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## A checklist of the amphibians and reptiles of Honduras, with additions, comments on taxonomy, some recent taxonomic decisions, and areas of further studies needed

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### Abstract

An updated checklist of the amphibians and reptiles of Honduras is provided. The list includes three amphibian species (*Ptychohyla euthysanota*, *Bolitoglossa odonnelli*, *Oedipina chortiorum*) and two reptile species (*Laemanctus waltersi* [elevated from subspecies status], *Epictia phenops*) not included in the most recent checklist of the amphibians and reptiles of the country. Also, one amphibian genus and species (*Triprion petasatus*) is removed from the country list and one Honduran lizard (*Ctenosaura praeocularis*) is synonymized with an older name. Comments where more study is needed are also included where pertinent. Authors, dates, and original spellings of the higher-level taxonomy of all taxa covered herein are also given. A total of 401 species (137 amphibians and 264 reptiles) are now known from the country with 111 species (27.7%) being Honduran endemics (52 amphibians and 59 reptiles).

**Key words:** Amphibians, reptiles, taxonomic checklist, Honduras, Central America

### Introduction

Seven countries make up political Central America. Of those seven countries, Honduras is among the leaders in the amount of progress being made towards an understanding of its amphibian and reptile diversity. Not only have recent years seen considerable fieldwork taking place, principally by two groups, but also active studies of the resulting fieldwork specimens taking place, frequently using both genetic and external morphological data sets. The five most recent years have seen studies that resulted in descriptions of new cryptic species (Köhler & Vesely 2010, McCranie & Cruz Díaz 2010, Townsend *et al.* 2010, 2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, McCranie 2011b, McCranie & Townsend 2011, Hedges & Conn 2012, Jadin *et al.* 2012, McCranie & Hedges 2012, 2013a, 2013b, McCranie & Rovito 2014), taxonomic clarifications of some problematic populations (Köhler & Vesely 2010, McCranie & Hedges 2013c, McCranie & Gotte 2014, McCranie & Köhler 2015), or species being reported for the first time from the country (McCranie & Köhler 2012, McCranie *et al.* 2013a, 2013b).

During the latter stages of work on this present manuscript, a publication appeared (Solís *et al.* 2014) that had some similar goals and intentions as this present work. My first thought upon seeing the Solís *et al.* publication was that my project was over. However, after a closer examination of Solís *et al.* (2014), the number of errors of various types in that work was as surprising to me as was first learning about the existence of that publication. The checklist of amphibians and reptiles known to occur in Honduras presented here differs in some respects from the list provided by Solís *et al.* (2014), and has the benefits of containing significantly fewer errors. The present manuscript also contains comments on overlooked publications by Solís *et al.* (2014), taxonomic comments published subsequent to Solís *et al.* (2014) or briefly introduced herein, as well as pointing interested workers where some taxonomic investigations are needed. In addition to the authors of each nominal form, also included herein are the dates and page numbers of each name where introduced for the first time. Although some of the Solís *et al.* (2014) errors seem small, they can have consequences if used in subsequent taxonomic publications that require having authors and dates of nominal forms correct (see McCranie & Gutsche 2015 for examples) and the large numbers of errors in Solís *et al.* seems to indicate insufficient effort went into their list. Lists like that of Solís

ranks third (behind Costa Rica and Panama) in total number of known species of amphibians and reptiles in political Central America.

*Retrospect.*—I was fortunate to begin fieldwork in Honduras during 1976 when much of the country still retained a lot of pristine forests. In addition, almost no herpetologists (the most notable exception being K. Schmidt, see K. Schmidt 1942) had visited isolated montane and premontane regions that were not connected by roads. Collecting permits were easily obtained in those days and continued to be so until the situation changed drastically during 2013. Also, deforestation began to occur in earnest during the 1980s and has accelerated in recent times to the point where little pristine forest remains in the country, and unless drastic changes take place immediately, all forests of Honduras will be soon gone. The chytrid disaster also began in montane and premontane regions of the country during the late 1980s. One can now walk along montane streams in the relatively few places still forested and be amazed by the lack of all wildlife. While walking several such streams in recent years, I could not help but think back and wonder what it would have been like to walk those streams back in the 1970s and early 1980s and see the streamside populations of *Craugastor* and hylid frogs that surely would have been there back then. By being fortunate enough to have had the possibilities of doing that fieldwork back then, and continuing to recent years, I have been part of the description of three new genera, one new subgenus, and 76 new species included in this list, almost all of which I collected personally. Sadly, some of those species, and one of those genera, collected before the chytrid and deforestation disasters are now thought to be extinct. Also sadly, is that today's herpetologists will never have an opportunity to experience those pleasures I was so fortunate to have experienced and enjoyed.

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