



*Tropidolepis undulatus.*

*J. H. Richard, del.*

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TROPIDOLEPIS.—*Cuvier. Dumeril et Bibron.*

Genus TROPIDOLEPIS.—CHARACTERS. Head short, sub-triangular, rounded in front, and covered with small plates; no palatine teeth; tongue obtuse in front, slightly notched, covered with minute papillæ; lips furnished with a double series of oblong plates; nostrils open in a single plate, surrounded by smaller scales; tympanum depressed in the meatus, which has its anterior border more or less dentated; neck below smooth, but with an oblique depression on each side; body short, depressed, and covered with large, carinated and imbricated scales above, and with smooth plates on the abdomen; tail very long, large, and depressed at its base, rounded towards its tip; neither dorsal nor caudal crest; there are femoral, but no anal pores.

TROPIDOLEPIS UNDULATUS.—*Bosc.**Plate IX.*

CHARACTERS. Head short, sub-triangular, rounded in front; body short, thick, depressed, covered with carinated and imbricated scales, and marked with transverse undulating black bands.

SYNONYMES. *Stellio undulatus*, *Latreille*, Hist. Nat. Rept., tom. ii. p. 40, MSS. from Bosc.

*Agama undulata*, *Daudin*, Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. iii. p. 384.

*Uromastix undulatus*, *Merrem*, Versuch eines Syst. der Amphib., p. 57.

*Stellio undulatus*, *Bosc*, Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxi. p. 527.

*Lacerta fasciata*, et *hyacinthina*, *Green*, Journ. Acad. Nat. Scien. Philad., vol. i. p. 349.



*Tropidolepis undulatus*, *Cuvier*, Reg. An., tom. ii. p. 38.

*Tropidolepis undulatus*, *Gray*, in Griff. An. King., vol. ix. p. 43.

*Agama undulata*, *Harlan*, Med. and Phys. Res., p. 140.

*Tropidolepis undulatus*, *Dumeril et Bibron*, Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. iv. p. 298.

**DESCRIPTION.** The head is short, sub-triangular, rounded in front, elevated above and covered with rough imbricated and polygonal scales. The snout is obtuse; the rostral plate pentagonal and elongated, with several small plates between it and the nasal and frontal; the nasal plates are single on each side, nearly semi-circular, and are surrounded by five or six small plates. The nostrils are lateral, but open upwards and backwards, and are very near the snout, on the inner margin of the superciliary ridge. There are about ten frontal plates, the central longest; of the two vertical plates, the anterior is the larger, pentagonal and bordered with small plates; the occipital plate is broad, rounded behind, angular in front, and surrounded by six smaller scales, arranged in two rows. There are five superior orbital plates, most extensive in the transverse direction; these have an inner margin of small scales, and an outer border, consisting of three rows of small scales, forming the margin of the superciliary ridge: the eyelids themselves are covered with minute scales. The margin of the upper jaw is covered with six or seven narrow, oblong, quadrilateral plates, nearly all of the same size; above these are two or three rows of small scales.

The eyes are small and black, and appear sunken, from the projection of the superciliary ridge. The external meatus of the ear is large and oval, most extensive in the vertical direction; and in front appears serrated, from the projection of the points of three or four scales. The neck is contracted and short, and has on each side in front of the anterior extremities a deep oblong depression, covered with a fold of skin.

The body is elongated, though full, large, rounded, and covered above with small hexagonal, strongly carinated scales; each carina terminating posteriorly in a sharp, elongated point. These carina form sharp ridges, which are directed



longitudinally on the back, but obliquely on the flanks. The abdomen is broad, flattened, rounded at the sides, and covered with rhomboidal, reticulated, and imbricated scales, each scale terminating posteriorly in a point. The scales on the throat and anterior part of the chest are frequently notched behind, instead of ending in a point; those under the chin are very small. The tail is long, cylindrical, and covered with sharp, elongated or imbricated scales, pentagonal or triangular, with their apices rounded, and are verticillated or arranged in circular rows, which renders the tail rough to the touch. The vent is semicircular, transverse, and bordered before and behind with minute scales.

The anterior extremities are rather large and rounded, covered above with scales similar to those on the back, but smaller and smooth below. There are five delicate fingers, furnished each with a very small, short and curved nail. The posterior extremities are nearly twice the size of the anterior, and are covered with similar scales, with a range of sixteen or eighteen pores on the inferior surface of the thigh; behind these are numerous small scales that make a sort of ridge. There are five toes, long, slender, and scaled to the root of the nails, which are short and curved.

**COLOUR.** The head is dark brown above, with a black bar extending from orbit to orbit; behind this is a dusky white bar of similar extent. The neck above is dark grey; behind the tympanum are two or three scales, with their margins of bright red. The lower jaw is silver-grey; the throat black, with a broad green blotch ascending, to be visible on the side of the neck, sometimes interrupted in the mesial line.

The body is pepper-and-salt grey above, with five or six transverse black bands, not of equal breadth in all parts, and having their posterior borders marked with white blotches, which frequently become continuous, so that their posterior margins appear tipped with a white edge. The abdomen is silver-grey, marked with small, oblong, black spots; these are so disposed near the centre as to form an interrupted line, which is most distinct between the thighs.



On each side of the abdomen is a long green blotch, surrounded with black, which runs to the anterior extremities; and the lighter central portion of the abdomen, meeting the lighter line extended from the inferior surface of the anterior extremities, forms a cross on the thorax.

The tail is dusky, with several transverse bands of black.

The anterior extremities are dusky above, with transverse bands of black even to the toes, with a few white spots on their anterior and posterior surface; the under surface is silver-grey. The posterior extremities are coloured like the anterior, both above and below.

**DIMENSIONS.** Length of head, 7 lines; length of body, 3 inches 3 lines; length of tail, 4 inches; total length, 7 inches 8 lines.

**HABITS.** The *Tropidolepis undulatus* inhabits chiefly the pine forests of our country, and is often found under the bark of decaying trees; it chooses also commonly old fences as its basking place. It is exceedingly rapid in its motions, climbing with great facility to the tops of trees, and is hence not taken alive without great difficulty. Its food is insects, especially such as are found under decayed wood.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.** The *Tropidolepis undulatus* has a very extended geographical range. It is abundant in the forests of New Jersey, and is found even as far north as latitude 43°, whence it reaches the Gulf of Mexico along the Atlantic States; and is also common west of the Alleghany mountains, as I have seen individuals of this species from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas; and Say observed it at Engineer Cantonment, on the Missouri river.

**GENERAL REMARKS.** There can be no doubt that this animal was first observed in Carolina by Bosc, who, in his notes furnished to Latreille and

Daudin, describes it under the name *Stellio undulatus*, as Latreille first published it, though Daudin afterwards arranged it as an *Agama*. Cuvier placed it in the genus *Tropidolepis*, in which he has been followed by Dumeril and Bibron, who have recently so well described the animal as to leave nothing to be desired.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Tropidolepis undulatus – Bosc." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 2, 73–77. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326780>.

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