

A New Generic Name for a Nominal Species of *Denisonia*

By ERIC WORRELL.

In an effort to relieve, if only slightly, the complete unwieldiness of the genus *Denisonia*,¹ I propose to create a new genus to accommodate the species *daemeli*.² This species in no way conforms with the unjustifiably broad limits of the genus either externally or osteologically, nor does it comply with the requirements of any other established genus.

On external characters *daemeli* is the only venomous Australian snake with the normal combination of a divided anal and single subcaudals. The type species of *Denisonia*, which is *maculata*,³ has an elliptical pupil and no canthus rostralis. The pupil is round and canthus rostralis present in *daemeli*.

On osteological characters *daemeli* differs in that its skull structure is lighter than other present nominal forms of the genus *Denisonia*. The most obvious feature is the shape of the maxillary bone and maxillary teeth. The maxillary is prolonged and the fangs are followed by seven to ten long recurved, sickle-like teeth, whereas in other nominal species of *Denisonia* the maxillary bone is not prolonged and the teeth following the fangs number from three to five.

It is therefore proposed that these characters be used to create a new generic name *Drepanodontis* which refers to the sickle-like structure of the maxillary teeth when viewed laterally.

Drepanodontis, gen. nov.

Maxillary bone prolonged, seven to eight long, recurved, sickle-like teeth follow fang; body cylindrical, tail moderate; canthus rostralis present; pupil round; anal paired, subcaudals single.

Type species, *Hoplocephalus daemeli* Gunther.

Drepanodontis daemeli (Gunther).

Distribution: Type locality, Peak Downs, Queensland. Occurs from eastern Queensland, about the Tropic of Capricorn to western N.S.W. as far south as Wentworth on the Murray River.

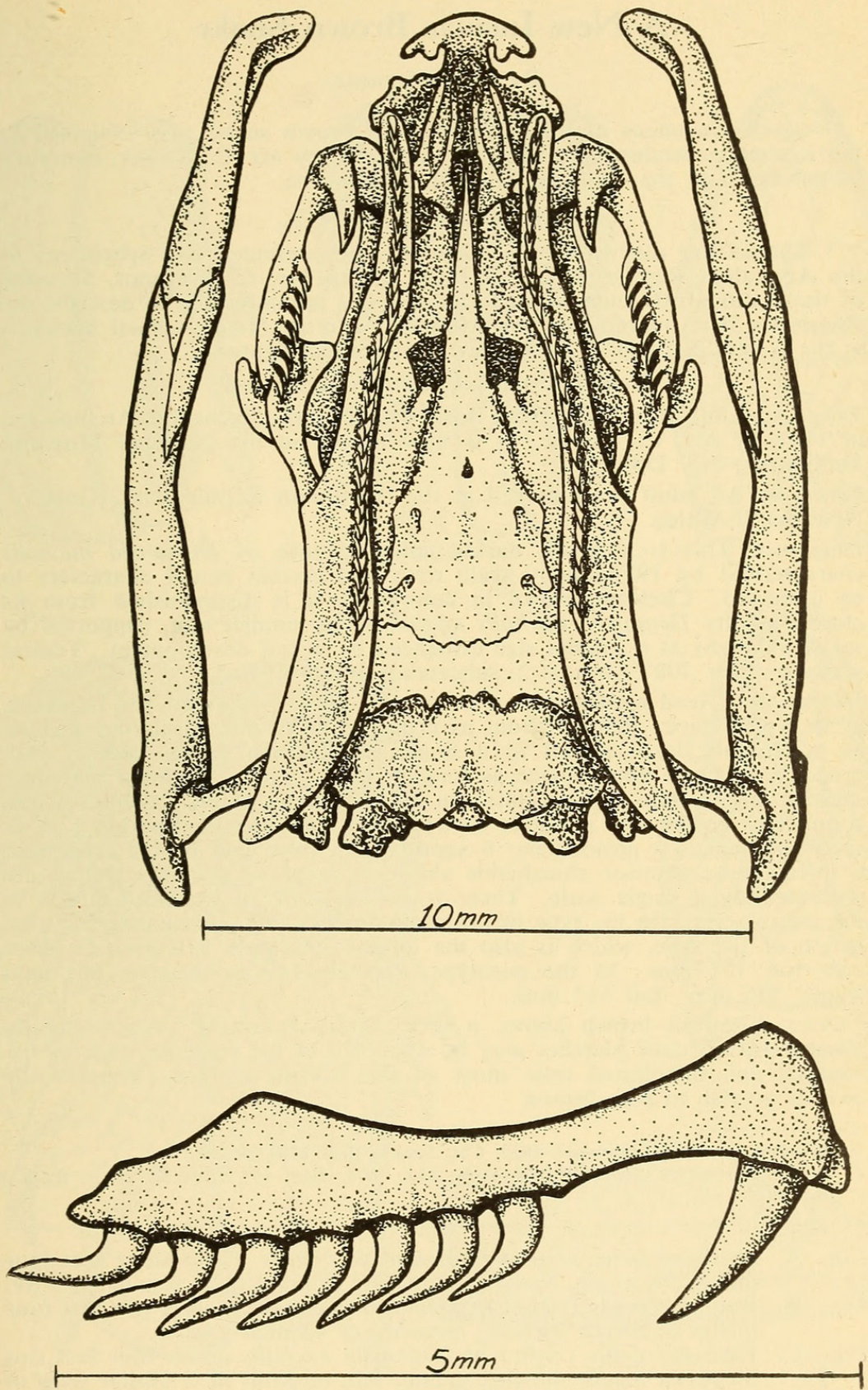
Description: Snout broad, obtuse, neck slightly distinct from body. Rostral broader than deep; single nasal contacts preocular; frontal longer and broader than supraoculars; six supralabials, third and fourth subocular; seven infralabials. Midbody scales in 17 smooth rows; ventrals 146 to 170; anal divided; subcaudals 40 to 45 single. Length attained is 620 mm, about two feet. It is ovoviparous.

Colour: Greyish above, whitish ventrally, the young are born with black heads which lighten in colour until maturity when the head is uniformly grey.

1. *Denisonia* Krefft 1869, Aust. Snakes, p. 82.

2. *Hoplocephalus daemeli* Gunther, Journ. Mus. Godeffroy, xii, 1876, p. 46; F. Mull. Verh. Nat. Ges. Basel, vi, 1878, p. 695.

3. *Hoplocephalus maculatus* Steindachner, 1867, Reise Oesterr. Freg. Novara, Reptiles, p. 81: N.S.W.



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Ventral aspect of skull of *Drepanadontis daemelia*.
Lateral aspect of maxillary bone showing characteristic teeth.



Worrell, Eric. 1961. "A new generic name for a nominal species of Denisonia." *Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales* 1958-59, 54-55.

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