

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Reptilia, Squamata, Amphisbaenidae, *Amphisbaena mertensi*: Distribution extension, new state record, geographic distribution map.

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Amphisbaena mertensi Strauch, 1881 is a medium-sized amphisbaenian, diagnosable by its size, cephalic shields, tail form and number of pre-cloacal pores (Gans 1966). Currently, the species has been recorded in the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo, Paraná, and Santa Catarina; Corrientes, Formosa, and Misiones, in Argentina; and Amambay, Asunción, Itapua, Tarumá Fondo, and San Pedro, in Paraguay (Gans 1966; Montero 1996; Montero and Terol 1999; Pramuk and Alamillo 2003).

A specimen of *Amphisbaena mertensi*, deposited in the collection of the Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (MNRJ 14117; Figure 1), was collected on 5 December 2005 by Gustavo Ribeiro Aloísio on an unpaved road crossing a disturbed Cerrado, near to pasture areas in the municipality of Aporé (ca. 18°39'48.4" S, 51°52'17.9" W), State of Goiás, Brazil (Figure 2). The specimen was identified using a redescription of the species (Gans 1966) and characterized according to the terminology presented by Gans and Alexander (1962). It is an adult male with 330 mm snout-vent length, 8.0 mm tail length (autotomized) and 11.3 mm head length. The head shields pattern is

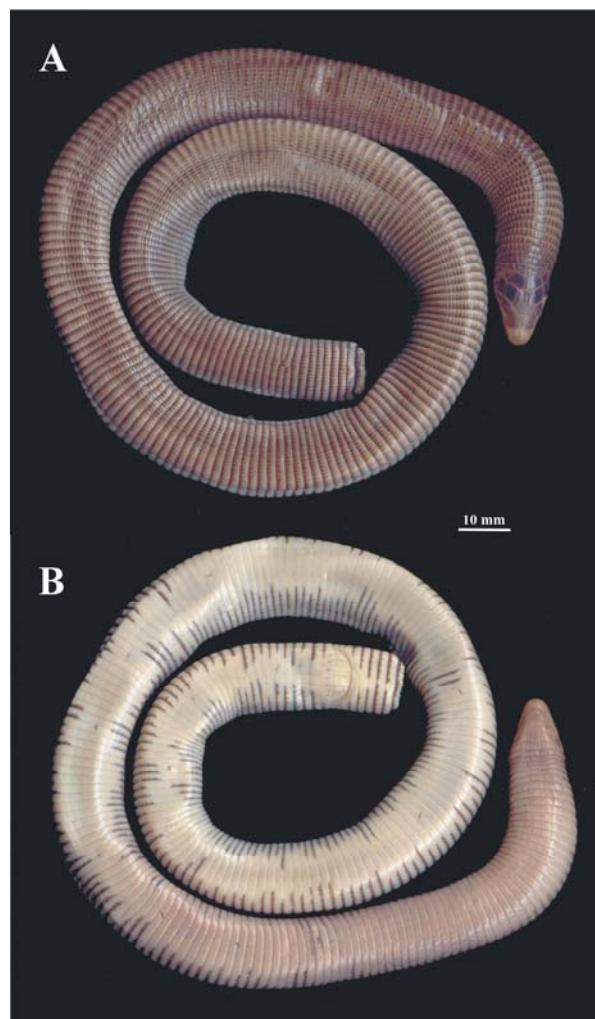


Figure 1. Dorsal (A) and ventral (B) views of *Amphisbaena mertensi* (MNRJ 14117) from Aporé municipality, State of Goiás, Central Brazil.

typical of the *Amphisbaena mertensi* from the State of Mato Grosso (*sensu* Gans 1966). The rostral scale, visible from dorsal view, is in contact with paired nasals. Posteriorly, in sequence along the head midline, a series of the following shields lies: paired prefrontals, paired frontals, paired parietals and a row of seven postparietals. The dorsolateral shields include three supralabials, one ocular rhomboid, one postocular and one postsupralabial. The chin segmentation includes three infralabials on each side of the mouth edge, one mental, one postmental with one malar on each side, and the first and second row of postgenials with four and nine shields, respectively. There are 237 body annuli, three lateral annuli on the cloacal region

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and six caudal annuli (autotomized tail); pre and postcloacal regions formed by eight and seven segments, respectively; precloacal region with seven pores distributed in distinct segments. General dorsal coloration is dark brown (Figure 1A). General ventral coloration is cream, with irregular transversal dark brown markings formed by the anterior pigmented zone of the segments. These markings extend from approximately the anterior third of the vent to the cloaca (Figure 1B). Rostral plate, first pair of supralabials and gular region are cream colored.

Six species of *Amphisbaena* are reported to the State of Goiás: *A. alba* Linnaeus, 1758, *A. anaemariae* Vanzolini, 1997, *A. fuliginosa* Linnaeus, 1758, *A. mensae* Castro-Mello, 2000, *A. neglecta* Dunn & Piatt, 1936, and *A. vermicularis* Wagler, 1824 (Vanzolini 2002a; Gans 2005). *Amphisbaena vermicularis* and *A. mertensi* are

morphologically more similar to each other than to other species, being distinguished by the number of supralabials: three in *A. mertensi*, four in *A. vermicularis*. The remaining species are easily distinguished by external morphology (Table 1).

Gans (1966) upon reviewing *Amphisbaena mertensi*, presented the locality “Colônia Teresa Cristina”, in the State of Mato Grosso, as the westernmost distribution point for the species, being the locality Jales, in the state of São Paulo, the closest point to southeast. However, it is important to point out that “Colônia Teresa Cristina” was erroneously positioned in Gans’ map, having been placed far south of the actual location (C. Strüssmann, pers. com.). The record of *A. mertensi* in Aporé municipality is the first for the State of Goiás, and fills a distributional gap in the mid-west region of Brazil, which turns the species distribution more homogeneous.

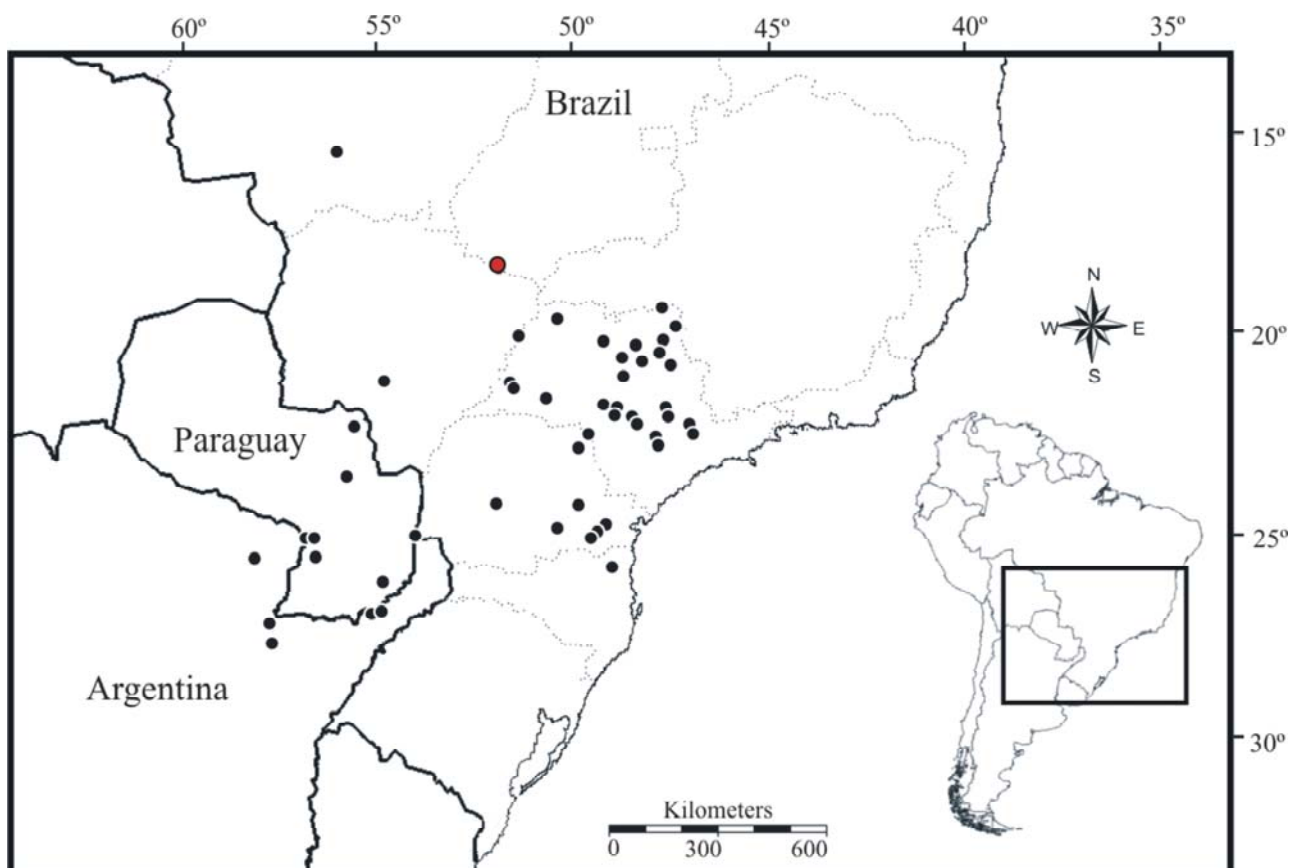


Figure 2. Geographic distribution of *Amphisbaena mertensi*. Black circles represent data from literature (Gans 1966; Montero 1996; Montero and Terol 1999; Pramuk and Alamillo 2003), and the red circle represents the new record to Aporé, in the State of Goiás, Central Brazil.

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Table 1. List of *Amphisbaena* species recorded in the state of Goiás, including diagnostic characters for each species. Morphometric data in millimetres (mm). References: I = Gans (1962a); II = Vanzolini (1955); III = Vanzolini (2002a); IV = Vanzolini (1997); V = Vanzolini (2002b); VI = Castro-Mello (2000); VII = Gans (1966); VIII = Gans (1962b); IX = Hoogmoed and Ávila-Pires (1991); and X = Gans and Amdur (1966).

| Characters | Species | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>A. alba</i> | <i>A. anaemariae</i> | <i>A. fuliginosa</i> | <i>A. mensae</i> | <i>A. mertensi</i> | <i>A. neglecta</i> | <i>A. vermicularis</i> |
| Pre-cloacal pores | 4-10 | 2 | 6-10 | 4 | 6-8 | 2 | 4-6 |
| Body annuli | 198-248 | 156-170 | 183-220 | 206-228 | 210-250 | 151-161 | 211-246 |
| Tail annuli | 13-21 | 18-20 | 19-30 | 25-29 | 25-29 | 20-21 | 23-34 |
| Autotomy site | 4-8 | 3-4 | 4-6 | 6-8 | 5-8 | 4-6 | 4-7 |
| Dorsal midbody segments | 30-42 | 14-16 | 10-13 | 12-14 | 14-25 | 12-14 | 18-26 |
| Ventral midbody segments | 35-46 | 14-16 | 9-13 | 16-18 | 16-25 | 12-16 | 18-26 |
| Supralabials (right/left) | 3-4/3-4 | 4/4 | 3/3 | 3/3 | 3/3 | 3/3 | 4/4 |
| Infralabials (right/left) | 3/3 | 4/4 | 3-4/3-4 | 3/3 | 3/3 | 3/3 | 3/3 |
| Snout-vent length | 215-672 | 96-172 | 130-450 | 115-130 | 110-410 | 111-150 | 90-325 |
| Tail length | 23-45 | 12-22 | 20-75 | 17-21 | 17-65 | 13-16 | 13-46 |
| References | I, II, III | IV | V | VI | VII | IV, VIII, IX | IX, X |

Acknowledgments

We thank the biologists Flávio C. G. Oliveira and Gustavo R. Aloísio, and Centro Tecnológico de Engenharia Ltda (CTE) for logistic support in the field; Agência Goiana de Meio Ambiente (AGMA) for the collection permit (permit # 033/2005); Ronaldo Fernandes for the loan of specimen; and Nelson R. de Albuquerque and Ana

P. Maciel for the English version and critical reading of this manuscript. Carolina Castro-Mello confirmed data on *Amphisbaena anaemariae*. We are grateful to Ricardo J. Sawaya, Paula H. Valdujo, and Christine Strüssmann for comments and suggestions. SLBR and APS thank Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) for grants.

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Received October 2006

Accepted March 2007

Published online May 2007