

OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE MUSEUM OF
ZOOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

LEPTODEIRA BAKERI, NEW SPECIES¹

BY ALEXANDER G. RUTHVEN

In a collection of reptiles secured for the Museum of Zoology by Dr. H. Burrington Baker on the Island of Aruba in 1922 are six specimens of *Leptodeira* which were recorded by me² in 1923 as *L. annulata* (Linné). Further study of this material and of specimens from Colombia, Venezuela, and British Guiana indicates that the island form exhibits a peculiar combination of characters which justifies its recognition as a distinct species, at least at this stage in our knowledge of the genus.

DIAGNOSIS.—Dorsal scale rows 19–17–15, median row not noticeably enlarged; ventrals 170–175; subcaudals 71–73 (2 specimens); sum of ventrals and subcaudals 241–245. Dorsal blotches large, 15–24 on body, extending usually broadly to, or slightly involving, the first row of dorsal scales, not continued upon the ventrals.

HOLOTYPE.—No. 57130, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan; collected at Bubali, Aruba, August 6, 1922, by H. Burrington Baker.

PARATYPES.—Nos. 57129, 57131–57133, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, collected at Bubali, and No. 57134,

¹ Named for Dr. H. Burrington Baker, the collector.

² "The Reptiles of the Dutch Leeward Islands," *Occ. Papers Mus. Zool., Univ. Mich.*, No. 143: 9.

collected at Mon Plaisir, Aruba, August 6-8, 1922, by H. Burrington Baker.

DESCRIPTION OF HOLOTYPE.—Adult female. Dorsal scale rows 19-17-15, median scales not enlarged. Upper labials 8, fourth and fifth under the eye; lower labials 10, oculars 1-2, a sub-preocular. Ventrals 170; caudals 71. Body with 16 broad dark bands (exclusive of nuchal blotch) 6-8 scales wide, separated by 3 or 4 scales, extending to, or involving, upper edges of the first row of dorsals; a small poorly defined dark spot between the dorsal blotches on the second and third or second, third, and fourth scale rows; tail with 8 blotches. Occiput with an irregular dark band involving the posterior ends of the parietals, succeeded by a broad pale band 3 or 4 scales wide; a nuchal blotch about 8 scales wide; a black temporal band not reaching the nuchal blotch. Belly white, immaculate.

Total length 591 mm; tail 140 mm.

REMARKS.—The affinities of this form can scarcely be discussed effectively in the present state of our knowledge of the South American representatives of the genus. The dorsal coloration recalls *L. septentrionalis* and its ally *L. yucatanensis*, but the blotches are not continued to include the ends of the ventrals in *L. bakeri*. Colombian, Venezuelan, and British Guianan specimens, now recorded as *L. annulata*, usually have 21 scale rows on the thickest part of the body, smaller and more numerous dorsal blotches, and a larger number of ventrals, 176-199. Two specimens, one each from Colombia and Venezuela, in the University of Michigan collection, and one from Colombia in the Carnegie Museum, approach *L. bakeri* in having 19 dorsal scales and, in the Colombian examples, 173 and 175 ventrals. The dorsal blotches, however, in these 3 mainland specimens, are more numerous (31-42) than in the Aruban series. For the information of herpetologists interested in the genus, it should be added that in the Aruban material the temporal band does not reach the nuchal blotch in any of the 6 specimens studied, and, while the occipital band is occasionally narrowly extended posteriorly on the median line, the extension in no specimen meets the nuchal blotch.

