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A new species of *Imantodes* Duméril, 1853 (Serpentes, Dipsadidae) from the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia

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Abstract

We describe a new species of *Imantodes*, morphologically similar to *I. chocoensis*, from the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia. This new species is distinguished from all congeners by the following combination of morphological characters: smooth dorsal scale rows 17/17/15; apical pits absent; infralabials 12–13; ventrals 227–236; subcaudals 147–148; presence of loreal scale; cloacal plate divided; dark temporal stripe on the suture between the lower edge of temporal scales and upper region of supralabials; dorsum of body light brown with dark brown transversal streaks, weakly evident in lateral view; hemipenis in situ extending to the level of 11th subcaudal and reaches the 10th subcaudal when everted; hemipenis with sulcus spermaticus expanded at the base of capitulum and extending distally. Additionally, we discuss the lateral expansion of the sulcus spermaticus in the new species, similar to that of species of *Leptodeira*.

Key words: Imantodini, trans-Andean species of *Imantodes*, hemipenial morphology

Introduction

Members of the genus *Imantodes* Duméril, 1853 comprise a group of primarily arboreal snakes with a broad Neotropical distribution, which occur at low and moderate elevations (up to 2,200m above sea level; asl hereafter) in environments as diverse as rainforest and savanna (Peters & Orejas-Miranda 1970; Myers 1982; Torres-Carvajal *et al.* 2012). The origin of the genus is dated to the middle of the Miocene, about 14 Mya (Daza *et al.* 2009). The taxonomy of *Imantodes* has been based mostly on color pattern, cephalic plate arrangements, and meristic characters (Savage 1980; Myers 1982; Savage & Scott 1985; Cisneros-Heredia 2006). Recently, molecular studies have demonstrated wide genetic variability among some populations of *Imantodes cenchoa* (Linnaeus, 1758) and, as a result, two distinct clades have been recovered for Central and South American populations, respectively (Mulcahy 2007; Daza *et al.* 2009).

Imantodes currently comprises seven nominal species (Wallach *et al.* 2014): *Imantodes cenchoa*, *I. gemmistratus* (Cope, 1861), *I. tenuissimus* (Cope, 1866), *I. lentiferus* (Cope, 1894), *I. inornatus* (Boulenger, 1896), *I. phantasma* Myers, 1982, and *I. chocoensis* Torres-Carvajal, Yáñez-Muñoz, Quirola, Smith & Almendáriz, 2012. Among these species, only *I. phantasma* and *I. tenuissimus* do not occur in Colombia, with records for Panama and Mexico, respectively (Cope 1866; Myers 1982; Lee 1996). In Colombia, *I. gemmistratus*, *I. inornatus*, and *I. chocoensis* occur in the western portion of the Andes (trans-Andean region), while *I. lentiferus* is distributed in the eastern portion (cis-Andean region), and *I. cenchoa* occurs in both regions (Myers 1982; Pérez-Santos & Moreno 1988; Jaramillo-Martínez *et al.* 2013).

While evaluating the morphological variability of South American populations of the *Imantodes cenchoa*, we found two specimens from the Eastern Cordillera Colombia that do not match any previously recognized species of the genus. On the basis of a combination of distinct color pattern and hemipenial morphology, we hypothesized that these individuals represent an unknown species. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to describe this new species and discuss its unusual hemipenial morphology.