
A New Snake for Trinidad

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ON September 18, 1981 Richard Joseph, a keeper at the Emperor Valley Zoo, found dead on the road near Chatham on the South West Peninsula of Trinidad a snake that was unlike any other he had ever seen. This snake was preserved and taken to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) where it was lodged as specimen No. 1980/1167.

The head of the Herpetology Department, Andrew Stimson, identified the snake as *Thamnodynastes strigatus* (Günther). It is a new record for Trinidad. There is a distinct possibility that it is a recent colonist or stray from the Venezuelan coast to the south, but the interesting aspect of this find is that this species has not so far been reported from nearby Venezuela but only in Sao Paulo State, Brazil and south into Paraguay and Argentina.

Further investigations are being carried out by Andrew Stimson. The description given by him of the specimen follows:

Male: snout-vent length 403mm; tail (incomplete) 105mm; dorsals smooth, with single apical pits, in 19 rows at midbody reducing to 17 posteriorly; ventrals 149; anal divided; subcaudals 50+ (an estimated 20–25 missing); 8 supralabials, 4th – 5th entering the eye; single preocular; two postoculars; temporals 2+2; 9 infralabials, first 4 in contact with the anterior chinshields.

The pale brown of the back separated from the darker brown of the sides by a pair of light longitudinal narrow stripes; dorsum and upper sides with irregular black spotting mostly confined to the scale edges; venter whitish with a pair of lateral, longitudinal, light-centred dark stripes; a second, central pair of light-centred longitudinal stripes is less distinct, almost grey; these two stripes merge posteriorly on the tail and anteriorly on the throat to form a single midventral stripe; head darker and more heavily black-spotted than the trunk; a black postocular streak runs from the eye to the angle of the jaw; supralabials barred with black; a black stripe runs from the eye to the nostril.