



Acta Zoológica Mexicana (nueva serie)

ISSN: 0065-1737

acta.zoologica@inecol.edu.mx

Instituto de Ecología, A.C.

México

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Acta Zoológica Mexicana (nueva serie), vol. 32, núm. 1, abril, 2016, pp. 123-125

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Xalapa, México

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Nota Científica
(Short Communication)

**FICIMIA PUBLIA COPE 1866 (SQUAMATA: COLUBRIDAE): FIRST RECORD
FOR THE HERPETOFAUNA OF MICHOACÁN, MÉXICO**

Recibido: 21/04/2015; aceptado: 09/02/2016

Torres-Pérez-Coeto, J., Alvarado-Díaz, J., Suazo-Ortuño, I. & Wilson, L. D. 2016. *Ficimia publia* (Squamata: Colubridae): Primer registro para la herpetofauna de Michoacán, México. *Acta Zoológica Mexicana* (n. s.), 31(2): 123-125.

RESUMEN. Se reporta el primer registro de la serpiente *Ficimia publia* para el Estado de Michoacán, México, ampliando su rango conocido de distribución.

The genus *Ficimia* Gray 1849 contains seven species of small secretive colubrid snakes, all of which are considered rare (Hardy 1975; Mendoza & Smith 1993). The included species are: *F. hardyi*, *F. olivacea*, *F. publia*, *F. ruspator*, *F. ramirezi*, *F. streckeri*, and *F. variegata*. The genus *Ficimia* is diagnosed by the presence of a rostral scale contacting the frontal and smooth dorsal scales in 17 rows at midbody. *Ficimia* is distributed from southern Texas in the United States southward through eastern and western Mexico, on the Mexican Plateau, and southward through southeastern Mexico, to the Yucatán Peninsula, Guatemala, Belize, and northern Honduras (Hardy 1975). The genus was thoroughly reviewed by Smith & Taylor (1941) and again by Hardy (1975).

Ficimia publia Cope 1866 is a terrestrial, semi-fossorial, and largely nocturnal species that feeds mostly on centipedes; it is the most widespread member of the genus. It was first described by Cope (1866); the type locality was listed as Yucatán, but no exact location was provided. In view of its wide distribution and occurrence in several protected natural areas, the IUCN (Ariano-Sánchez & Lee 2013) considered *F. publia* a non-threatened species (listed as Least Concern), and Wilson *et al.* (2013) scored it at the upper end of the low vulnerability level.

Historically, Smith (1943) reported *F. publia* from Chilpancingo, Guerrero and four years later from Veracruz (Smith 1947). Peters (1953) first reported this species from Quintana Roo, Webb & Fugler (1957) from Puebla, and Neill & Allen (1961) from Belize. Hensley & Smith (1962) included Tabasco in the range, Gar-

cía & Valtierra-Azotla (1996) noted its occurrence on the Pacific coastal region of Jalisco, and Castro-Franco & Bustos-Zagal (2004) reported it for the first time in Morelos. Presently, the known distribution of *F. publia* ranges from northern Veracruz on the east, Puebla and Morelos in central Mexico, and southern Jalisco on the west, southward to Guerrero, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Chiapas, the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico and Central America, south-central Guatemala, and northwestern Honduras (McCrane 2011). Locations where *F. publia* have been registered were found below 1500 m elevation (mostly below 1000 m elev.) in a variety of vegetation formations from tropical wet forests through subtropical dry forests (Hardy 1980; Wilson & Johnson. 2010). There is a distributional gap in the range of this species on the Pacific lowlands of Mexico between Jalisco and Guerrero that encompasses the states of Colima and Michoacán (Fig. 1).

Herein we report for the first time, the presence of *F. publia* in the state of Michoacán. An adult female (TL: 175 mm) was found dead on 24 August 2014 by Jesús Ibarra Medina on Carretera Federal 120 between Coalcomán and Aquila in the Municipality of Chinicuila (18.662413° N - 103.436682° W; WGS 84; 990 m elev.; Fig. 1). The dominant vegetation type in the area was tropical deciduous forest. The specimen was deposited in the Colección Herpetológica de la Universidad Michoacana (HINIRENA). This locality represents a range extension of 179 airline km southeast from closest known record at Rancho Cuixmala, Municipality of La Huerta, Jalisco (Fig. 1; García & Valtierra-Azotla 1996). The closest known localities in adjacent states (Fig. 1) are at Chilpancingo, Guerrero (Smith 1943) and Tlaquiltenango, Morelos (Castro-Franco & Bustos-Zagal 2004). Presently, Colima is the only Mexican state where this species has not been recorded on the Pacific versant below Jalisco, but considering the similarity in elevational range and vegetation types, *F. publia* should eventually be reported from there in low to moderate elevations.

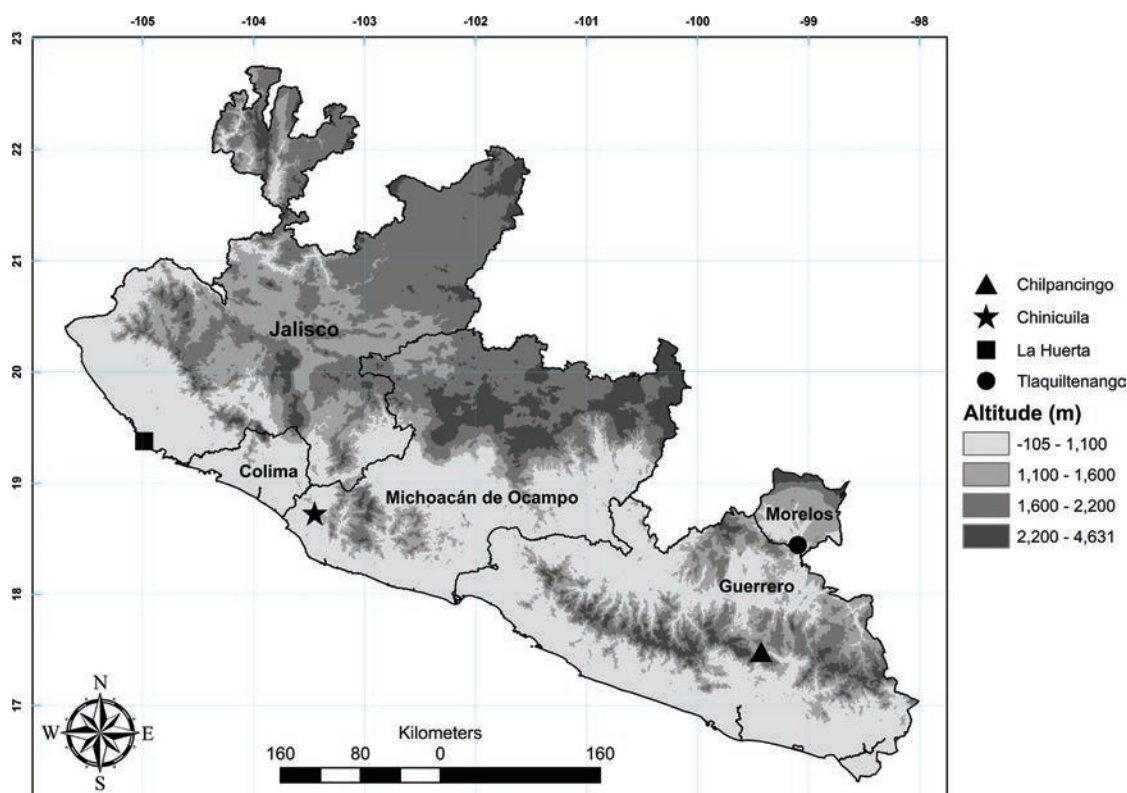


Figure 1. Collecting site of *Ficimia publia* in Michoacán and nearest localities where the species was previously collected in the surrounding states of Jalisco, Guerrero, and Morelos.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. We thank to Jesús Ibarra for collecting the specimen under SEMARNAT permit No. FAUT-0113, and Barush A. Montejano V. for helping produce Fig. 1. We also thank the Coordinación de la Investigación Científica de la UMSNH.

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