

New country record of *Erythrolamprus dorsocorallinus* (Reptilia: Dipsadidae) from Guyana

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The genus *Erythrolamprus* Boie, 1826 (synonym of *Liophis*; Grazziotin *et al.*, 2012) is one of the most diverse taxa of New World snakes, comprising roughly 50 species widely distributed from Central to South America (Dixon, 1980; Fernandes *et al.*, 2002; Esqueda *et al.*, 2007; Curcio *et al.*, 2009; Vidal *et al.*, 2010; Grazziotin *et al.*, 2012). Among these, the species *Erythrolamprus dorsocorallinus*, formerly thought to be a variation of *Erythrolamprus reginae* (Dixon, 1983), was originally described from the Venezuelan state of Barinas by Esqueda *et al.*, 2007. Since its formal description, *E. dorsocorallinus* has then been reported from a number of localities in Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, and the western Brazilian Amazonia (Franca *et al.*, 2010; Bernarde *et al.*, 2011; da Silva Araújo *et al.*, 2012; Pantoja *et al.*, 2012; Miranda

et al., 2014; Eversole *et al.*, 2016; Ascenso *et al.*, 2019) (Figure 1).

On 23 July 2022, at about 16:30 h (UTC-4), while walking in proximity of the primary school of the Warapoka village (7.8127, -59.2706; elevation 37 m), Moruca sub-district, Region 1, Guyana, author RB found what he reported to be “an exuberantly coloured snake” (Figure 2A), and called the attention of the other authors to help with identification. The snake was thus carefully inspected in situ, and compared to the information on scale counts, coloration, and markings available from literature (e.g., Esqueda *et al.*, 2007; Bernarde *et al.*, 2011; da Silva Araújo *et al.*, 2012; Ascenso *et al.*, 2019).

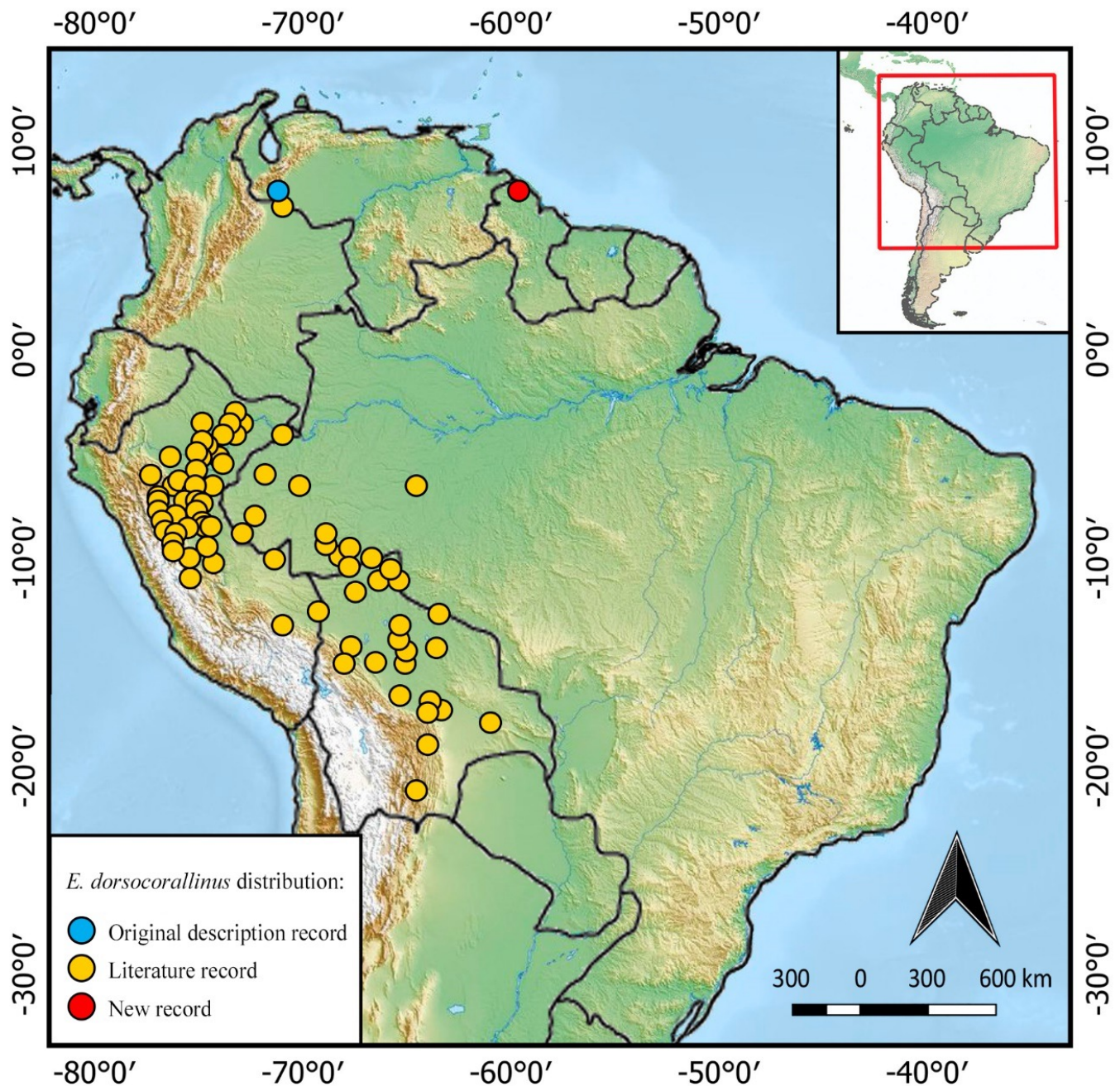


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of *E. dorsocorallinus*, including the new record from Guyana presented in this study (red). Map modified from Ascenso *et al.*, 2019.

The specimen presented 17 dorsal scale rows, 147 ventrals, and 68 subcaudals. The dorsum of body and tail was reddish. The distal half of the scales, the upper edges of supralabials, and the post-orbital stripe were black. No lateral black spots and dorsal-lateral stripes were detected. The belly was almost

uniformly orange, with very few black spots. The ventral surface of the tail was also orange, but completely lacked black spots. The following head scale features were recognised: prefrontals two contacting supraoculars, preocular, loreal, and postnasal; frontal pentagonal, longer than wide;

parietals two, longer than wide; supralabials eight, second and third contacting loreal, fourth to fifth contacting eye, and sixth and seventh higher than remaining supralabials; supraoculars longer than wide; loreal tetragonal, contacting second and third supralabials, postnasal, prefrontals, and preocular; preocular contacting supraocular, prefrontal, nasal, third and fourth supralabials; postoculars two, upper postocular higher than lower; infralabials nine (see Figure 2B). Based on these characteristics, matching the descriptions by Esqueda *et al.*, 2007 and Ascenso *et al.*, 2019, the snake was identified as *E. dorsocorallinus*. After further examination, the snake was released exactly where it had been found. No samples were collected from it.

To our knowledge, this is the first report of *E. dorsocorallinus* from Guyana, thus representing an addition to the faunal list of this country. The present record also constitutes the easternmost

boundary of the currently known distribution of *E. dorsocorallinus* in South America, and a range extension of about 1,300 km from the location where it was originally described (see Esqueda *et al.*, 2007). Due to the novelty of this species, the distribution of *E. dorsocorallinus* is probably underestimated. We hypothesise the presence of significant gaps between known occurrences to be attributable to insufficient sampling, and expect them to be filled by future reporting. Indeed, rigorous sampling is needed to more comprehensively document the actual distribution of *E. dorsocorallinus*, particularly regarding the apparent isolation between northern and southern records (see Figure 1). Reaching a better understanding of the species' distribution might help to promote studies on its ecology and behaviour, as well as to assess the potential need for conservation measures.

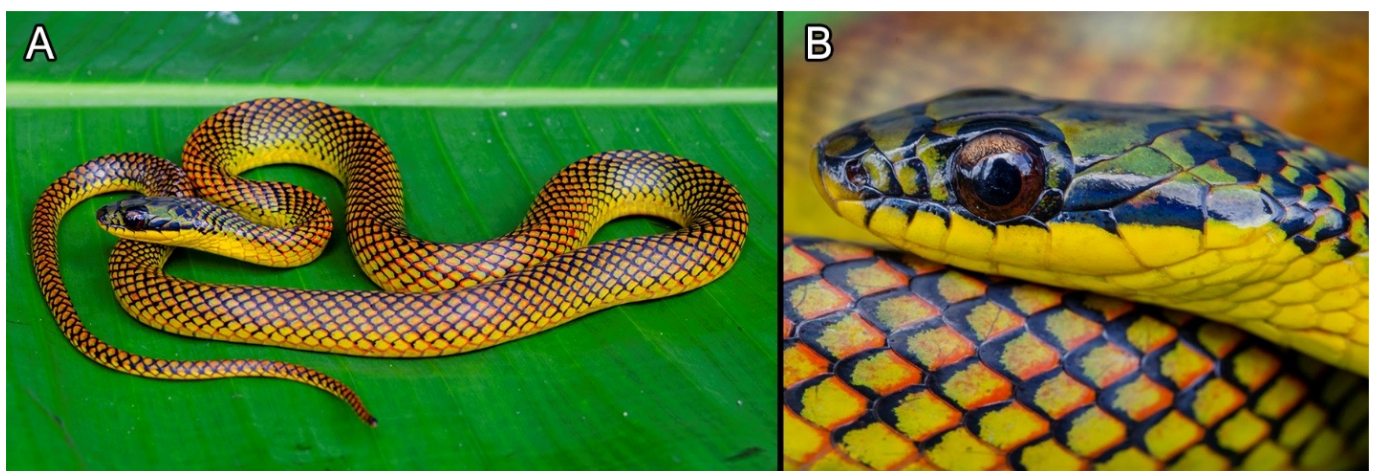


Figure 2. *Erythrolamprus dorsocorallinus* specimen found in Warapoka village, Moruca sub-district, Region 1, Guyana. A: entire view of the specimen; B: detail of the head. Photos by Ignazio Avella.

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