



Crotalophorus tergeminus.

J. Richard del.

P. S. Duval Lith. Phila.

CROTALOPHORUS TERGEMINUS.—*Say*.*Plate V.*

CHARACTERS. Head large, triangular, rounded in front, covered anteriorly and on the vertex with plates, and posteriorly with scales; a deep pit between the eye and nostril; upper jaw with poisonous fangs; body above cinereous, with a triple series of dark brown spots; beneath a double series of dusky spots.—Pl. 150. Caud. Pl. 19. Bifid Pl. 6.

SYNONYMES. *Crotalus tergeminus*, *Say*, Long's Exped. Rock. Mount., vol. i. p. 499.

Crotalus tergeminus, *Harlan*, Med. and Phys. Res., p. 135.

DESCRIPTION. The head is large, triangular, truncated in front, and covered above with plates to behind the eyes. The vertical plate is large, pentagonal, broad before, and pointed behind; the superior orbital are oblong, of equal length with the vertical, but narrower, and project outwardly over the eye; the occipital plates are rather large and irregularly rhomboidal; behind these the head is covered with small scales; the frontal plates are broad, sub-pentagonal, and rounded outwards; the anterior frontal are trigonal, with their bases directed outward and forward; the nasal are quadrilateral and nearly of the same size; the one is concave behind and the other before, to accommodate the nostrils. There are two posterior orbital plates, and two inferior, of which the posterior is long and narrow; there are two anterior orbital, the inferior making part of the pit. The nostrils are lateral and near the snout. The upper jaw is covered with twelve labial plates on each side.

COLOUR. The ground colour of the whole animal above and at the sides is

cinereous, tinged slightly with olive. The head is marked with a dusky bar between the orbits, whence depart two dark bands, one of which runs along the neck for an inch or more, and then joins the band of the opposite side, leaving an oblong lighter coloured blotch on the vertebral line; the other dusky band descends from the orbit to behind the angle of the mouth; beneath this latter dusky band is a white one of equal length, and of nearly the same breadth. The upper jaw is dusky. The body is marked with a triple series of dusky blotches, those on the vertebral line largest, and about forty-two in number; they are oval, emarginate in front, and most extensive transversely, and are all bordered with a thin margin of black; opposite to these oval spots and on each side is another series of dusky spots, sub-round and bordered also with black, and this again, but indistinctly, with a lighter colour. The tail is banded with dusky. The belly is whitish, tinged with flesh colour, mottled with black spots; and each plate has two or more dusky blotches, disposed in two irregular series.

DIMENSIONS. Length of head, 1 inch 2 lines; length of body, 22 inches 10 lines; length of tail 2 inches 2 lines: total length, 2 feet 2 inches 2 lines. In the specimen here described there were 150 abdominal plates, 19 entire plates, and bifid under the tail, which sustained five rattles.

HABITS. Mr. Say observes—"they seem to prefer an unproductive soil, where their sluggish gait may not meet with the opposing obstacles of grass and mud;" for their hiding places they seek the holes of the prairie dog, (*Arctomys Ludovicianus*.)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. The *Crotalophorus tergeminus* inhabits the region of country bordering on the Rocky Mountains, near the sources of the Missouri.

GENERAL REMARKS. This Rattlesnake was first observed and accurately described by Mr. Say, in Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains. The colour of the accompanying plate was done from a preserved specimen.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Crotolophorus tergeminus – Say." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 3, 29–30. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326796>.

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