 1 to 4 dorsal scales. The paravertebral blotches are larger on the anterior third of the dorsum, some fused forming larger, unpaired blotches, but decreasing in size or disappearing towards the tail. The dorsal portion of the head is darker than the rest of the dorsum but lighter than the blotches. The lower and gular surfaces of the head are cream-colored with heavy

