

Oedipina elongata (SCHMIDT, 1936) in Honduras

JOSIAH H. TOWNSEND, JAMES C. NIFONG & ROBERTO DOWNING M.

Abstract. A specimen of *Oedipina elongata* (SCHMIDT, 1936) was recently collected in extreme northwestern Honduras in Departamento de Cortés. This represents the first confirmed record of this species from a locality in Honduras. The specimen was found active at night, crawling on a branch 1 m above the ground.

Key words: Amphibia: Caudata: Plethodontidae: *Oedipina elongata*; Honduras; distribution; arboreal behavior.

SCHMIDT (1936) first described the worm salamander *Oedipina elongata* (Caudata: Plethodontidae) based on material collected near Puerto Barrios, Departamento Izabel, Guatemala, a locality within 30 km of the Honduran border (McCranie & Wilson 2002). This species is currently known to occur in eastern Chiapas, Mexico, eastern Guatemala, and the Maya Mountains of southern Belize (Lee 1996, Campbell 1998). The status of *O. elongata* in Honduras is poorly known, with its previous inclusion in the Honduran herpetofauna based on a single specimen [UF (Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida) 89460] acquired by an animal importer in Miami from an exporter in Honduras, and a photograph of an animal provided by the same Honduran exporter (McCranie & Wilson 2002). Neither of these records is attributed with any locality data other than simply "Honduras". Citing this material as well as the proximity of the type locality of *O. elongata* to the Honduran border, McCranie & Wilson (2002: 154) included the species in their treatment of the amphibian fauna of that country, stating "the species almost certainly occurs in northwestern Honduras near the border with Guatemala".

Between 29 June and 17 August 2005, herpetofaunal surveys were conducted at El Paraiso Valley Ecological Reserve, a pri-

vately owned reserve in the northern foothills of the Sierra de Omoa in Departamento Cortés. Survey methods included drift fence lines with pitfall traps as well as daytime and nighttime opportunistic and quadrat searches. To allow for nighttime surveys deeper inside the reserve, a remote campsite was established about 2 km inside the valley along the Río Piedra de Muclé.

On 6 August 2005, an adult *Oedipina elongata* (UF 144649; Fig. 1 a, b) was collected at night at the aforementioned remote campsite (15°40'36"N, 88°06'01"W), 185 m elevation, as it crawled on a broken branch approximately 1 m above the ground. This species is typically found inside of fallen logs and termite nests (Campbell 1998), making the location of UF 144649 notable, as it is the first reported example of arboreality by *O. elongata*. The broken branch had been propped up with a pile of firewood next to a burning fire. The salamander may have become dislodged from one of the recently collected logs before climbing up the branch, or climbed the branch to avoid the smoke and heat radiating from the nearby fire. Relevant data for UF 144649 is as follows: costal grooves 17, with eight visible between adpressed limbs; maxillary teeth absent; dorsal coloration in life purplish black with grayish white patches on dorsal surface of head, scattered grayish white spots



Fig. 1a, b. *Oedipina elongata* (UF 144649) from the El Paraiso Valley Ecological Reserve, 185 m elevation, Departamento Cortés, Honduras. Photographs: J.C. NIFONG.

on dorsal surface of body, and rings of grayish white spots on dorsal and lateral surfaces of tail; ventral coloration medium gray with scattered grayish white spots. The locality where UF 144649 was collected is less than 15 km from the border with Guatemala, and less than 50 km from the type locality.

Acknowledgments

Fieldwork was conducted as part of Operation Wallacea's Honduras Forests Conservation Pro-

ject, and we thank TIM COLES and RICHARD FIELD for supporting our work with this project. We are grateful to ENRIQUE MORALES ALEGRÍA for allowing us to work on his property, and to DOÑA TELMA for being a gracious hostess during our stay in El Paraiso. Field assistance was provided by LOUISA F. SLY, CHARLOTTE C. WOODHEAD, PHILLIP J. LEWIS, and JACKIE B. GRANT. Research and export permits were kindly furnished by CONRADO GONZÁLEZ, MARTHA MORENO, and IBRAHIM PADILLA of the Departamento de Areas Protegidas y Vida Silvestre (DAPVS) of AFE-COHDEFOR. LARRY D. WILSON provided comments on a draft of this manuscript.

References

- CAMPBELL, J.A. (1998): Amphibians and Reptiles of Northern Guatemala, the Yucatán, and Belize. – University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- LEE, J.C. (1996): The Amphibians and Reptiles of the Yucatán Peninsula. – Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- MCCRANIE, J.R. & WILSON, L.D. (2002): The Amphibians of Honduras. – Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, Ithaca.
- SCHMIDT, K.P. (1936): Guatemalan salamanders of the genus *Oedipus*. – Zoological Series of the Field Museum of Natural History, **20**: 135-166.

Manuscript received: 12 October 2005

Authors' addresses: JOSIAH H. TOWNSEND, Tropical Conservation and Development Program, Center For Latin American Studies, University of Florida, and Division of Herpetology, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida 32611-7800, USA, e-mail: jtownsend@flmnh.ufl.edu; JAMES C. NIFONG, Division of Herpetology, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida 32611-7800; ROBERTO DOWNING M., Barrio Los Andes, 10 Calle, 11 y 12 Avenida, NO 111, San Pedro Sula, Cortés, Honduras.