

we visited the stream to make behavioral observations of these snakes. Some of the time they lie motionless on the bottom of the stream, until a fish comes by and they try to catch it with a quick, sideways jerk of the head. At other times they swim around and forage actively. We found one with a goby in its throat. The snakes ignore the large shrimp that are also common in this stream.

The evening of 20 August 1969 we found an adult specimen crawling on a road, the only one ever seen out of water on the Bay Islands, although Meyer and Wilson collected them at night on the mainland San Pedro Sula-Puerto Cortés highway. We never saw them on the stream banks nor in the daytime, when they doubtless hide in the masses of dead leaves on the stream bottom or under the banks.

We also collected two specimens in 1967 in a stream near the La Playa Hotel on Guanaja. These snakes apparently prefer a stream without too steep a gradient. The species has not been found on Utila, which has practically no surface water.

When caught these snakes make no attempt to bite, nor did we notice any other defensive mechanism such as the cryptic response discussed by Petzold (1967) for *Tretanorhinus variabilis* of Cuba.

Five subspecies of *Tretanorhinus nigroluteus* are currently recognized (Dunn, 1939; Smith, 1965; Villa, 1969), *nigroluteus*, *lateralis*, *mertensi*, *dichromaticus*, *obscurus*. They are distinguished by varying combinations of discordant characters, perhaps the most generally used criteria for the formal recognition of infraspecific taxa. The better to assess the significance of variation in the Bay Island material, we have tried to summarize the significant variation in *T. nigroluteus* over its whole range.

Ventrals vary slightly, generally increasing gradually from north to south on the mainland. Bay Islands specimens have essentially the same number of ventrals as do those from the adjacent mainland. Females from the Corn Islands also agree generally with females from the mainland. Males average fewer, but the differences are not great.

The loreal may be single or vertically divided into two. Specimens from the northern portion of the range (México to Guatemala) have a single loreal; those from the southern portions (Panamá) almost invariably have two. Within the middle section of the range (Honduras to Nicaragua) the percentage of specimens with two loreals gradually increases southward. Villa (1969) pointed out that 5.3% of mainland Honduran specimens and 32.1% of Bay Island specimens have two loreals, against 89.1% of mainland Nicaraguan and 91.7% of Corn Island specimens.

The number of preoculars is usually 2 or 3. Dunn (1939) stated that the 3 preocular condition is "practically confined to Belize" (=Brit-