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XLVIII.—*On the Ophidian genus Helicops.*
By Dr. ALBERT GÜNTHER.

THE genus *Helicops*, as defined by Duméril and Bibron, is a very natural group of Snakes; it comprises those freshwater snakes from Tropical America which have the scales keeled, the anterior frontals united into a single triangular shield, and the posterior maxillary tooth longest, smooth, and at some distance from the others. At the time of the publication of the Catalogue of Hydroid Snakes, Dr. Gray was only acquainted with two species, which he referred to two genera, *Uranops* and *Helicops*, the former being distinguished by very strongly-keeled scales, the latter by having the scales smooth on the anterior part of the body. Since that time, a third species (*H. Leprieurii*) has been discovered, intermediate between those extreme forms, and proving their close affinity. This is confirmed by numerous examples since procured by Dr. Gray for the British Museum; and among these there are two other species which have not yet been described:—

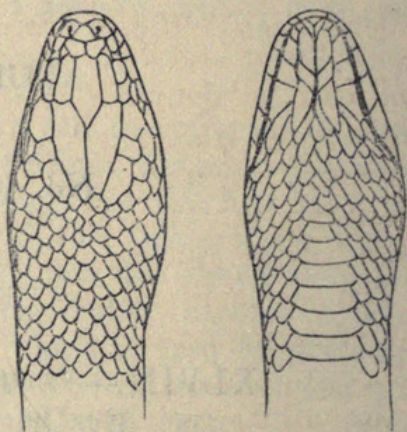
1. *Helicops modestus*.

Diagnosis.—Three pairs of chin-shields; occipitals narrow, elongate. Scales in nineteen rows; those on the sides smooth, on the anterior parts of the back with feeble keels. Blackish above, with two indistinct darker longitudinal bands; lower parts uniform dull yellowish.

Hab. Tropical America?

Description.—Head depressed, triangular, not very distinct from neck; rostral shield pentagonal, much broader than high; anterior frontal single, triangular, with the posterior side longest; one pair of posterior frontals, each being not much larger than

the prefrontal; vertical elongate, with the lateral margins slightly convergent anteriorly; occipitals elongate, thrice as long as broad. The nostril is on the upper side of the head, small, at the end of a groove which incompletely divides a quadrangular shield into an anterior and posterior portion. Loreal shield large, covering the central part of the antorbital; the upper and lower ends of the antorbital are broader than the middle, which is overlapped by the loreal. Two posterior oculars, in contact with a large temporal shield, which has a small shield beneath; the other temporal shields are scale-like, except one on the side of the extremity of the occipital, which is larger than the rest. Eight upper labial shields, the eye being above the fourth; the third enters the orbit only with a point. The first pair of lower labials form a suture together behind the central labial; and there are three other pairs of chin-shields besides, the middle one being the smallest. The scales on the sides are smooth, those along the middle of the back provided with feeble keels, the keels becoming stronger on the posterior parts of the body. Ventral shields 125; anal 1/1; subcaudals 43.

*Helicops modestus.*

The posterior maxillary tooth is somewhat distant from, but not much longer than, the rest.

The dark longitudinal bands are very indistinct, and run along the sides of the back.

Length of the cleft of the mouth $\frac{2}{3}$ rds of an inch, of trunk 16 inches, of tail 4 inches.

The specimen on which I have founded this species was procured from the Leyden Museum, and was marked as coming from North America. It is, however, very doubtful whether species of this genus go so far northwards, and it is probable that this very distinct species comes from Tropical America as well as its congeners.

2. *Helicops polylepis*.

Diagnosis.—Two pairs of chin-shields; occipitals rounded, as long as the vertical. Scales in twenty-six rows, strongly keeled. Brown above, with three series of indistinct dark spots; the black colour is predominant on the lower parts, and nearly entirely suppresses the whitish ground-colour.

Hab. Upper Amazon.

Description.—Head broad, obtuse, short, not very distinct from

neck; eyes rather prominent; rostral shield pentagonal, broader than high; anterior frontal single, triangular, with the posterior side rather longer than the anterior ones; one pair of posterior frontals, each being not much larger than the prefrontal; vertical elongate, with the lateral margins slightly convex; occipitals short, obtuse, and rounded posteriorly, nearly as long as the vertical. Nostril and nasal plate as in *H. modestus*; one loreal, one anterior and two posterior oculars, the latter being in contact with a temporal shield; the other temporals scale-like. Eight upper labial shields, the eye being above the fourth. There are only two pairs of chin-shields behind the anterior pair of lower labials. Ventral shields 133; anal 1/1; subcaudals 82 (three of the anterior subcaudals are undivided).

The posterior maxillary tooth is not grooved, distant from, and longer than, the rest.

Length of the cleft of the mouth $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, of trunk 12 inches, of the tail $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

As the British Museum possesses examples of all the species, it will be useful to make a synoptical survey of them.

1. *Helicops carinicauda*.

Coluber carinicaudus, Neuwied, Abbild. taf. 3.

Helicops carinicaudus, Wagler, Ic. tab. 7.

Scales in nineteen rows; those on the anterior half of the body smooth, on the hinder part of the back and tail keeled. Two pairs of chin-shields. Belly with three longitudinal series of black spots, each ventral plate having three spots. (Two very young specimens in the British Museum have only two series.)

Hab. Southern parts of Brazil; Cayenne.

2. *Helicops modestus*.

Scales in nineteen rows; those on the sides smooth, on the anterior parts of the back with feeble keels. Occipitals narrow, elongate; three pairs of chin-shields. Blackish above, with two indistinct darker longitudinal bands; lower parts uniform dull yellowish.

Hab. Tropical America?

3. *Helicops Leprieurii*.

Helicops Leprieurii, Dum. et Bibr. vol. vii. p. 750. pl. 68.

Scales in nineteen rows; those on the sides smooth, on the anterior parts of the back with feeble keels. Occipitals narrow, elongate; two pairs of chin-shields. Brownish or blackish

above, with longitudinal series of more or less distinct darker spots; belly checkered with black.

Hab. Bahia*; Cayenne.

4. *Helicops angulatus*.

Coluber angulatus, L. Mus. Ad. Fried. p. 23, pl. 15.

Natrix aspera, Wagl. Serp. Bras. tab. 13.

Helicops angulatus, Wagl. Syst. Amph. p. 171.

Uranops angulatus, Gray, Catal. p. 68.

Scales in nineteen rows, strongly keeled anteriorly and posteriorly.

Occipitals short, as long as the vertical; two pairs of chin-shields. Brownish or brown, generally with a series of large rhombic spots extending on the sides and on the belly.

Hab. From Venezuela to the southern parts of Brazil.

5. *Helicops polylepis*.

Scales strongly keeled anteriorly and posteriorly, in twenty-six rows. Occipitals short; two pairs of chin-shields. Brown, with series of indistinct darker spots.

Hab. Upper Amazon.

XLIX.—*Descriptions of ten new Species of Spiders lately discovered in England.* By the Rev. O. P. CAMBRIDGE, B.A.

Tribe Octonoculina.

Family DRASSIDÆ. GENUS DRASSUS.

Drassus prælongipes.

Size small; general colours olive-brown and yellow; abdomen with several transverse angulated yellow lines on the hinder half; actual length of legs very great, especially of the first and fourth pairs; shape of legs, particularly of the femoral joint, flattened or strap-shaped; digital joint of palpi small; palpal organs simple; eyes nearly uniform in size; maxillæ without any inward curvature.

Adult male.—Length $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch; length of cephalothorax $\frac{1}{16}$, breadth $\frac{1}{20}$; relative lengths of legs 4, 1, 2, 3; actual length of longest (or fourth pair) $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch.

Cephalothorax oval; front part squared off, and slightly compressed on the sides; hinder part, near the abdomen, considerably wider and rather more elevated than the front part. Some slight furrows or indentations correspond with the insertions of the legs, and converge towards the most elevated part. Its

* Several fine specimens have been sent from that province by Dr. O. Wucherer.



Günther, Albert C. L. G. 1861. "On the ophidian genus *Helicops*." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 7, 425–428.

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