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TROPIDONOPHIS PUNCTIVENTRIS (BOETTGER, 1895):
DESCRIPTION OF THE THIRD KNOWN SPECIMEN

(SERPENTES, COLUBRIDAE, NATRICINAE)

Tropidonophis punctiventris (Boettger, 1895) was known only for two specimens both from Halmahera (Indonesia, Moluccas): the holotype male found in 1894 by Willy Kükenthal and preserved in Senckenberg, Forschungsinstitute und Naturmuseen (Frankfurt) (SMF 17195) and a female collected in 1866 by Heinrich Bernstein and preserved in Naturalis (Leiden) (RMNH 4804); therefore abundance, ecology and range of the species are uncertain (MALNATE & UNDERWOOD 1988; VOGEL 2011).

Revising the herpetological collection of Genoa Museum we found a specimen of *Tropidonophis* (MSNG 30112), preserved in alcohol, collected on Halmahera in 1875 by Antonie Augustus Bruijn and listed by PETERS & DORIA (1878) as "*Tropidonophis picturatus* (Schlegel, 1837)".

But, as *T. picturatus* actually is not reported for Halmahera, being present only in New Guinea and Misool and Waigeau Islands, we decided to compare the features of our specimen with those of the above listed specimens of *T. punctiventris*, on the basis of photographs and measures kindly sent us by the colleagues from Frankfurt and Leiden Museums (MALNATE & UNDERWOOD 1988).

So we could ascertain that our snake is referable to *T. puncti-*

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ventris and moreover that its length is the highest known for the species (mm 422 against 342 and 324) (see photos and table 1).

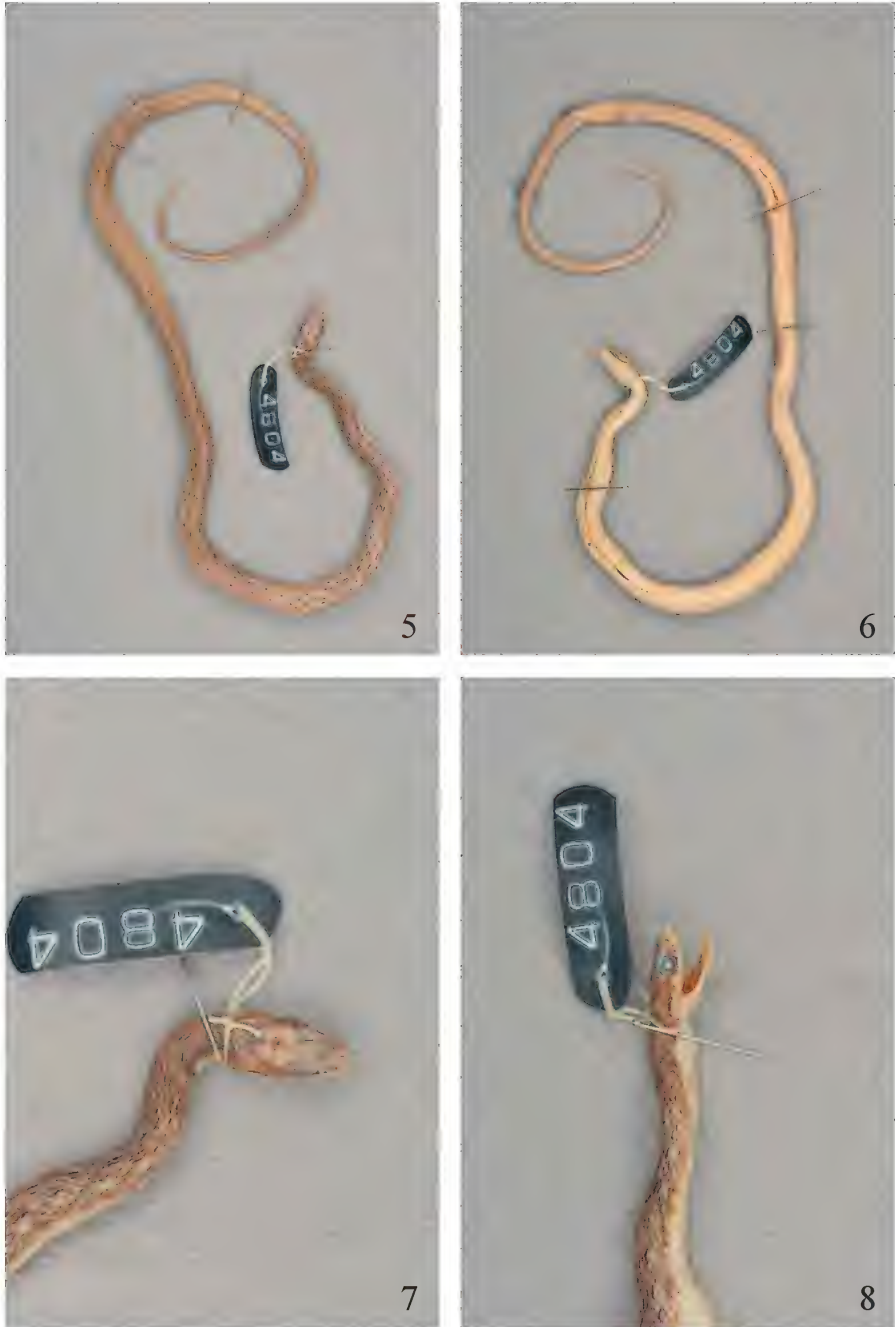


Figs. 1-4. *Tropidonophis punctiventris* SMF 17195, holotype - 1: body dorsal view; 2: body ventral view; 3: head dorsal view; 4: head lateral view.

In consideration of the rarity of the taxon we think useful to report here the description of our specimen to provide at least a better contribution to the morphology of the species; further data are given in table 1.

Table 1.

	SMF 17195 holotype	RMNH 4804	MSNG 30112
sex	male	female	male
total length	mm 342	mm 324	mm 422
tail length	mm 87.21	mm 89.75	mm 110
% tail length	25.50%	27.70%	26.07%
dorsal scale rows	15	15	15
ventrals	160	145	151
subcaudals	75	74	74
ventrals+subcaudals	235	219	225
subcaudals/ventrals+subcaudals	0.319	0.338	0.329
number subcaudals with pits	68	55	right 34, left 20
% subcaudals with pits	90.7%	74.3%	73%
dorsal scale reduction to 15	3	6	7
subcaudal reduction >8	7	4	14
subcaudal reduction 8	10	12	8
subcaudal reduction 6	23	25	23
subcaudal reduction 4	27	23	22
subcaudal reduction 2	8	10	7
maxillary teeth	31	35	36
intergenials	4	3	3
nasal	2	2	2
loreal	1	1	1
preocular	2	2	2
postocular	3	3	3
supralabials	9	9	9
supralabials in contact with eye	4th 5th 6th	4th 5th 6th	4th 5th 6th
infralabials	9	10	right 9, left 10
temporal formula	2-3	2-3	2-2-3



Figs. 5-8. *Tropidonophis punctiventris* RMNH 4804 - 5: body dorsal view; 6: body ventral view; 7: head dorsal view; 8: head lateral view.



Figs. 9-12. *Tropidonophis punctiventris* MSNG 30112 - 9: body dorsal view; 10: body ventral view; 11: head dorsal view; 12: head lateral view.

Colour. The cephalic plates are brown; on the parietals there are two light areas and two small bright spots. The supralabials are clear with the upper part dark; first supralabials have brown lines. Mental and gular zone is uniform clear; first infralabials are divided by brown lines. The dorsal body is uniform brown; on the fifth scale row there are two series of clear spots. The belly, strongly dotted, is uniform cream in the first half while is gray in the second one.

Scalation. Dorsal and upper caudal scales are keeled. Dorsal scales are distributed in 15 rows at one head length behind head, 15 rows at midbody and 15 rows at one head length before vent. Loreal is irregularly pentagonal. First mental and simphisial are separated by first infralabial. 1st-5th infralabials are in contact with first mental; 5th-7th infralabials are in contact with second mental. A single preventral is present.

Measurements. Head length: mm 13.1; diameter of the eye: mm 2.85; eye-nostril distance: mm 2.18; first chin shields length: mm 3.65; second chin shields length: mm 5.45.

Pits on the head are present in the parietals, temporals and oculars scales and on the loreal only of the left side.

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ABSTRACT

Data of the third and the longest known specimen of *Tropidonophis punctiventris* (Boettger, 1895) are reported.

RIASSUNTO

Tropidonophis punctiventris (Boettger, 1895): descrizione del terzo esemplare conosciuto. (Serpentes, Colubridae, Natricinae)

Vengono riportati i dati morfometrici del terzo individuo noto di *Tropidonophis punctiventris* (Boettger, 1895); si tratta di un esemplare raccolto sull'isola di Halmahera nel 1875, lungo 422 mm, precedentemente identificato e citato come *T. picturatus* (Schlegel, 1837).