

OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE MUSEUM OF  
ZOOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

## A NEW CAECILIAN FROM ECUADOR

BY PHILIP HERSHKOVITZ

INCLUDED in a collection of vertebrates which I made in Ecuador between the years of 1933 and 1937 are three caecilians. Of these, two, identified as *Caecilia pachynema* Günther, were found on the western slopes of the western cordillera of the Andes in a region commonly known as Intag, in Imbabura Province. These may possibly be topotypes of the specimen in the British Museum from "western Ecuador" since others there have been recorded from Intac.<sup>1</sup> The third specimen, found to the east of the Ecuadorian Andes in the vast area popularly called "Oriente," which includes also the Peruvian and Colombian watersheds of the Amazon River, appears to belong to an undescribed species. In acknowledgment of Dr. E. R. Dunn's labors in the field of the Gymnophiona, of his examination of my specimens, and of his unselfish assistance in supplying me with necessary data difficult to procure otherwise, I name this species

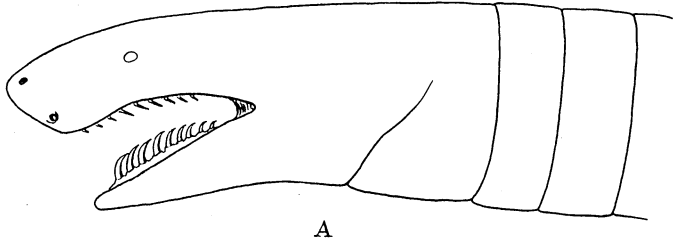
<sup>1</sup> Most collectors of the last century spelled the name of the region, Intac, according to the geographer, Teodoro Wolff, rather than Intag, the correct form. In addition, final *c* and *g* are practically identical in pronunciation in Spanish. Intag is a geographical region.

MAILED

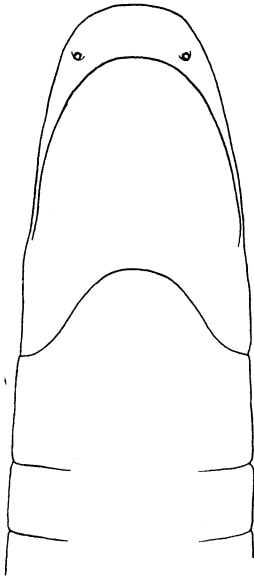
APR 18 1938

*Caecilia dunnii*, n. sp.

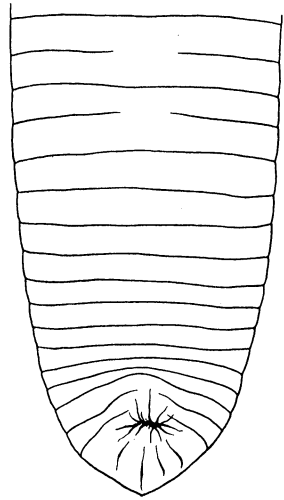
HOLOTYPE.—U.M.M.Z., No. 82901. Collected in December, 1935, near Tena, province of Napo-Pastaza (Oriente), at an altitude of about 1700 feet.



A



B



C

Grace Eager '37

FIG. 1.—Views of *Caecilia dunnii*.

DIAGNOSIS.—One hundred and twenty-four primary circular folds and 68 secondary folds. The length of the body is to its greatest diameter as 35:1.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE SPECIMEN.—Scales present posteriorly but not anteriorly and readily visible on lifting folds. Sixty-eight secondary folds, beginning between fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth primary folds, increasing in size posteriorly, last five complete. Head broad, slightly convex dorsally; snout broad, slightly rounded; eyes visible under skin; tentacle below nostril on under surface of snout, much nearer to edge of mouth than to nostril. Teeth large and prominent, those of lower jaw larger than corresponding teeth of upper jaw; nine teeth in outer mandibular row, strong, hooked; two medium-sized teeth in each mandibular row; nine maxillary and nine vomeropalatine teeth (Fig. 1, *A* and *B*). Measurements of the preserved specimen in millimeters are:

|                                  |       |                                 |     |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-----|
| Total length of the body . . .   | 455.0 | Distance between the eyes . . . | 6.7 |
| Greatest diameter of the body    | 13.0  | Distance between the nostrils   | 4.5 |
| Greatest width of the head . .   | 9.5   | Distance from eye to nostril .  | 5.0 |
| Length of cleft of mouth . . . . | 9.5   |                                 |     |

Coloration, noted at time specimen was collected, dorsal surface light blue, ventral surface paler with grayish mottling. The body is cylindrical and fairly thick throughout its entire length, terminating abruptly in a blunt point (Fig. 1*C*).

REMARKS.—*C. dunni* appears to be most closely related to *tentaculata* Linnaeus, described from Surinam.

I found the specimen dead in the middle of the road between the settlements of Archidona and Tena. Workmen had been digging drainage trenches along the sides of the dirt road earlier in the day, and, no doubt, the caecilian was unearthed by the shovel of some Indian who killed the animal and hurled it to the center of the road. The natives informed me that caecilians are frequently encountered in this region and that they believe their bite to be poisonous. Their local Quichua name is *tapia machacui*, which means, "blind snake." In the Ecuadorean Andes, caecilians are known by almost any inhabitant of the warmer forests, by the name of *culebra ciega*, Spanish for "blind snake" and, also, by *barradillo*, which may be translated as either "little mud dweller" or "little rod-shaped animal." The fact that the natives have local names for them indicates that caecilians occur commonly in Ecuador.

