

NOMENCLATORIAL NOTES ON MILK SNAKES.

Referring to the treatment in the Check List of North American Amphibians and Reptiles, by Stejneger and Barbour, of the North American milksnakes belonging to the genus *Lampropeltis*, especially the group corresponding to Cope's genus *Osceola* (as distinguished from the original use of this name by Baird and Girard) which should be known as *Sphenophis* Fitzinger, 1843, I have been asked repeatedly what has become of the old well-known names *L. doliata* (Linnæus), *L. coccinea* (Schlegel) and *L. annulata* Kennicott. In the check list only the following names occur: *L. elapsoides* (p. 88); *L. triangulum triangulum* (p. 89); *L. triangulum amaura*; and *L. triangulum gentilis* (p. 90).

To begin with *L. annulata*, Kennicott's paratype, from Brownsville, Texas, upon which this name was based in 1860, I can not now distinguish specifically from Baird and Girard's *Ophibolus gentilis* (1853) based upon a specimen collected by Capt. Marcy, June 14, 1852, in a locality on the North Fork of the Red River, near Sweetwater Creek, Wheeler Co., Texas.

As for *Coronella coccinea* of Schlegel, 1837, it must first be noted that he describes it as having 17 scale rows, being undoubtedly the same form which Holbrook the following year described as *Coluber elapsoides*. This would give Schlegel's name the priority, but the name is not original with him, as he quotes *Coluber coccineus* of Latreille, 1802. This name, however, is antedated by Blumenbach's *Coluber coccineus* (1788). Latreille's and Blumenbach's name, however, undoubtedly refers to the same species, Schlegel's statement to the contrary notwithstanding. Thus this name which has caused so much confusion fortunately drops out as unavailable.

Finally, Linnæus in the twelfth edition of the *Systema Naturæ*, 1766, vol. 1, p. 379, describes a *Coluber doliatus* from Carolina, collected by Garden, with a scale formula of 164 ventrals and 43 caudals as follows: "Hæ fasciæ nigræ non perfecte cingunt abdomen, sed lateribus connecuntur cum remotiori, unde perfecti annuli dorsales." This is certainly not the form which later has been known as *Ophibolus* or *Lampropeltis doliatus*. It is not unlikely, in fact there is great probability, that he had a *Cemophora coccinea*, but the type has apparently disappeared and the question of its identity may never be established with such certainty as to justify us in substituting the Linnæan name for Blumenbach's well-known species.

—Leonhard Stejneger.



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