



First Records of the Black False Boa, *Pseudoboa nigra* (Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril 1854) (Squamata: Dipsadidae), in Peru

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The genus *Pseudoboa* comprises six currently recognized species (Uetz et al. 2025). The Black False Boa (*Pseudoboa nigra*) is widely distributed in Brazil, with a few records in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina (Orofino et al. 2010; Gaiarsa et al. 2013; Etchepare et al. 2015; Cacciali et al. 2016; Nogueira et al. 2019; Schaefer et al. 2023; Uetz et

al. 2025). This species inhabits forested areas and open-vegetation formations such as the Amazon and Atlantic Forests, Caatinga, Cerrado, and Chaco (Peters and Orejas-Miranda 1970; Zaher et al. 2008; Orofino et al. 2010; Gaiarsa et al. 2013; Etchepare et al. 2015; Cacciali et al. 2016; Nogueira et al. 2019; Schaefer et al. 2023). These snakes feed primarily

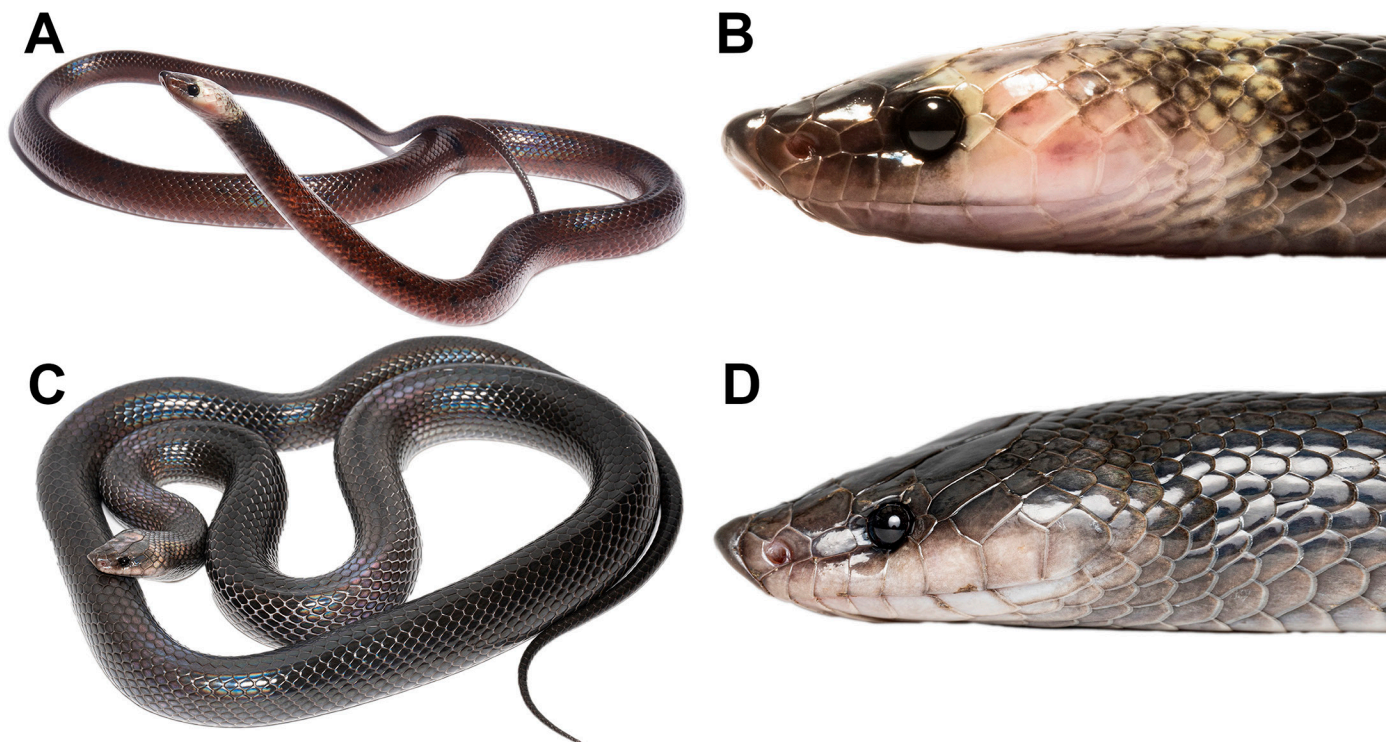


Figure 1. Black False Boas (*Pseudoboa nigra*) collected in Nuevo Shupishiña, Morales District, San Martín Province, San Martín Region, Peru: Whole body (A) and head (B) of a juvenile male (CORBIDI 24665; SVL = 551 mm); whole body (C) and head (D) of an adult female (CORBIDI 27375; SVL = 1,040 mm). Photographs by Luis A. García-Ayachi and Pablo J. Venegas.



Figure 2. Habitat in which Black False Boas (*Pseudoboa nigra*) were collected in Morales District, Perú (elev. 250–270 m asl). Photograph by Sandro A. Ramírez-Castillo.

on lizards, but also prey on lizard eggs, small mammals, and anurans (Orofino et al. 2010; Gaiarsa et al. 2013; Eisfeld et al. 2014; Rodrigues et al. 2016; de Medeiros et al. 2021).

We herein present the first record of *P. nigra* from Peru, based on two individuals (a juvenile and an adult female) collected during surveys conducted in agricultural zones near the city of Tarapoto, San Martín Department and Province, Peru. Specimens were deposited in the herpetological collection of the Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI 24665 & 27375), Lima, Peru. For the purpose of showing the wide distribution of *P. nigra*, we obtained locality records from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility database (GBIF 2025) and a review of the literature (e.g., Orofino et al. 2010; de Noronha et al. 2013; Eisfeld et al. 2014; Rodrigues et al. 2016; Marques et al. 2021; de Medeiros et al. 2021; Ugalde and Prado 2022).

We corroborated our identification by sequencing a fragment of the 16S rRNA of CORBIDI 27375 with the standard 16Sar (forward) primer (5'-3' sequence: CGCCTGTTTATCAAAAACAT) and 16Sbr (reverse) primer (5'-3' sequence: CCGGTCTGAACTCAGATCACGT). The thermocycling conditions during the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) were: one cycle at 96 °C/3 min; 35 cycles at 95 °C/30 s, 55 °C/45 s, 72 °C/1.5 min; and one cycle at 72 °C/7 min. We used a Proflex thermal cycler (Applied Biosystems, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA), purified PCR products with Exosap-IT (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Lenexa, Kansas, USA), and shipped purified samples to the Molecular Cloning Laboratories (MCLAB) (South San Francisco, California, USA) for sequencing. We assembled reads in Geneious, version 11.1.5 (Biomatters Inc., San Francisco, California, USA) <http://www.geneious.com/> and used BLAST (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>) to find similar sequences in Genbank. We calculated p-distances for 16S using MEGA7 (Kumar et al. 2016) and the available sequences from

Genbank from seven specimens of three species (*P. coronata*, *P. neuwiedii*, and *P. nigra*).

At 2120 h on 25 December 2022, SARC, DD, and LAGA collected a juvenile male (CORBIDI 24665; SVL = 618 mm, TL = 169 mm; Fig. 1A–B), at night in a hut near rice fields and secondary vegetation in Nuevo Shupishíña, Morales District, Peru (−6.50720, −76.42588; elev. 270 m asl). At 2230 h on 7 August 2024, SARC, DD, VF, and LAGA collected an adult female (CORBIDI 27375; SVL = 1,040 mm, TL = 290 mm; Fig. 1C–D) at night moving along a trail surrounded by rice fields and secondary vegetation at the same locality (−6.49583, −76.40175; elev. 254 m asl). The habitat in the lowlands and hills of the lower basins of the Mayo and Huallaga Rivers is part of the seasonally dry forest of the Huallaga (Linares-Palomino 2004; García-Villacorta 2009). Although the expansion of farms and the conversion of forests into agricultural fields has fragmented the forest, some remnants of native vegetation remain (Fig. 2).

Both specimens represent the first records of *P. nigra* in Peru, extending its known range by approximately 1,395 km NW of the nearest locality in Mapinguari National Park in Brazil (GBIF 2025) (Fig. 3). The collected specimens were initially identified based on diagnostic characters of *P. nigra* described in Peters and Orejas-Miranda (1970), Vanzolini et al. (1980), and Zaher et al. (2008) (our scale counts in parentheses): (1) 19 dorsal scale rows (19); (2) eight upper labials (eight); (3) rostral scale conspicuously elevated from the adjacent scales; (4) dorsum of larger individuals uniformly black; 197–221 ventrals (199 in male, 208 in female); 75–98 subcaudals (82 in female, 97 in male). The head of the juvenile male (CORBIDI 24665) is black from the tip of the snout to the middle of the frontal scale; a creamy white neck collar with dark spots extends from the second half of the frontal scale to the sixth dorsal scale; the dorsum is almost uniformly reddish black, with dorsal scales 7–11 and adja-

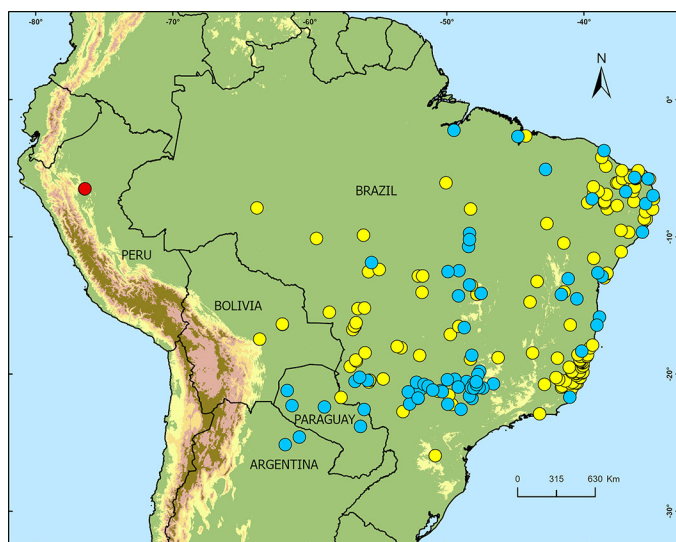


Figure 3. Map showing the distribution of the Black False Boa (*Pseudoboa nigra*): Yellow dots represent GBIF records, light blue dots denote literature records, and the red dot marks the new record reported herein.

cent scales completely black. The identity of both specimens was confirmed by Paulo R. Melo-Sampaio (Departamento de Vertebrados, Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil).

The sequence of CORBIDI 27375 (Genbank Accession code PQ721476), trimmed to a length of 432 bp, was nearly identical to the corresponding sequence of two specimens identified as *P. nigra*: MZUSP 13278 from Brazil (GQ457764) and a specimen lacking voucher and locality data (AF544804), except for three transitions (one T to C and two C to T mutations in CORBIDI 27375; p-distance = 0.8%). Sequences of 16S from all other species of *Pseudoboa* had at least 10 nucleotide changes (p-distances of 3.1–3.6% with *P. newwiedii* and 3.6–3.9% with *P. coronata*).

Moreover, we note a previously undescribed defensive behavior exhibited by the adult female (CORBIDI 27375). When lifted from the ground, it hid its head, burying it by pressing it against the ground, and made energetic erratic movements while abruptly changing its body position. This behavior differs from those described by Mesquita et al. (2013), Marques et al. (2019), and Ugalde and Prado (2022), who reported behaviors that included hiding the head under the body and elevating the tail by raising it above the head, along with escape attempts and erratic movements but without trying to bury its head.

We recommend conducting additional surveys in the area and other suitable habitats to collect additional data about the population status of *P. nigra* in Peru, as well as its ecology and natural history.

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