



First Record of Neuwied’s False Boa, *Pseudoboa neuwiedii* (Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril 1854), in Costa Rica

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The genus *Pseudoboa* (Schneider 1801), which is assigned to the Neotropical clade Pseudoboini, is comprised of six currently recognized species that are distributed from Panama to Argentina plus the islands of Trinidad and Tobago (Costa et al. 2015). These are predominantly nocturnal and terrestrial rear-fanged snakes that prey mainly on lizards, snakes (including conspecifics), and small mammals (Köhler 2008; Gaiarsa et al. 2013). Only one species, *Pseudoboa neuwiedii*, with a distribution that covers northern South America south to northern Brazil, has a range that extends into Central America (Ray 2017; Lozano and Sierra 2018). *Pseudoboa neuwiedii* inhabits forested and open areas, including palm plantations and pastures cleared for grazing cattle. Maximum recorded size is 121.7 cm (Martins and Oliveira 1998).

Herein we report a new locality for *P. neuwiedii* near the southern Pacific coast of Costa Rica. On 25 December 2020, a red medium-sized snake (ca. 1.2 m) was found dead on the road in an African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) plantation near La Palma, La Cuesta District, Municipality of Corredores, Puntarenas Province (8.5199°N, 82.9014°W; WGS 84; 40 m asl). Based on the red dorsal coloration, black head, white ventral scales, and the presence of entire subcaudals (Fig. 1), we identified the snake as *Pseudoboa neuwiedii*, which was confirmed by Harry Greene and Twan Leenders. The snake had consumed an unidentified lizard. The specimen was not collected due to the advanced degree of decomposition. Photographic vouchers were deposited in the Biodiversity Collections at the University of Texas at Austin digital collection (TNHC 115040).

No previous reports place the species in Costa Rica, with the nearest record in Sortová, Bugaba District, Chiriquí Province, Panama (Ray 2017; Ueda 2020), some 28 km west of La Palma (Fig. 2). The La Palma locality is the first record of Neuwied’s False Boa from Puntarenas Province and first for the species in Costa Rica. The presence of this species in the area was foreseeable due to the close proxim-

ity to the Panamanian border. According to local residents, this species has been observed regularly at the site although it had not been properly identified. Although *P. neuwiedii* is

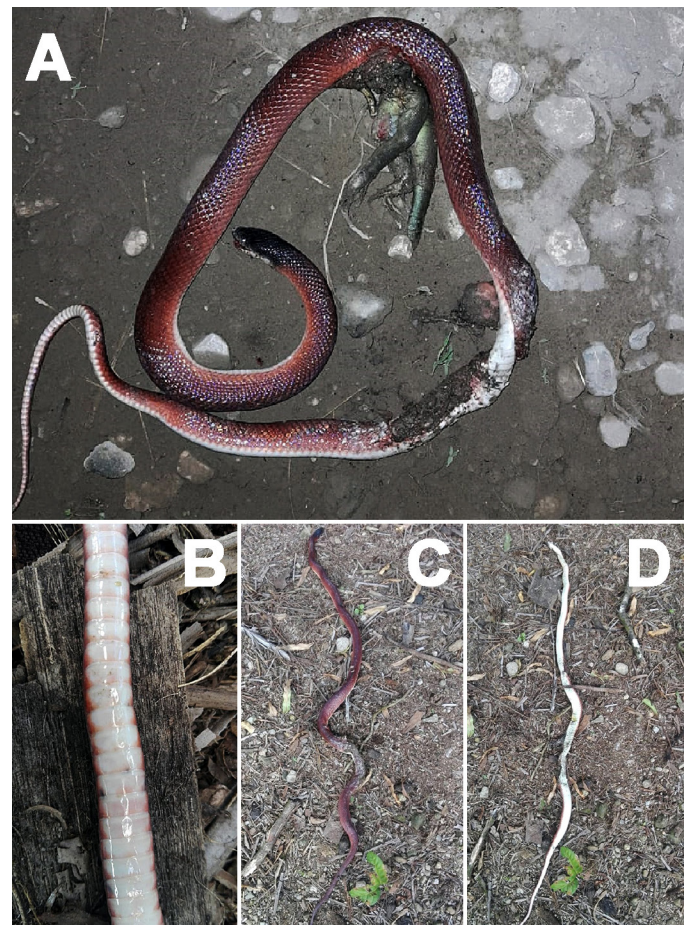


Fig. 1. A Neuwied’s False Boa (*Pseudoboa neuwiedii*) from La Palma, La Cuesta District, Municipality of Corredores, Puntarenas Province on the southern Pacific versant of Costa Rica. (A) Specimen found dead on the road (note the unidentified lizard that was exposed when the snake was run over); (B) entire subcaudal scales; (C) dorsal view; (D) ventral view. Photographs by Heriberto Abarca.

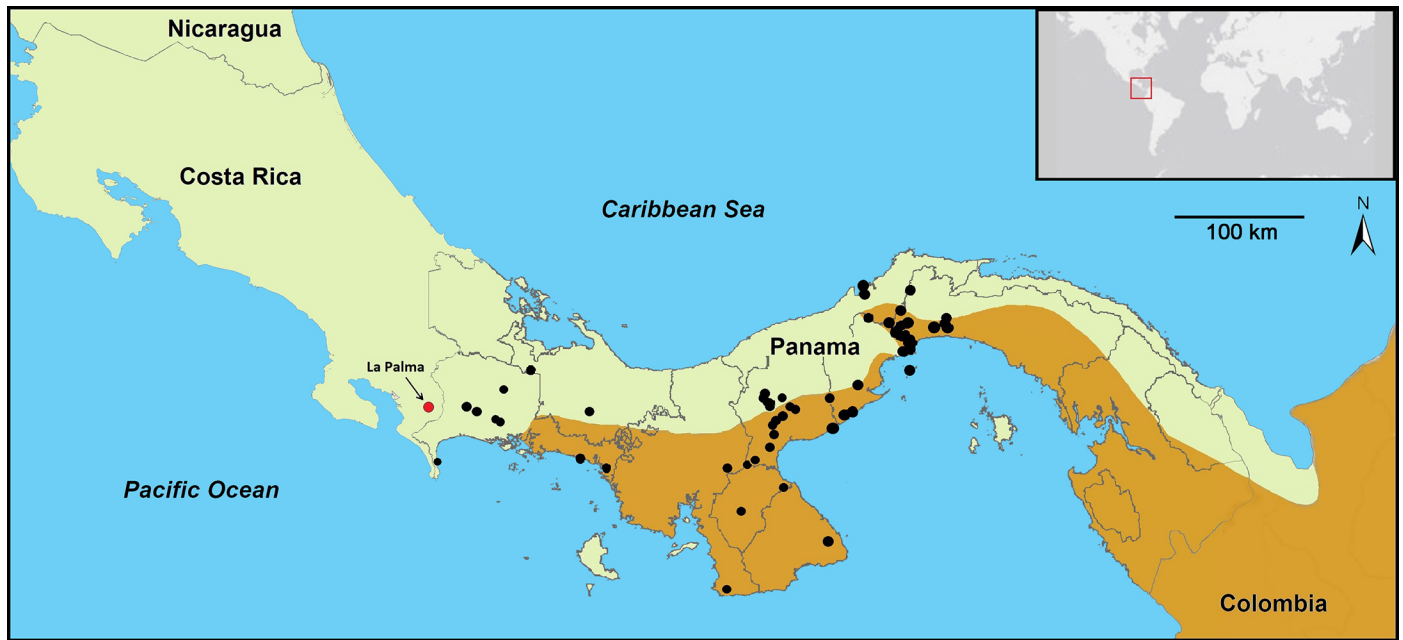


Fig. 2. Distribution of Neuwied's False Boa (*Pseudoboa newwiedii*) in Central America. Black dots indicate records of the species in Panama according to Ray (2017), orange shading represents the distribution according to Ibáñez et al. (2019), and the red dot marked with an arrow denotes the locality in La Palma, Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Sources: GBIF (2020) and Ibáñez et al. (2019). Geographic coordinate system WGS84.

an adaptable species and is not currently threatened (Ibáñez et al. 2019), the area where this snake was found is highly impacted by African Oil Palm plantations. Further research should explore the impact on wildlife in agricultural areas where agrochemicals are used. Like other red snakes, *P. newwiedii* often is confused with venomous coral snakes and is frequently killed when encountered. Campaigns to raise awareness in local communities are needed to recognize the biodiversity that exists in nearby ecosystems.

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