

New records for *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863) in French Guiana (Ophidia: Colubridae)

Neue Nachweise von *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863) in Französisch Guyana
(Ophidia: Colubridae)

JEAN-PIERRE VACHER & MAËL DEWYNTER
& CHRISTIAN MARTY & MICHEL BLANC

KURZFASSUNG

Die seltene amazonische Natter *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863) erreicht in Französisch Guyana ihre nordöstliche Verbreitungsgrenze. Wir führen zwei neue Fundorte in Französisch Guyana auf und berichten über die erstmalige Beobachtung eines lebenden Exemplars.

ABSTRACT

The rare Amazonian colubrid *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863) reaches its north-eastern distribution limit in French Guiana. We give two new localities and the first record of a living specimen for this overseas region of France.

KEY WORDS

Reptilia: Ophidia: Colubridae; *Drepanoides anomalus*; distribution, French Guiana

Drepanoides anomalus (JAN, 1863) is an Amazonian species of Colubridae, belonging to the neotropical family Xenodontinae. It is known to be a widespread but rare species of ground snake, occurring throughout the whole Amazon basin, as only very few individuals are mentioned in different checklists (e. g., CUNHA & NASCIMENTO 1978, 1993; DUELLMAN 1978; DUELLMAN & SALAS 1991; MARTINS & OLIVEIRA 1998; PEREZ-SANTOS & MORENO 1986, 1991; RODRIGUEZ & CADLE 1990; VIDAL et al. 1998). It occurs in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana and Peru (VIDAL et al. 1998).

This species was first recorded in French Guiana by VIDAL et al. (1998). A dead specimen was collected on the road leading to the Petit-Saut dam, during the wild animals rescue project "Faune Sauvage". VIDAL et al. (1998) also mention four other specimens found in the "Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle" (Paris, France) collections, hitherto unmentioned. The localities of these old specimens (1895 and 1903) are "Guyane", "environs de Cayenne" (= surroundings of Cayenne) and "Mana".

This information is too general in order to have a precise idea of the exact localities where they were collected. These were the only records of this snake in French Guiana. The aim of this note is to document new records of *D. anomalus* in French Guiana.

A dead specimen was found by one of us (M. B.) on the road RN2, 3 km south of the "Crique Gabaré", on the 3rd of September 1996. The coordinates of this locality are 51°48' W and 3°55' N (according to HOFF & CREMERS 1996). The snake had been run over and was badly injured, but the diagnostic characters as given in MARTINS & OLIVEIRA (1998) and in VIDAL et al. (1998) were still visible and permitted the identification of the snake with no doubt.

Another observation was made on the 24th of April 2000. A juvenile specimen was found by three of us (M.D., C.M., J.P.V.), at about 23:00 on Kaw Mountain (fig. 1). The coordinates of this site are 52°09' W and 4°33' N (according to HOFF & CREMERS 1996). It was crawling on the road D6 after a storm. The specimen was photographed and meristic data were taken. They correspond to what is given in CHIPPAUX (1986)



Fig. 1: *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863), juvenile. Montagne de Kaw, French Guiana, 24.04.2000.
Photograph by J. P. VACHER.

Abb. 1: *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863), Jungtier. Montagne de Kaw, Französisch Guyana, 24.04.2000.
Photo: J. P. VACHER.

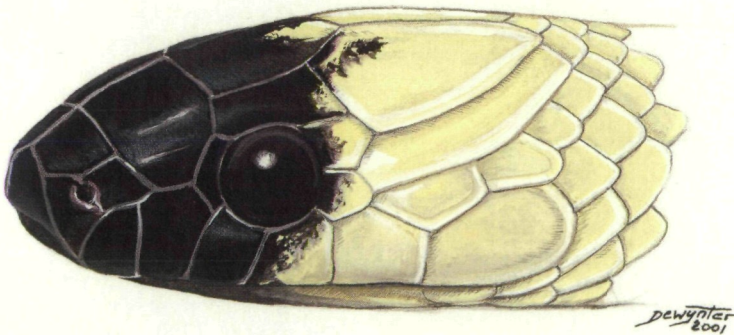


Fig. 2: Head of *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863), same juvenile as in fig. 1. Drawing by M. DEWYNTER.

Abb. 2: Kopf von *Drepanoides anomalus* (JAN, 1863), Jungtier von Abb. 1. Graphik: M. DEWYNTER.

and VIDAL et al. (1998) (fig. 2). This is the first observation of a living specimen of *D. anomalus* in French Guiana. These two observations in French Guiana extend the known area of distribution of the species by 110 km.

The RN2 road, linking the towns of Regina and Saint-Georges, and Kaw Mountain is located in the north-eastern part of French Guiana, behind the coastal fringe south of Cayenne. It is the most rainy region of the whole department (C.N.R.S. / O.R.S.T.O.M. 1979). The habitat consists of primary rainforest with the highest altitude reaching approximately 400 m on Kaw Mountain.

From a biogeographical point of view, French Guiana is known to be a transitory region between the Amazonian basin and the Guianan plateau (LESCURE 1975). No clear

border exists between these two geographical entities, but rather we find gradation in habitats and climate. Therefore, we can consider that *D. anomalus* represents another example of a species belonging to the Amazonian herpetofauna that reaches its north-east limit in French Guiana, as it is, for example, the case for the amphibians *Hyla raniceps* (COPE, 1862) and *Typhonectes compressicaudus* (DUMÉRIL & BIBRON, 1841) (LESCURE & MARTY 2000).

This note is also a call to all herpetologists who are likely to do field research in French Guiana to observe quite closely every snake with a red body and a black head, with or without a white collar. Care should be taken to observe all external characters in order to confirm the species identity. Any new chorological data clearly increases our knowledge of the distribution of this rare species.

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Corresponding editor: Heinz Grillitsch

AUTHORS: Jean-Pierre VACHER, 5 rue Pons-Capdenier, 31500 Toulouse, France [overmuch51@hotmail.com]; Maël DEWYNTER, Office national des forêts, BP 7002, 97300 Cayenne, French Guiana; Christian MARTY, Impasse Galot, 97354 Montjoly, French Guiana; Michel BLANC, 24 les jardins de Sainte Agathe, 97355 Macouria, French Guiana.

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Vacher Jean-Pierre, Dewynter Mael, Marty Christian,
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