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Key to the *Ophiodes* (Squamata: Sauria: Diploglossidae) of Paraguay with the description of a new species

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Abstract

Ophiodes is a South American genus of legless diploglossid lizards. Four species have been formally described: *O. intermedius*, *O. vertebralis*, *O. striatus*, and *O. fragilis*; three additional species were described but not officially named in an unpublished dissertation. These species are referred to as *Ophiodes* sp. “1”, *Ophiodes* sp. “2”, and *Ophiodes* sp. “3”. We recognize five species of *Ophiodes* in Paraguay, one widespread (*O. intermedius*) and four known from only one or two localities (*O. fragilis*, *O. striatus*, *O. sp. “3”*, and an undescribed species, described herein). The new species described represents the fifth Paraguayan species and the eighth member of the genus. It is distinguished by a combination of the following characters: a high number of middorsal scales between occipital and cloacal opening (>165), 29 scale rows around midbody, the posterior limbs 4 scales long, and vertical black bars on the face absent.

Key words: *Ophiodes luciae* sp. nov., Reptilia, South America, Worm Lizards

Resumen

Ophiodes es un género de lagartijas ápodas que se encuentran distribuidas en Sudamérica. Se reconocen cuatro especies formalmente descritas: *O. intermedius*, *O. vertebralis*, *O. striatus* y *O. fragilis*. Además, se describieron tres especies adicionales en un trabajo de tesis, por lo que aun no se las puede considerar como efectivamente publicadas. Estas son referidas como *Ophiodes* sp. “1”, *Ophiodes* sp. “2” y *Ophiodes* sp. “3”. En este trabajo se reconocen cinco especies de *Ophiodes* para Paraguay, una ampliamente distribuida (*O. intermedius*), y cuatro conocidas sólo de una o dos localidades (*O. fragilis*, *O. striatus*, *O. sp. “3”* y una especie no descrita, la cual se describe aquí). La especie descrita en este trabajo representa la quinta especie paraguaya, y el octavo miembro del género. La nueva especie se distingue de las restantes por la combinación de los siguientes caracteres: un mayor número de escamas mediodorsales entre la occipital y la cloaca (>165), 29 hileras longitudinales de escamas alrededor de la mitad del cuerpo, miembros posteriores de 4 escamas de largo y ausencia de barras oscuras verticales en la cara y nuca.

Introduction

Ophiodes (Diploglossidae) is a genus of four described and several undescribed species of legless lizards distributed east of the Andes in Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay (Peters & Donoso-Barros 1970; Borges-Martins 1998; Pizzatto 2005). The genus is characterized by a lack of external forelimbs, hind legs reduced to flaps, skin composed of osteoderms, relatively long autotomous tail (up to twice body length), and relatively small head (Carreira *et al.* 2005; Barros & Teixeira 2007). Reproduction is ovoviviparous, but other aspects of its biology and ecology are little known. Females are usually larger than males (Pizzatto 2005; Barros & Teixeira 2007).

The first described species of the genus were by Spix (1825), who described two Brazilian species: *Pygopus*