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Atractus nigricaudus Schmidt & Walker, 1943 (Squamata: Dipsadidae) first record from Bolivia

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Locality. – Bolivia, Cochabamba, Carrasco National Park, Sehuencas, (-17.446544°; -65.270047°, 2100 m a.s.l., Fig. 1). An adult female of *Atractus nigricaudus* (Fig. 2), was registered and collected (MHNC-R 3251). The specimen was found dead among the leaf litter near on an unpaved road adjacent to a mature secondary mountain forest in the Yungas ecoregion by Jorge Espinoza on December 2024. The specimen was collected under permit MMA-YANMABCCGDF/DGBAP/MEG Nº 0053/2019 issued by Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Aguas and deposited in the herpetological collection of

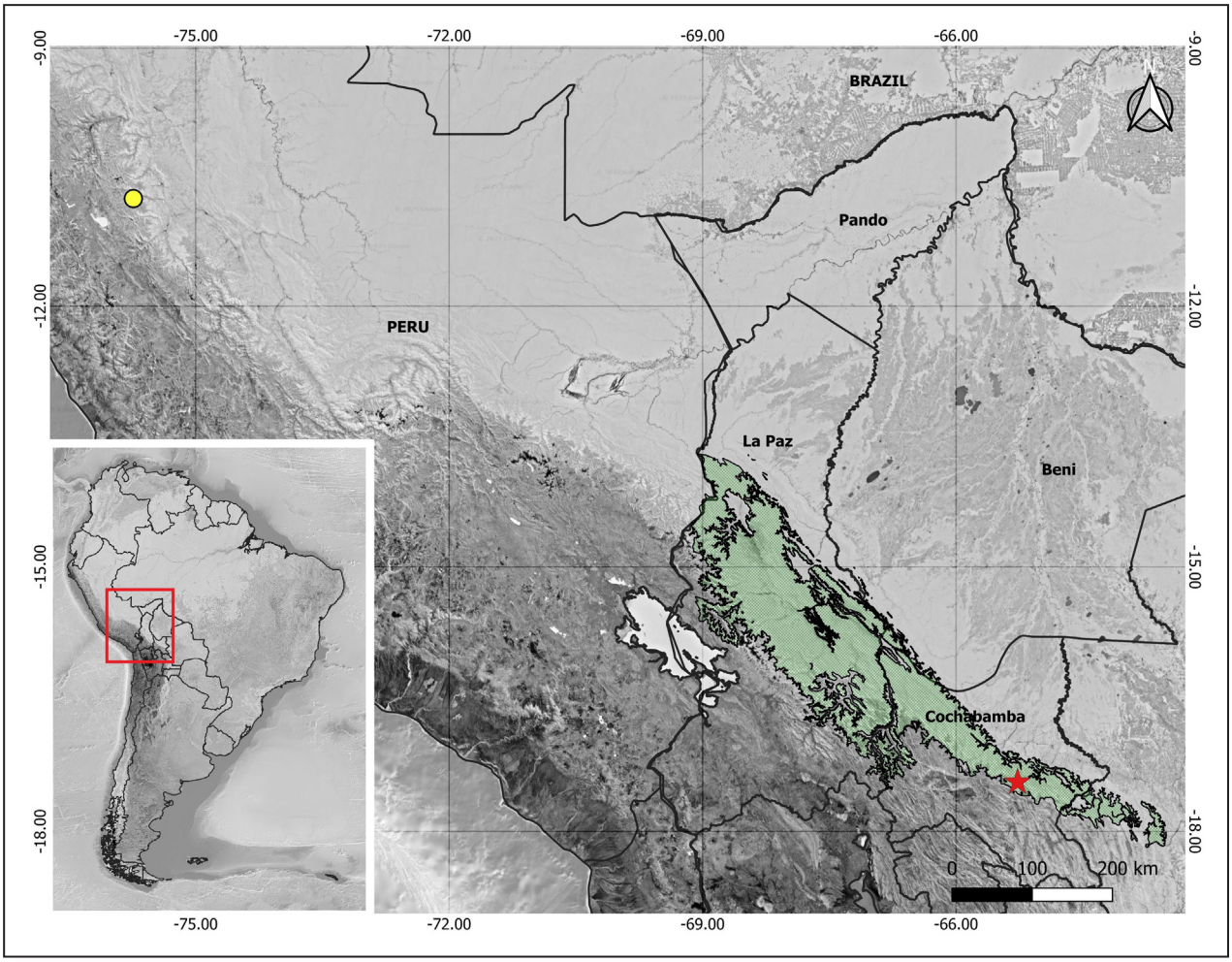

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of *Atractus nigricaudus*. Yellow circle represents the previously known distribution in Peru according Schmidt & Walker (1943) and Aguilar (2017). Red star corresponds the new record (MHNC-R 3251) in Cochabamba, Bolivia for the Yungas ecoregion (green cross line).

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the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny (MHNC-R), Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Comments. - The complex and diverse genus of neotropical snakes *Atractus* Wagler 1828, is composed of more than 150 species, distributed from Panama to Argentina (Myers, 2003; Passos *et al.*, 2013; Melo–Sampaio *et al.*, 2021; Uetz *et al.*, 2025; Esqueda *et al.*, 2025). However, many species remain known only from their type series or from geographically restricted regions (Passos *et al.*, 2019). This is do as the cryptic habits of these types of snakes limit their knowledge in the literature and scientific collections (Silva, 2004). In Bolivia, 8 species are recognized (Gómez-Murillo *et al.*, 2025): *A. albuquerquei* Cunha & Nascimento, 1983; *A. bocki* Werner, 1909; *A. elaps* (Günther, 1858); *A. emmeli* (Boettger, 1888); *A. latifrons* (Günther, 1868); *A. major* Boulenger, 1894; *A. snethlageae* Cunha & Nascimento, 1983; and *A. torquatus* (Duméril *et al.*, 1854).

Atractus nigricaudus Schmidt & Walker, 1943 is a species categorized as Least Concern by the IUCN (Aguilar, 2017). This species is known only from the type locality: Huachon, in the upper part of the Paucartambo valley, Cerro de Pasco, Junín, Peru

Figure 2. Female specimen (MHNC-R 3251) of *Atractus nigricaudus* in preservative, from Sehuencas Carrasco National Park, Cochabamba, Bolivia. Left: lateral (top), dorsal (middle) and ventral (bottom) views of head. Right dorsal (top) and ventral (bottom) views of body. Scale bar (head only) = 10 mm.

(Schmidt & Walker, 1943; Aguilar, 2017). It is a very poorly known species, so new information about it is of great importance, through which conservation actions can be established.

During the review of the snake's collection from the Yungas ecoregion housed in the herpetological collection of the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny, Cochabamba, Bolivia, we found an adult specimen of *Atractus nigricaudus* collected in December 2024. Here we describe the presence of *A. nigricaudus* for the first time in Bolivia. This record extends its geographic distribution more than 1350 km southeast of its nearest recorded locality in Peru and we provide an updated distribution map for this species.

The voucher specimen (MHNC-R 3251, Fig. 2) was deposited in the herpetological collection at the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The specimen was identified using the descriptions of Schmidt & Walker (1943), Rivera-González (2009) and the photographs of the holotype (MCZ 45909, Fig. 3) available in the database of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University (MCZ). Morphological terminology and abbreviations of the morphometric traits follow Melo–Sampaio *et al.* (2021). To provide an updated distribution of this species, we checked data on the presence of *Atractus nigricaudus* from the literature (Schmidt & Walker, 1943; Aguilar, 2017). The final map of the currently known distribution of the species was built on cartographic information from the IUCN (Aguilar, 2017).

We identified this specimen as *A. nigricaudus* using the following characteristics according to Schmidt & Walker (1943): (1) small ground snake with a moderately stout body (SVL=480 mm, TL=561 mm), a small head barely distinguishable from the neck, and a short tail; (2) maxillary teeth 8 ; (3) postoculars 2; (4) temporals 1+2; (5) supralabials 6, the third and fourth entering the eye; (6) infralabials 7, the first four in contact with the single pair of chin shields; (7) dorsal scales 17-17-17; (8) ventrals 156; (9) cloacal plate single; (10) subcaudals 26; (11) dorsal background brown with black-marked scales; vertebral line black and two faint lateral lines on each side converging into one on the tail; (12) head brown, mottled black, with a longitudinal black stripe through the eye and a transverse one on the nape; (13) venter coloration yellowish, mottled black, and on each side a faint row of discontinuous stripes along its entire length; (14) tail mottled black with dark edges to the scales. Meristic characters of the specimens of *Atractus nigricaudus* from Peru and Bolivia are in Table 1.

Rivera-González (2009) presents a comparative information on *Atractus nigricaudus* and *Atractus pausiscutatus*, very similar species whose distribution is very close (approximately 50 km apart) and both described by Schmidt & Walker (1943). *Atractus pausiscutatus*, the holotype was found in Carpapata, Junin, and *Atractus nigricaudus* with type locality in Huachón, Pasco. Although the author finds the same differences as Schmidt & Walker (1943), between the number of ventral scales, ventral coloration, and the relationship between the size of the frontal scale and the distance of that scale from the tip of the snout, these identified characters do not offer significant differences to separate these two species. Thus, only the presence of *Atractus nigricaudus* is recognized for Peru, and this species is also valid for the present comparison.

The record presented here of *Atractus nigricaudus* is of special interest for taxonomic and conservation issues. The specimen identified as *A. nigricaudus* from Sehuencas in Bolivia confirms the presence of this species in the country and extends the geographical distribution of this snake approximately 1350 km southeast of the nearest locality in Huachon, Peru (Schmidt & Walker, 1943; Aguilar, 2017). The Bolivian record of *A. nigricaudus* shows that the species has an even wider distribution. It is also possible that it is uncommon or rare in Bolivia. This record also confirms that the species inhabits the Yungas of Bolivia. According to Quinteros-Muñoz *et al.* (2022), these types of forests (Yungas) play a very important role, as they act as a "green corridor" between Peruvian Yungas and the Yungas of Bolivia, thus allowing the dispersal of this species to the more southern habitats of South America.

Atractus nigricaudus is a species with restricted distribution and is only known from its type locality in Peru (Schmidt & Walker, 1943; Aguilar, 2017) (Fig. 1). We name the Bolivian population presented here *Atractus nigricaudus*; however, to better understand and clarify the status of the species and its possible "geographic variation" from a geographically distant population, a detailed integrative and molecular approach is necessary.

Finally, this record, housed in a museum, highlights the importance of repositories such as scientific collections. They are of great importance as they contribute to the exchange and increase of scientific knowledge and, much more importantly,

Figure 3. In preservative, holotype MCZ 45909 of *Atractus nigricaudus* Schmidt & Walker, 1943 collected in Peru. Left: dorsal (top and bottom) views of body. Right lateral (top), dorsal (middle) and ventral (bottom) views of head. © President and Fellows of Harvard College (licensed under http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).

serve as custodians of timeless treasures that are part of our natural heritage (Koch *et al*., 2019).

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Table 3. Meristic characters of the specimens of *Atractus nigricaudus*: Holotype (MCZ45909) from Peru and the new record (MHNC-R 3251) from Bolivia.

	Holotype: MCZ 45909	**MHNC-R 3251**
Sex	Female	Female
DSR	17-17-17	17-17-17
SVL	335	480
TL	367	561
TTL	32	81
Postoculars	2	2
Temporals	1-2	1-2
Ventrals	157	156
Subcaudals	19	26
Supralabials (SL)	7	6
SL contact the orbit	third and fourth	third and fourth
Infralabials (IL)	7	7
IL contact first pairs of chin–shields	first four	first four
Maxillary teeth	-	8
Anal plate	single	single

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