



A new, brightly colored species of *Pseudoboa* Schneider, 1801 from the Amazon Basin (Serpentes, Xenodontinae)

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Abstract

A new species of *Pseudoboa*, *P. martinsi*, is described from the Amazon basin of Brazil, with records from the states of Pará, Amazonas, Roraima and Rondônia. The new species is distinguished from the other five species of the genus by a combination of scalation and coloration characters. Individuals of the new species were found in both primary and disturbed forested areas. The species seems to be predominantly nocturnal and secretive because specimens were found foraging in the litter during night.

Key words: Brazil, Colubridae, hemipenis, taxonomy, distribution

Introduction

The genus *Pseudoboa* Schneider, 1801 comprises five species of predominantly nocturnal terrestrial pseudoboine snakes that form a monophyletic group (Zaher 1994) distributed through most of South America, from Panamá to Argentina, and the islands of Trinidad and Tobago (Bailey 1970). Although the genus was erected by Schneider in 1801 to accommodate *Pseudoboa coronata* Schneider, 1801, its present definition and taxonomic boundaries gained stability only with Bailey's (1967) publication of an annotated checklist based on the results of his PhD dissertation (Bailey 1939). As currently defined, species of *Pseudoboa* are easily distinguished from other pseudoboines by the presence of unpaired subcaudals, a characteristic that is known to occur within the pseudoboines only in *Phimophis guerini* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854), *Rachidelus brazili* Boulenger, 1908 and some individuals of *Clelia* Fitzinger, 1826, that have mixed subcaudal scales (Bailey 1967).

Pseudoboa haasi (Boettger, 1905) and *P. serrana* Morato, Moura-Leite, Prudente and Bernils, 1995 are restricted to the southeastern and southern regions of the Atlantic rainforest (Morato *et al.* 1995), while *P. coronata* Schneider, 1801 and *P. neuwiedii* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854) are distributed throughout the Amazon basin, with the latter species reaching the western part of the Panamanian rainforest as well as Trinidad and Tobago (Bailey 1970). *Pseudoboa nigra* (Duméril, Bibron and Duméril, 1854) is the only species of the genus known to live in the open-area formations of South America, being widely distributed throughout the Caatinga, Cerrado, and Chaco biomes (Bailey 1970). Useful taxonomic and natural history information on the five known species of *Pseudoboa* was provided by Cunha and Nascimento (1983) and Morato *et al.* (1995). Martins and Oliveira (1998) illustrated and provided natural history information on three individuals of an unnamed species of *Pseudoboa* from the Brazilian Amazon basin that we describe herein.