

## **A new snake of the genus *Atractus* Wagler, 1828 (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae) from Kaieteur National Park, Guyana, northeastern South America**

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### **Abstract**

A new colubrid snake of the genus *Atractus* Wagler 1828 is described from Kaieteur National Park, west-central Guyana. The new species differs from all other congeners by the combination of two postoculars, 15 dorsal scale rows, eight supralabials, seven to eight infralabials, loreal much longer than high, six maxillary teeth, and a color pattern consisting of irregular red or pale red markings, sometimes forming an incomplete broken dorsolateral stripe, on a medium brown to brownish black ground color, and heavy brownish black mottling on a yellowish cream venter. A key to the species of the genus *Atractus* from Guyana is provided.

**Key words:** Reptilia, Colubridae, *Atractus tamessari* **sp. nov.**, Systematics, Kaieteur National Park, Guyana, Guiana Shield

### **Introduction**

Snakes of the genus *Atractus* are widely distributed in the Neotropics, from Panama to northern Argentina (Giraud & Scrocchi 2000, Myers 2003). Most of the nearly 100 species comprising the genus have restricted distributions. Many species have confused taxonomic status, and obviously a major revision is needed (Hoogmoed & Prudente 2003, Myers 2003, Schargel & Castoe 2003). The Guiana Shield region has a high diversity of *Atractus*, with 21 species currently recognized (Hoogmoed 1980, Silva Haad 2004, Avila-Pires 2005). Only four species are confirmed from Guyana (Avila-Pires 2005), a country where the knowledge of the herpetofaunal diversity is still very limited (Ernst *et al.* 2005, Donnelly *et al.* 2005).

During the course of our ongoing study of the herpetological richness and community structure in Kaieteur National Park, Guyana, 33 snake species have been recorded. We