



A new species of the genus *Oligodon* Fitzinger, 1826 (Squamata: Colubridae) from Pulau Nias, Indonesia

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Abstract

A new species of the genus *Oligodon* Fitzinger, 1826, *Oligodon wagneri* **sp. nov.**, is described on the basis of a single specimen originating from Nias Island, off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. It differs from other species of the region by the combination of a constant number (15) of dorsal scale rows, undivided hemipenes, entire anal plate, form of dentition, and dorsal pattern of white crossbars alternating with three irregular reticulations. This new species is compared with other species of the Greater Sunda Islands with 15 or 17 dorsal scale rows. An updated checklist and key to *Oligodon* species of the region of Sumatra is provided.

Key words: Colubridae, Indonesia, *Oligodon wagneri* **sp. nov.**, Pulau Nias, Squamata, taxonomy, Sumatra

Introduction

With about 70 currently recognized species (Green *et al.* 2010), the genus *Oligodon* Fitzinger, 1826 is one of the largest genera of Asiatic snakes (Smith 1943; David *et al.* 2008, 2011; Tillack & Günther 2010). It is widespread throughout tropical Asia. Currently, seven species are recognized in the Sumatran Region. Tillack & Günther (2010) revised the species present in Sumatra and adjacent islands and recognized six species, to which we add *Oligodon bitorquatus* Boie, 1827 and *Oligodon praefrontalis* Werner, 1913 on the basis of our own data.

In examining Indonesian specimens of *Oligodon* deposited in the collection of the Paris *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* (MNHN), we came across a single specimen originating from Pulau Nias, or Nias Island, Indonesia. On the basis of the catalogues of the MNHN and of the tag attached to this specimen, it had been identified around 1974 as the holotype of a species that was supposed to be subsequently described by Frederick W. Wagner, then a student of the Louisiana State University. Wagner undertook a revision of some groups of this difficult genus in the course of his Master thesis (Wagner 1975, 1976). His arrangements for the groups of *O. cyclurus* and *O. cinereus* are insightful and were accepted by David *et al.* (2008, 2011). However, the planned description of the specimen from Nias was never published.

A close examination of this specimen from Nias Island and the comparison of its morphology with other species of the region confirm its distinct specific status, both on the basis of our own material (see Appendix) and of Tillack & Günther (2010). As a consequence we here refer this specimen to a new species which is described below. It seems to be related to *O. bitorquatus* Boie, 1827. A new key to *Oligodon* species of Sumatra and adjacent islands is provided.

Material and methods

The description is based on morphological characters regarded as taxonomically significant in the genus *Oligodon*, i.e. scalation and colour pattern, as well as the dentition of the maxilla and the hemipenes. Measurements, except