

A new colubrid snake from the Corn Islands, Nicaragua

by

J. D. Villa*

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Among the noteworthy herpetological material from the Corn Islands or Islas del Maíz (publication of which awaits the completion of the manuscript) is a small series of brightly colored *Drymobius margaritiferus* (Schlegel) that, being in life easily distinguishable from all other known populations of *margaritiferus*, may well have a name of its own.

Drymobius margaritiferus maydis (Figs. 2-4)

Drymobius margaritiferus, Barbour & Lovetidge, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 1929, vol. 69, p. 139 (Corn Islands).

TYPE: UCR 999 (formerly JV 66094) ♂ from Nicaragua: Departamento de Zelaya; Great Corn Island (circa 40 kms east-north-east of Bluefields) collected by Jaime D. Villa, Janis A. Rozé and Richard G. Zweifel, 22 Jan. 1966.

PARATYPES: (All from Great Corn Island) AM 97071 ♀ (Allotype), col. R. G. Zweifel, J. A. Rozé and J. D. Villa, 24 Jan. 1966; MCZ 26953 ♂, James Lee Peters, Dec. 1927-Jan. 1928.

ASSOCIATED SPECIMEN: KU 86188, ♀, L. M. Hardy, 30 June 1964 (Great Corn Is.)

DIAGNOSIS: A subspecies of *Drymobius margaritiferus* that differs from all other known subspecies (except from the nominal race) in having the anterior edges

* Departamento de Biología, Universidad de Costa Rica.

of median dorsal scales blue (in adult specimens), white (faded specimens) or gray (young specimens), this color well differentiated from a black tip of scale; from *D. m. margaritifera* and other subspecies (see SMITH, 1942, Proc. U.S. Natl. Mus., 92 (3153): 382-384) by its ground color, turquoise-green in life (dull or bluish gray in preservative); adults retaining the juvenile pattern of about 35 to 45 diffuse dorsal blotches or bands (2 or 3 scales wide) that extend to the origin of the ventrals, this pattern more conspicuous in the anterior part of the body; dorsal scales almost entirely black (on dark blotches) to almost entirely turquoise green (on lighter areas), bordered with gray or black, always black-tipped.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE: Head scutellation typical of the species: supralabials 9, the third, fourth and fifth entering orbit; infralabials 10, the first pair in contact behind the mental and the sixth the largest; preoculars 1; post oculars 2; loreal present; temporals 2 + 2; two pairs of chinshields, the anterior pair shortest and in contact with the first five infralabials; posterior pair of chinshields elongate and posteriorly directed outward, separated by one scale anteriorly and by two scales posteriorly; four rows of gulars at the level of the eighth infralabial; dorsal scale formula 17-17-15; dorsals keeled except for the first 3 or 4 rows; two apical pits present (best visible in the allotype); ventrals 145; caudals in 93 pairs; anal divided.

Hemipenes single, subcylindrical, medially swollen and gradually tapering distally; *sulcus spermaticus* simple, straight; basal portion of hemipenis naked or covered with very small spinules; median portion of hemipenis covered with moderate sized spines gradually diminishing in size distally, being substituted by a papilled calyculate structure; distal portion of hemipenes naked or nearly so. COLOR: (in life) Ground color turquoise-green, lighter ventrally; head dark with a diffuse yellowish green "V" with its apex on the frontal; anterior part of the head lighter in color, gradually approaching the turquoise-yellow pigment present in the labials; posterior edge of upper (and last lower) labials bordered with black except for the last two, which are completely black; dorsal scales ranging from nearly entirely black (on blotched areas) to almost completely turquoise-green finely bordered with gray or black; ventrals laterally and anteriorly bordered with gray or black except for the posterior ones, in which this pigment tends to diminish as it approaches midbody; caudals basically with the same pattern as the ventrals, but with their median area immaculate. In formalin the ground color turns bluish or gray and thus the blotched pattern is somewhat obscured.

MEASUREMENTS: (in millimeters)

	Total length	Snout-Vent	Head	Tail
AM 97071	667	437	28	230
KU 86188	—	701	35	—
UCR 999	798	542	28	256

RANGE: *D. margaritiferus maydis* is known only from Great Corn Island but it will possibly be found on Little Corn. Several specimens* of this species were examined from the mainland of Nicaragua and Costa Rica and they can all be identified with the nominal subspecies.

REMARKS: The type specimen was found at the muddy edge of a brackish swamp. Upon being caught it bit repeatedly until it was placed in a collecting bag. A brightly colored juvenile individual (lost) was taken while sunning itself on a fallen coconut trunk.

The name *maydis* (not *miadis* as used by Barbour and Loveridge in the description of *Ameiva festiva miadis* (= *A. undulata miadis*) and *Rana miadis* (= *R. pipiens*) was suggested by Dr. R. L. Rodríguez as the correct derivation of *Mays*, the Latin word for corn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the authorities of the Universidad de Costa Rica, Departamento de Biología, especially to Dr. Jorge Mora-Urpi, present director and Dr. R. L. Rodríguez, former director, for the facilities and working space during the preparation of this and other research projects; to Mr. Douglas C. Robinson, at the Museo de Zoología of the Universidad (UCR), Dr. Richard G. Zweifel, at the American Museum of Natural History (AM) and Dr. Ernest Williams at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ) for the loan of pertinent material; Mr. Norman J. Scott, Jr., at the University of Southern California, and Dr. Zweifel, read the manuscript in its initial stages and offered useful opinions and critiques; Sr. Carlos Muñoz at the Facultad de Microbiología, (U.C.R.) prepared the illustrations. To all of them, my sincere appreciation.

SUMMARY

The colubrid snake *Drymobius margaritiferus maydis* is described from the Corn Islands, Caribbean Nicaragua.

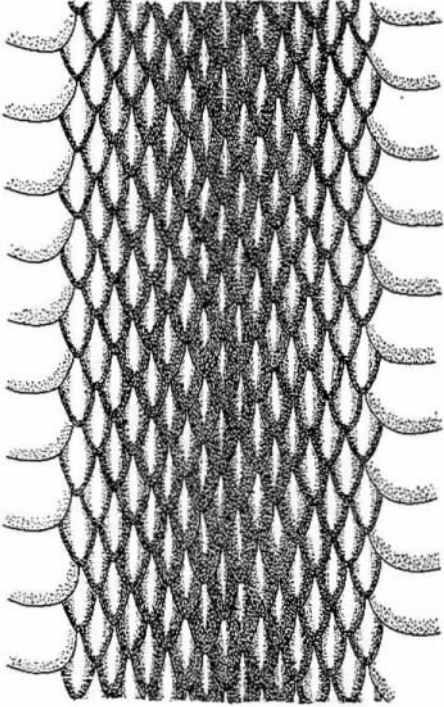
RESUMEN

Se describe la serpiente colúbrida *Drymobius margaritiferus maydis* de las Islas del Maíz (Corn Islands), Nicaragua. Se distingue de las demás sub-

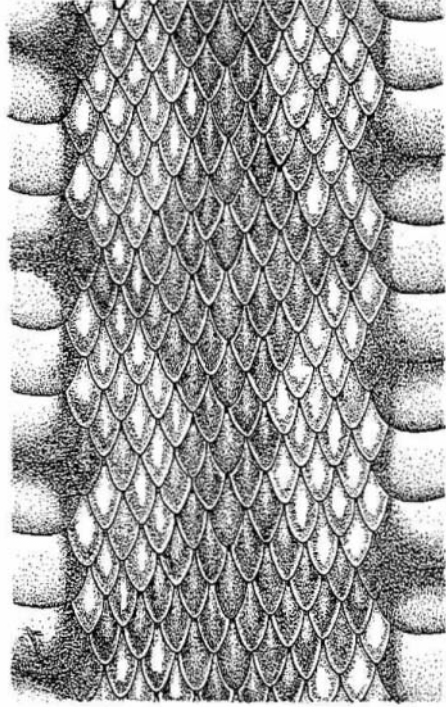
* From NICARAGUA: *Granada*, near Granada (JV 156), *Jinotega*, Río Jigüina (JV 278); *León*, near Poneloya (JV 277); *Managua*, Río Tipitapa (JV 430). From COSTA RICA: *Guanacaste*, Cañas (JV 1185), *Hacienda Taboga* (JV 1168), *Tilarán* (UCR 509); *Limón*, near Limón (UCR 029); *Puntarenas*, Palmar Sur (UCR 106); *San José*, (UCR 010,113).

especies de *margaritiferus* por la siguiente combinación de características: borde anterior de escamas dorsales color claro; color de fondo verde-turquesa en vida (gris opaco o azulado en líquido preservativo); adultos reteniendo el patrón juvenil de unas 35 a 45 manchas o bandas dorsales que se extienden hasta el origen de las ventrales; dorsales color verde-turquesa con grados variables de pigmentación negra o gris oscura; ápice de las dorsales siempre negro; ventrales y caudales marginadas de negro hacia la base.

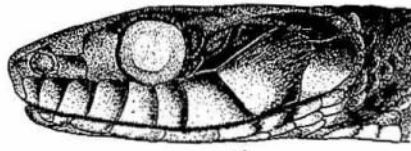
- Fig. 1. *D. margaritiferus margaritiferus* (Schlegel), typical pattern at midbody (drawn on a generalized scale pattern). Ground color is yellowish.
- Fig. 2. *D. margaritiferus maydis* Villa, same as above. Ground color is turquoise-green.
- Fig. 3. *D. m. maydis*, lateral view of head.
- Fig. 4. Same, dorsal view. (Scale represents 10 mm).



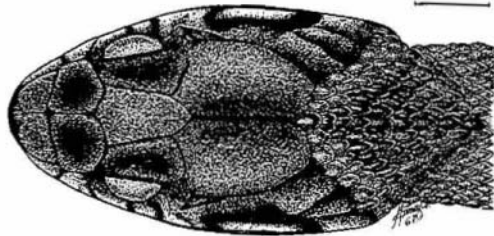
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