

Distribution of *Siphlophis compressus* (DAUDIN, 1803) in Venezuela with a remarkable geographic extension

Siphlophis compressus (DAUDIN, 1803), is the most common member of the genus in northern South America and southern Central America. Two species of the genus *Siphlophis* are known from Venezuela, one of which, *S. cervinus* (LAURENTI, 1768), is apparently widely distributed south of the Orinoco River, although only two localities are known (BARRIO-AMORÓS et al. 1998). On the other hand, *S. compressus*, has been mentioned only in generalized Venezuelan herpetological literature (ROZE 1966; LANCINI 1979; McDIARMID & PAOLILLO 1988; LANCINI & KORNACKER 1989; RODRIGUEZ & FUENTES 1995-1996); and only two recent reports are known: KAISER et al. (2003) and BARRIO-AMORÓS & DUELLMAN (2009). The latter species is widespread south of the Orinoco River, and through eastern Venezuela. Although considered by SAVAGE (2002) and SOLORZANO (2004) as an uncommon species in Central America, in some areas south of the Orinoco river it can be quite common (like in Río Uei, Sierra de Lema, Estado Bolívar, Venezuela; BARRIO-AMORÓS & DUELLMAN 2009). During an expedition to this last place (BARRIO-AMORÓS & DUELLMAN 2009), three out of six snakes observed in 14 days belonged to this species.

Currently, this snake is known from Costa Rica and Panama south to Bolivia (SAVAGE 2002), with an apparent gap between the Darien area and the area south of the Orinoco River, though it is well known in the Colombian Chocó (CASTRO-HERRERA & VARGAS-SALINAS 2008). All known Venezuelan localities (Fig. 1) were south of the Orinoco River and in the east of the country (BEEBE 1946; KAISER et al. 2003; BARRIO-AMORÓS & DUELLMAN 2009). But because of the species' presence in Central America (e.g. SAVAGE 2002), it is reasonable to assume a wider distribution along the north-eastern Andean piedmont, as well as along the piedmont of the Sierra de Perijá, where it has not yet been found. This distribution pattern is followed by other ophidian species like *Drymobius rhombifer* (GÜNTHER, 1860), *Oxybelis fulgidus* (DAUDIN, 1803), and *Xen-*

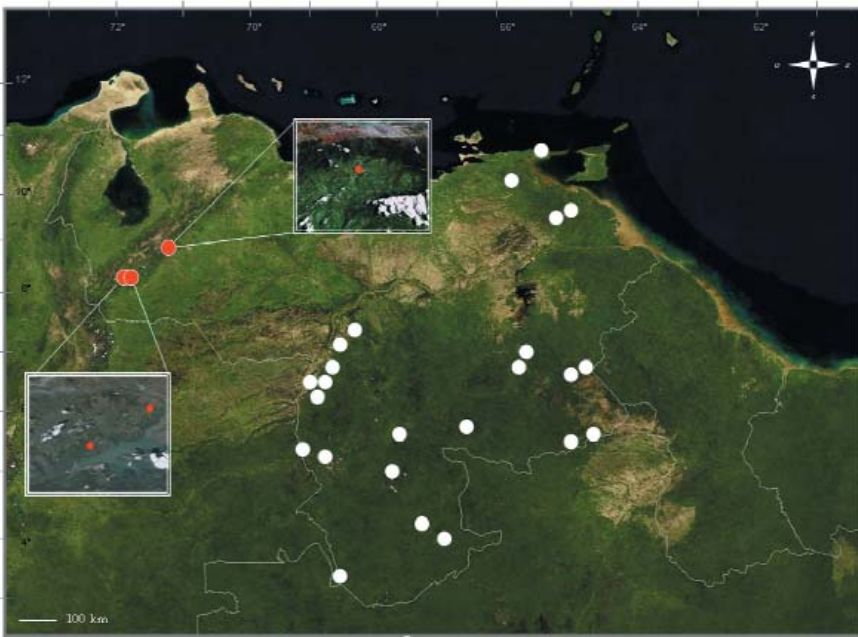


Fig. 1: Known distribution (white dots) of *Siphlophis compressus* (DAUDIN, 1803) in Venezuela south and east of the Orinoco River based on data in BEEBE (1946), ROZE (1966), LANCINI (1986), MCDIARMID & PAOLILLO (1988), LANCINI & KORNACKER (1989), RODRÍGUEZ & FUENTES (1995-1996), KAISER et al. (2003), BARRIO-AMORÓS & DUELLMAN (2009) and new records from the foothills of the Cordillera de Mérida, western Venezuela (red dots). Upper red symbol - 08°54'56"N, 70°26'50"W (BARRIO-AMORÓS & MOLINA 2010), lower red symbols - 07° 54'51"N, 71°43'28"W and 07°47'59"N, 71°45'38"W (this paper).



Fig. 2: *Siphlophis compressus* (DAUDIN, 1803) from near Calderas, Municipio Bolívar, Estado Barinas, Venezuela (08°54'56"N, 70°26'50"W, 900 m a.s.l.),

odon rhabdocephalus (WIED, 1824) (CALCAÑO & BARRIO 2002; SAVAGE 2002, SOLÓRZANO 2004, BARRIO-AMORÓS & MOLINA 2010).

Recently, some members of the Programa Andes Tropicales, a NGO based in Mérida city (Venezuelan Andes), found two specimens of *S. compressus* at the eastern (Orinoquian) versant foothills of the Cordillera de Mérida. One of the animals was photographed (Fig. 2) but not collected. The locality is at the vicinity of the town of Calderas, Municipio Bolívar, Estado Barinas, 08°54'56"N, 70°26'50"W, 900 m a.s.l. (BARRIO-AMORÓS & MOLINA 2010). A second locality, further to the southwest is at Segundo Desarrollo Complejo Hidroeléctrico Uribante-Caparo, Sector Las Cuevas, Municipio Uribante, Estado Táchira, 07°54'51"N, 71°43'28"W, 1200 m, with a voucher specimen at Colección Biológica del Desarrollo Uribante Caparo, Táchira, Venezuela (CBDESURCA-00563). Finally, two more specimens from the same locality, but at slightly lower elevation (07°47'59"N, 71°45'38"W, 790 m) were deposited at Museo Científico de la Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira, Venezuela (CVUNET AN-0067 and 0153). All these sites are located within areas classified as premontane humid forest and premontane very humid forest, according to HOLD-RIDGE's system (EWEL & MADRIZ 1968).

The remarkable new records extend the known range of *S. compressus* in Venezuela about 400 km to the NNW. This corroborates once again the Amazonian corridor along the eastern piedmont of the Venezuelan Andes. The senior author and colleagues have already reported many Amazonian species, otherwise known only from the south of the Orinoco River in Venezuela and sometimes with extension to the eastern part of the country (BARRIO-AMORÓS 1998). These include species such as the frogs *Lepidodactylus (Lithodytes) lineatus* (SCHNEIDER, 1799) (BARRIO 1999a), *Hypsiboas boans* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (BARRIO 1999b, 2001), and the snakes *Anilius scytale* LINNAEUS, 1758 (BARRIO et al. 2002), *Micrurus lemniscatus* LINNAEUS, 1758 (BARRIO-AMORÓS & CALCAÑO 2003), and *Epicrates cenchria* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (BARRIO-AMORÓS & DÍAZ DE PASCUAL 2008).

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