



*Phrynosoma coronata.*

*Stone by C. Buchel.*

*P. S. Duvall, Lith, Philad<sup>a</sup>.*

PHRYNOSOMA CORONATA.—*Blainville*.

*Plate XIII.*

CHARACTERS. Head short, triangular; nostrils open at the anterior extremity of the superciliary ridge; occipital region surrounded with eleven spines; eight rows of large, rhomboidal, elongated and pointed scales under the chin, reaching to the throat, external series largest. Body covered with rhomboidal scales, and large trihedral tubercles; two rows of spines along the flanks, the superior larger; a row of spines on each side the tail, from the root to the extremity.

SYNONYMES. *Phrynosoma coronata*, *Blainville*, *Nouv. Ann. du Mus. d'Hist. Nat.*, tom. iv. p. 284, pl. xxv. fig. 1. a b c.

*Agama orbicularis*, *Audubon*, *Birds, &c.*, vol. iv. pl. cccxviii.

*Phrynosoma coronata*, *Dumeril et Bibron*, *Hist. Nat. des Rept.*, tom. iv. p. 318.

DESCRIPTION. The head is short, thick, triangular, and covered on the forehead and vertex with small polygonal plates of unequal size, and with a few scales and elevated tubercles on the occipital region. The snout is short and rounded, with the rostral plate very small. The nostrils are near the snout, open at the anterior extremity of the superciliary ridge, and are directed upwards and a little outwards. The nasal plates are single on each side, circular, exceedingly narrow, and surrounded by six polygonal scales. The superciliary ridge is prominent, projecting over the eye, and covered with five or six quadrilateral plates; posteriorly it is elongated, and terminates in a pointed tubercle. The eyes are small and sunken, with the pupil black and the iris very dark grey. The superior labial plates are eight in number, quadrilateral, very small, and not extending to the angle of the mouth, where their place is supplied by small granulations; there are



twelve inferior labial plates, quadrilateral, and still smaller than the superior. The outer and inferior margin of the lower jaw presents an horizontal series of large tubercles, increasing in size from the chin towards the angle of the mouth; the posterior of these is a little removed from the row, and is much larger, sharply pointed, and placed directly under the angle of the mouth; the other tubercles are not elongated and spinous posteriorly, as in the *Phrynosoma cornuta*, but give only a festooned appearance to the lower jaw. Between these tubercles and the inferior labial plates are three or four rows of small scales.

The chin is covered below, on the mesial line, with one or two rows of small rhomboidal scales; on each side of these are placed four rows of larger scales, greatly elongated, and pointed outwardly and posteriorly, reaching to the throat, and increasing in size from within outwards, the external largest. Beyond these, and within the series of large tubercles that border the lower jaw, are again three or four rows of small scales.

The whole posterior border of the head, from one angle of the mouth to the other, is surrounded by a row of long pointed spines, of conical shape, flattened at their bases, and disposed as in the *Phrynosoma cornuta*, but longer, and more numerous—in general eleven, but I have seen thirteen, the inferior very small. The external meatus of the ear is large, oval, and vertical. The neck is short, contracted behind the head, and protected above by small scales and pointed tubercles. The throat is covered with smooth rhomboidal scales, pointed posteriorly; a transverse fold of the skin ascends on the side of the throat, and covers a depression in front of the anterior extremities, where the border of the fold is furnished with spines.

The body is short, flattened, rounded, and arched outwards at the flanks; above it is protected by small, irregular scales, intermingled with large trihedral pointed tubercles. These pointed tubercles are surrounded at their bases by others of the same form, but smaller, and are irregularly disposed in four rows on each side of the mesial line, as in the *Phrynosoma cornuta*, from which, however, it differs



entirely in wanting the three or four rows of small scales on the vertebral line, in place of which it has large scales and spiny tubercles. The flanks are furnished with a double row of spines; the upper is much the larger, and makes a serrated margin from the anterior to the posterior extremities. The scales on the thorax and abdomen are large, rhomboidal and smooth, terminating posteriorly in a point.

The tail is large, broad, and flattened at the root, but soon becomes smaller, is depressed in its whole length, and covered above with scales and pointed tubercles, as on the back; and below, with large rhomboidal scales, elongated in points posteriorly. On each lateral margin of the tail is a very remarkable range of large trihedral flattened spines, which gives to the tail a strong and regularly serrated border, unlike any other of this genus that I have observed.

The anterior extremities are well developed, and protected in front by large, elongated, rhomboidal scales, carinated and pointed, even to the roots of the nails; their under surface is covered with small, smooth, rhomboidal scales; there are five fingers, distinct and slender, each with a short and curved nail. The posterior extremities are but little larger than the anterior, and are covered in the same way, but have strong spines along the superior and posterior part of the thigh. The toes are five in number, large, distinct, and furnished each with a short and curved nail. On the under surface of the thigh is a range of sixteen or eighteen pores.

COLOUR. The head above is light brown, with a few dusky blotches; the upper jaw is grey. The three inferior spines that surround the head are light, and the two central spines are dark chestnut. The ground colour of the neck and body above is pepper-and-salt grey, with a lighter vertebral line from the occiput to near the extremity of the tail, but frequently interrupted by transverse dusky bars; nor is it perfect in other parts, as it contains several spines, which are all dark; on each side of this line at the neck is an oblong dark chestnut blotch, reaching to the shoulders, broad before and narrow behind. Behind these are four bands, with irregular margins, which traverse completely the vertebral line, but are there less



evident. The throat and abdomen are yellowish-white, marked with large dusky blotches, frequently confluent. The tail is coloured like the back above, but is more completely banded, especially towards the tip; its inferior surface is silver-grey, with a few indistinct dusky bars, corresponding with those of the upper surface. The anterior extremities are light grey above, with dusky bars and bands, and silver-white below. The posterior extremities are coloured like the anterior, both above and below.

**DIMENSIONS.** Length of head, 10 lines; of body, from head to vent, 3 inches 2 lines; of tail, 1 inch 11 lines; of thigh, 11 lines; of leg, 9 lines; of tarsus and toes, 11 lines; total length, 5 inches 11 lines.

**HABITS.** The *Phrynosoma coronata* is similar in its habit, as I am informed by Mr. Nuttall, to the *Phrynosoma cornuta*. He says its food is invariably insects, and that he has kept them for months in confinement; that they would conceal themselves about his person or about his apartment, but make their appearance at certain times for their food, which they took readily from the hand. When in their wild state they move with great rapidity among the bushes; but when they find they cannot escape by their swiftness, they remain perfectly quiet, and suffer themselves to be made prisoners without resistance.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.** The *Phrynosoma coronata* inhabits the country south of the Oregon river.

**GENERAL REMARKS.** This animal was first described by Blainville, from a specimen found in California by Botta; his description is very good, but the figure accompanying it is faulty in many respects, especially in having the superciliary ridge represented with several prominent spines, and in wanting the peculiar serrated margin of the tail. Audubon next gave a good figure of it in his great work on Ornithology, under the name *Agama orbicularis*, from a specimen furnished him by Nuttall.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Phrynosoma coronata – Blainville." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 2, 97–100. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326784>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/24927>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326784>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/326784>

**Holding Institution**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

**Sponsored by**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.