

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

McCranie, J.R. 2006. *Bolitoglossa decora*.

***Bolitoglossa decora* McCranie and Wilson**

Bolitoglossa decora McCranie and Wilson 1997:367.

Type-locality, "along the trail to Cerro de Enmedio near the Monte Escondido campground (15°05'N, 86°44'W), Parque Nacional La Muralla, 1440 m elev., Departamento de Olancho, Honduras." Holotype, National Museum of Natural History (USNM) 500000, an adult female, collected by D. Almendarez, J.R. McCranie, and L.D. Wilson, 29 July 1996 (examined by author).

B[olitoglossa]. (Magnadigita) decora: Parra-Olea et al. 2004:336.

• **CONTENT.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **DEFINITION.** *Bolitoglossa decora* is a moderately large salamander (SVL 51.2 and 52.9 in 2 adult males, 61.0 and 62.1 mm in 2 adult females) with a moderately long and broad head (head length/SVL 0.256–0.257 in adult males, 0.233–0.250 in adult females; head width/SVL 0.163–0.166 in adult males, 0.161–0.163 in adult females). The snout is nearly truncate to broadly rounded in dorsal aspect and broadly rounded in lateral profile. The labial protuberances are well developed in males and weakly developed in females. Adult males have a distinct, oval-shaped mental gland cluster. The eyes are slightly protuberant and are not or only narrowly visible beyond the margin of the jaw when viewed from below. The postorbital groove is shallow and extends posteriorly from the eye before turning sharply ventrally to connect with the gular fold, and another groove proceeds sharply ventrally just posterior to the lower jaw and extends irregularly across the throat anterior to the gular fold. There is no sublingual fold. The maxillary teeth number 60–67 (63.5) in adult males, 68–70 (69.0) in adult females, and extend posteriorly to a level beyond the center of the orbit, and increase in number with increasing adult size (maxillary teeth number 47 and 54 in 2 subadult males). The vomerine teeth number 30–31 (30.5) in adult males, 29–31 (30.0) in adult females, and are in long, single or slightly irregular, arched series that extend laterally to a level slightly beyond the medial border of the choanae. The premaxillary teeth number 5–6 in adults of both sexes. The premaxillary teeth are enlarged and pierce the lip or are located just posterior to the lip line in males and are not enlarged and are located posterior to the lip and in line with the maxillary series in females. The costal grooves number 13. The tail is nearly rectangular in cross section anteriorly, becoming ovoid for the distal one-third of its length and is strongly constricted basally. Tail length/SVL is 0.749 in 1 subadult male and 0.757–0.770 in adult females. The limbs are relatively slender and moderately long (forelimb length/SVL 0.273–0.274 in adult males, 0.231–0.235 in adult females; hind limb length/SVL 0.278–0.280 in adult males, 0.241–0.253 in adult fe-



Figure 1. (Above): Adult female holotype (USNM 500000; photograph by the author); (below): Adult male (UF 142737; photograph by Josiah H. Townsend) of *Bolitoglossa decora*, showing the two extremes in lateral spotting known in this species.



males). The adpressed limb interval is 0.5 costal folds in both adult males and 0.5–1.0 costal folds in adult females. The feet are moderately large (hind foot width/SVL 0.123 in both adult males, 0.103–0.105 in adult females). The digits are differentiated, with slightly more than two segments on both sides of toe III on the forelimbs and of toe III between toes III–IV on the hind limbs free of webbing. The toe tips are bluntly rounded and bear well-developed subdigital pads. The relative length of the toes on the forelimbs is I<IV<II<III, whereas that on the hind limbs is I<V<II<IV<III. A fairly distinct postiliac gland cluster is present. Males have cloacal papillae and females have cloacal folds (the above from data taken by McCranie and published in McCranie and Wilson 1997, 2002, and supplemented by two recently collected adult males [UF 142737–38]).

McCranie and Wilson (1997), using Smithe (1975–1981) for color names (capitalized) and color codes (in parentheses), described the color in life of the adult female holotype (USNM 500000) as follows: "middorsal region of back and top of head Amber (36), this color grading laterally to Burnt Umber (22); lateral surface of body with variously-sized prominent Buff-Yellow (53) spots; dorsal surface of tail Burnt Umber (22) with Warm Buff (118) spots; dorsal surfaces of limbs Warm Buff (118) with Buff-Yellow (53) spots and Burnt Umber (22) crossbars; side of head Raw Umber (23) with Buff-Yellow (53) spots; all ventral surfaces Drab (27) with Buff-Yellow (53) spots; iris mottled gold and rust color." Color in life of a subadult female (USNM 497536) was also described by these authors as follows: "dorsal surfaces of body and tail Fuscous (21) with slightly paler middorsal line of irregular markings; top of head Russet (34); lateral surfaces of body Fuscous (21) with row of Buff-Yellow (53) spots; dorsal surfaces of limbs Amber (36) with darker smudging; all ventral surfaces Drab (27) with very few scattered Buff-Yellow (53) spots on chin and chest; iris mottled gold and rust color."

Color in alcohol was described as follows by Mc-

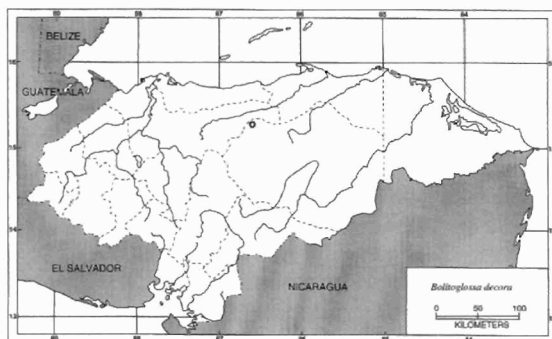
Cranie and Wilson (1997): “dorsum of body dark brown, sometimes with paler brown middorsal region; top of head usually paler brown than body ground color; lateral surfaces of body dark brown with pale yellow spots of varying sizes, ranging from small and few in number to numerous and large in size; most specimens also have small to moderately large pale yellow spots on dorsal and lateral surfaces of tail; dorsal surfaces of limbs usually with pale brown spots covering at least the knee region; ventral surfaces of body and tail vary from cream-colored with numerous tiny brown flecks to dark brown with numerous tiny pale iridophores, some specimens also have numerous large pale spots on ventral and subcaudal surfaces; large females have more numerous and larger pale spots on lateral surfaces of body and tail, on dorsal surfaces of tail and limbs, and on all ventral and subcaudal surfaces.”

• **DIAGNOSIS.** *Bolitoglossa decora* is a member of the *B. dunni* species group of the subgenus *Magnadigita* Taylor 1944 (Parra-Olea et al. 2004). Eleven described species were included in this species group by Parra-Olea et al. (2004) and two more species have been subsequently described (Greenbaum 2004, McCranie et al. 2005). The well-defined yellow (in life) and pale yellow (in alcohol) spots on the lateral surface of the body in *B. decora* will distinguish it from all other known species in the *B. dunni* group.

• **DESCRIPTIONS.** Detailed descriptions of external morphology are in McCranie and Wilson (1997, 2002).

• **ILLUSTRATIONS.** Color photographs of the adult female holotype and a subadult female are in McCranie and Wilson (2002). A black-and-white photograph of the holotype is in McCranie and Wilson (1997).

• **DISTRIBUTION.** *Bolitoglossa decora* is known only from the type-locality at the base of Cerro de Enmedio, about 8 km NNW of La Unión, in northwestern Olancho in north-central Honduras. The known elevational range is 1430–1550 m in primary cloud forest (Lower Montane Wet Forest formation of Holdridge 1967).



Map. Distribution of *Bolitoglossa decora*. The circle denotes the type-locality. All known localities are from the immediate area of the type-locality.

• **FOSSIL RECORD.** None.

• **PERTINENT LITERATURE.** What little is known about the natural history of this species was discussed by McCranie and Wilson (1997, 2002) and its distribution by Honduran physiographic and ecogeographic regions was presented by McCranie and Wilson (2002). Wilson and McCranie (2003) discussed its status as an “indicator species” used to measure environmental stability and these authors considered the species to be highly vulnerable. Wilson and McCranie (2004a) discussed its conservation status and also considered the species to be highly vulnerable and Wilson and McCranie (2004b) discussed its distribution within the Honduran cloud forests. Parra-Olea et al. (2004) studied its mitochondrial DNA and presented a phylogenetic analysis of its relationships among the genus *Bolitoglossa* that confirmed its previous placement in the *B. dunni* species group by McCranie and Wilson (1997). Parra-Olea et al. (2004) also placed the species in the subgenus *Magnadigita* Taylor (1944). The species was included in diagnoses of new species of *Bolitoglossa* by Greenbaum (2004, in his Table 1), McCranie and Köhler (1999), and McCranie et al. (2005). Greenbaum (2004) also reproduced the figure of the “*Magnadigita*” clade previously published in Parra-Olea et al. (2004). McCranie et al. (2005) included a map showing the known localities of this species and the remaining members of the *B. dunni* group in Honduras. The type description of this species was alluded to in addendums to publications on the herpetofauna of Parque Nacional La Muralla (Espinal et al. 2001), the ecogeography of the Honduran herpetofauna (Wilson et al. 2001), and distributional patterns of amphibians in Middle America (Campbell 1999; although the elevational range given therein is erroneous). Duellman (2001) listed the species as occurring in the Eastern Nuclear Highlands of Middle America. Larson et al. (2003) listed the species as a member of the subfamily Plethodontidae, tribe Bolitoglossini, in the genus *Bolitoglossa*, and also included it in the *B. dunni* group. Duellman and Schlager (2003) included it in their valid species list.

• **COMMENT.** Museum acronyms follow Leviton et al. (1985).

• **ETYMOLOGY.** The name *decora* is an adjective formed from the Latin *decorus-a-um* and means ornamented, elegant, or beautiful. The name refers to the “spectacularly ornamented and beautiful color pattern of the large females of this taxon” (McCranie and Wilson 1997).

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