

The easternmost record for *Tropidophis spiritus* Hedges and Garrido, 1999 (Serpentes: Tropidophiidae) in Cuba

Ansel Fong G. ^{1*}and Luis F. de Armas²

The small boa *Tropidophis spiritus* Hedges and Garrido, 1999 was described on the basis of a single male specimen from Canal Zaza, cacerío Chorrera Brava, Sancti Spiritus province, Cuba. A second specimen is deposited in the Zoological Collection of the Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática, La Habana, Cuba (catalogue number: CZACC 4.5660), which was collected in Caja de Agua, Sierra de Banao, Central Cuba on June 2000. Hedges (2002) examined four specimens in his revision of the genus, but he did not include the localities from the analysed snakes nor the name of the collections where they are deposited.

Regarding its geographical distribution, Dominguez and Moreno (2003) said that it is restricted to the southern part of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus provinces in Cuba; they also added that the species is very abundant in Trinidad and near Zaza dam, but they did not mention any voucher specimens. Henderson and Powell (2009) extended the distribution of this species to “Central Cuba” and compiled the scarce data available from previous authors. None of these papers have included information about the habitat where this snake lives.

On February 25, 2008, Luis F. de Armas, Glenia Diaz and Carlos A. Cruz collected an specimen of *T. spiritus* in Loma del Heliógrafo (22°01'N, 79°04'W, altitude: 140 m), south of Arroyo Blanco town, Sancti Spiritus province, Cuba (Fig. 1). This specimen was found under a small stone, near a creek, in a semi deciduous forest. Approximately 20 m away, a juvenile specimen of *Tropidophis melanurus* was collected under another small stone. This new locality is 38.5 km (straight line distance) NE of the type locality, and represents the

easternmost record for this species (Fig. 1).

The specimen collected at Loma del Heliógrafo is a sub-adult individual with a snout-vent length of 182 mm and a tail of 27 mm (Fig. 2). It agrees with the original description of *T. spiritus* (Hedges and Garrido, 1999) and with the species definition following Hedges (2002): ventrals= 190, subcaudals= 38, smooth dorsal scales in 25-23-17 rows, parietal scales not in contact, dorsal body spots= 36/32, dorsal tail spots= 4, longitudinal rows of body spots= 6, ventral spots present, eye diameter (1.5 mm)/head width (5.82 mm)= 0.26, head width/neck width (3.22 mm)= 1.81, body gracile. The specimen is permanently deposited in the herpetological collection of BIOECO, Cuba (catalogue number: BSC.H 3573).

Acknowledgments. We thank Michel Domínguez for confirming our specimen identity and for donating data of the specimen in the IES collection, and M. Cañizares for helping with coordinates for Banao locality. The junior author is very indebted to G. Diaz Concepción and her suitor C. A. Cruz for field help during the expedition to Loma del Heliógrafo.

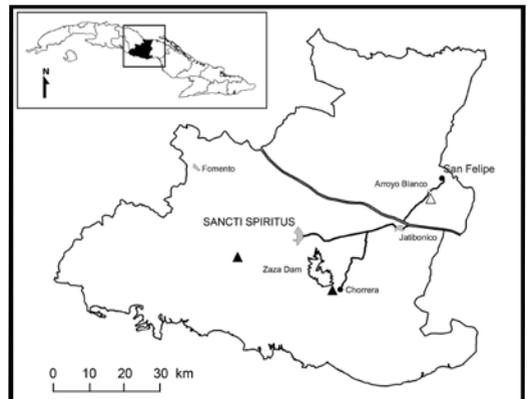


Figure 1. Map of Sancti Spiritus province, Cuba, showing the known localities for *Tropidophis spiritus* (solid triangles, the right one marks the type locality) and the new locality record (open triangle). Inset: Location of main map within Cuba.

1 Centro Oriental de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad (BIOECO), Museo de Historia Natural “Tomás Romay”, Enramadas # 601, Santiago de Cuba 90100, Cuba; e-mail: ansel@bioeco.ciges.inf.cu

2 Apartado Postal 4327, San Antonio de los Baños, La Habana 32500, Cuba.

* Corresponding author.



Figure 2. Live specimen of *Tropidophis spiritus* from Loma del Heliógrafo, Sancti Spiritus province, Cuba. Photo by A. Fong.

References

- Domínguez, M., L.V. Moreno. (2003): Serpientes del suelo. In: Anfibios y reptiles de Cuba, p. 98-109. Rodríguez Schettino, L.R., Ed., Vassa, Finland, UPC Print.
- Hedges, S.B. (2002): Morphological variation and the definition of species in the snake genus *Tropidophis* (Tropidophiidae). Bull. Nat. Hist. Mus. (London), Zool. Ser. **68**: 83-90.
- Hedges, S.B., O.H. Garrido. (1999): A new snake of the genus *Tropidophis* (Tropidophiidae) from Central Cuba. J. Herpetol. **33**: 436-441.
- Henderson, R.W., R. Powell. (2009): Natural history of West Indian reptiles and amphibians. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.