

A new record of Amphisbaena slateri from Peru.

by Carl Gans.

The forested valleys of the eastern Andes represent a series of isolated pockets that appear to have been poorly studied. Three apparently endemic amphisbaenians are known from this general region. These are Amphisbaena pericensis Noble (1921) from northern Peru, Amphisbaena slateri Boulenger (1907) from southern Peru and Amphisbaena polygrammica Werner (1900) of Central Peru, was based upon a single specimen from Chanchamayo. The type of the latter form was once in the Dresden museum which was destroyed the second World War and the form has never been retaken. This is particularly unhappy because this species shows the closest affinities to Amphisbaena occidentalis Cope, thus far taken only on the western side of the Andes.

Under the circumstances I am most grateful to Dr. H.-W. Koepke of the Hamburg Zoological Museum for making available another amphisbaenid collected in northeastern Peru. This is ZMH R01282 (KP 1892 hg) from Panguana, Rio Yuyapichis a tributary of the Rio Pachitea (9° 37'S, 74° 56'W), at an elevation of 260m taken when digging in a garden in the tropical rainforest. To my surprise the specimen proves to be A. slateri and representing a more than 1000 kilometer range extension to the north for this form well past the zone from which the type of A. polygrammica was obtained. The specimen has 213 body annuli, autotomy at caudal annulus nine of a total of 22 and ten dorsal and 14 ventral segments to a midbody annulus. Snout-vent plus tail length is 148+18 mm.

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The color pattern differs from that of the previous specimens in being generalized brown but not dark. However the other characteristics show only minor differences so that this form might ultimately prove to have been sampled from a discrete race of Amphisbaena slateri but is clearly conspecific with this. The new record again suggests that the eastern Andes presumably contain many as yet undescribed or poorly characterized amphibians and reptiles and raises some interesting questions regarding the ecological separation of the several forms occurring here.