



Tropidonotus erythrogaster.

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TROPIDONOTUS ERYTHROGASTER.—*Shaw*.*Plate VII.*

CHARACTERS. Head elongated; body long, covered with carinated scales above; whole superior surface of animal brick-dust colour, with a tinge of green at the sides; abdomen and tail uniform copper colour. Pl. 147. Sc. 60.

SYNONYMES. *Coluber erythrogaster*, *Shaw*, Gen. Zool., vol. iii. p. 458.

Copperbellied-snake, *Catesby*, Carolina, &c., vol. ii. p. 46.

Copperbelly, *Vulgo*.

DESCRIPTION. The head is large, but elongated and rather pointed at the snout, and covered with large plates. The vertical plate is regularly pentagonal, broadest in front; the superior orbital are quadrilateral, elongated, narrow. The occipital are irregularly pentagonal, broadest anteriorly. The frontal plates are quadrilateral and large; the anterior frontal are of similar shape, but small. The rostral is large and semicircular, concave below, convex above. There are two nasal plates, quadrilateral, and nearly of the same size; the anterior is concave posteriorly, and the posterior lunated in front. There is but one anterior orbital plate, and two posterior, smaller, and nearly quadrilateral. The inferior wall of the orbit is completed by the fourth and fifth labial plates, which are eight in number, quadrilateral, and largest posteriorly.

The nostrils are lateral, and very near the snout. The eyes are large and bright; the pupil dark, the iris grey, with a tinge of red. The neck is contracted; the body very stout, and covered with strongly carinated scales, notched on their

posterior part. The tail is long, compressed, triangular, and terminates in a point; covered with carinated scales above, and bifid plates below.

COLOUR. The whole superior surface of the animal, body, head, neck, and tail, is brownish-red, or brick-dust colour; the sides are tinged with green near the abdomen; the whole inferior surface is uniform copper colour.

DIMENSIONS. Length of head, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest breadth of head, 11 lines; length of body, 32 inches; length of tail, 11 inches. The specimen described had 147 abdominal plates, and 60 pair of sub-caudal bifid plates.

HABITS. The habits of the *Tropidonotus erythrogaster* seem closely allied to those of the *Tropidonotus fasciatus*; they are found in similar localities, and live on similar food, though the former is less numerous than the latter.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. I have never hitherto heard of the existence of this snake northward of South Carolina; its range extends through that state, Georgia, Alabama, and along the northern shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Professor Green, of Philadelphia, has in his possession a specimen taken as far west as Amity county, Louisiana.

GENERAL REMARKS. This animal was first described by Catesby, under the name of Copperbellied Snake, who gave also a pretty good drawing of it; and Foster, in his catalogue appended to Catesby, called it *Coluber erythrogaster*; since which work it has been overlooked by some naturalists, and by others referred to the *Coluber porcatus* of Bosc.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Tropidonotus erythrogaster – Shaw." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 4, 33–34. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326828>.

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