

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

McCranie, J.R. and L.D. Wilson. 1991. *Rhadinaea montecristi*.

***Rhadinaea montecristi* Mertens**

Rhadinaea montecristi Mertens, 1952a:136. Type-locality, "Hacienda Monte Cristo, 2200 m. H., Gebirge von Metapan, Dept. Santa Ana, El Salvador." Holotype, Natur-Museum und Forschungs-Institut Senckenberg (SMF) 43188, an adult male, collected by Adolf Zilch, 26 or 27 August 1951 (not examined by authors).

• **Content.** The species is monotypic.

• **Definition.** *Rhadinaea montecristi* is a medium small species (females to 555 mm TL, males to 523 mm) of the *R. godmani* group with 19 smooth dorsal scale rows throughout the body, 8 supralabials, usually 8 (occasionally 9) infralabials, usually 1 (occasionally 1-2) preoculars, usually 2 (occasionally 1-2) postoculars, and 1+2 temporals. Ventrals and subcaudals range from 157-176 (157-165 in males, 164-176 in females) and 71-87 (77-87 in males, 71-79 in females), respectively.

The body pattern consists of a medium rust brown ground color middorsally (7, 9, or 11 scale rows wide) and whitish to cream lateral ground color. A poorly-distinguished dark middorsal stripe is usually present. A very dark lateral stripe is located on scale row 3 and the adjacent halves of rows 2 and 4; occasionally this stripe may be positioned on row 2 or 4 and similarly expanded onto adjacent rows. An equally prominent dark ventrolateral stripe is located on the lateral tips of the ventrals and the lower portion of the first dorsal scale row. The venter is immaculate bright yellow in some specimens, but usually some scattered black dots are present. The dorsum of the head is rust brown. The lower portions of the supralabials and the postocular line or stripe are pale yellow, bordered with black. The chin is pale yellow, grading into the bright yellow of the venter.

• **Diagnosis.** *Rhadinaea montecristi* can be distinguished from all members of the genus except *R. bempsteadae* and *R. serperaster* in having 19 dorsal scale rows. *Rhadinaea montecristi* can be distinguished from these two species by the presence of very heavy lateral and ventrolateral stripes.

• **Descriptions.** Myers (1974) provided the most thorough description of scutellation and color pattern based on 32 topotypic specimens. Subsequently, Wilson et al. (1979) described the scutellation and color pattern of a Honduran specimen and Wilson and Meyer (1985) included data on four other Honduran specimens. Earlier, Mertens (1952a) provided a thorough description of the holotype, Mertens (1952b) a description of the paratype, and Uzzell

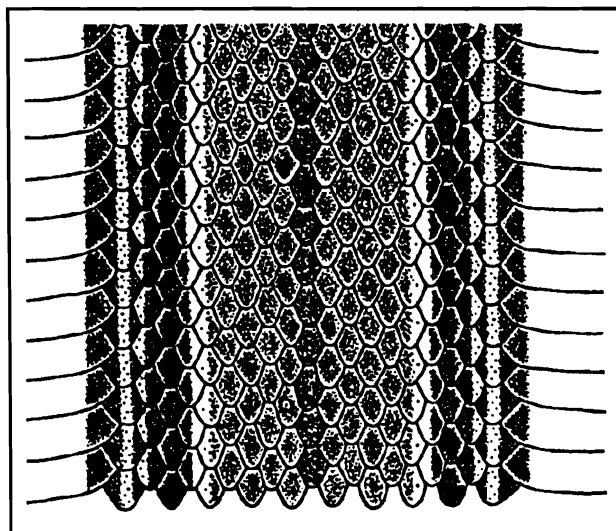
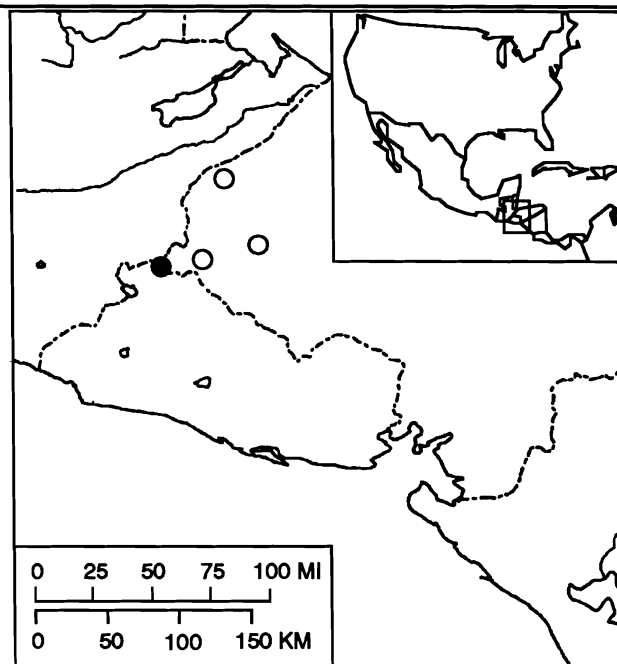


Figure. Dorsal pattern of *Rhadinaea montecristi* (KU 203092) from Quebrada Grande, Depto. Copán, Honduras (from Wilson and Meyer, 1985).



Map. Distribution of *Rhadinaea montecristi*. The solid circle marks the type-locality, open circles mark other known localities.

and Starrett (1958) a description of seven topotypic specimens. Myers (1974) described the maxillary dentition and the hemipenis.

• **Illustrations.** Myers (1974) provided a black and white photograph showing the head pattern, a drawing showing midbody color pattern, and a drawing of the hemipenis. Wilson and Meyer (1985) included a drawing of the midbody color pattern and Mertens (1952b) a black and white photograph of a lateral view of the head and the anterior portion of the body of the holotype.

• **Distribution.** The species is known from disjunct populations in the mountains of extreme northwestern El Salvador and southwestern Honduras between 1300 and 2620 m. Campbell and Vannini (1989) suggested that this species may eventually be found in the adjacent portion of Guatemala.

The species has been collected in both cleared and virgin areas of cloud forest (Lower Montane Moist Forest and Lower Montane Wet Forest formations of Holdridge, 1967). Most Honduran specimens were taken from beneath logs; however, one was found inside a cavity connected to the surface by a tunnel within a terrestrial moss mat.

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Myers (1974) obtained two unidentified salamanders from the stomach of two specimens of *R. montecristi*. Wilson et al. (1979) listed herpetofaunal associates and habitat data on the first Honduran specimen. Villa et al. (1988) listed the majority of the pertinent literature on the species. Mertens (1952a, 1952b, 1952c) thought the closest relative of *R. montecristi* to be *R. bempsteadae*. Myers (1974) and Uzzell and Starrett (1958) suggested that *R. lachrymansis* most closely related to *R. montecristi*. Campbell (1982) presented a cladogram theorizing that the closest relatives of *R. montecristi* are *R. bempsteadae* and *R. serperaster*, the two species which also possess 19 dorsal scale rows. Wilson et al. (1979) cited two instances in which *R. montecristi* is known to occur syntopically with two other member of the *R. godmani* group.

• **Etymology.** The specific name *montecristi* is based on the type-locality, Hacienda Monte Cristo.

• **Comment.** The following specimen was included on the map in Wilson and Meyer (1985), but was inadvertently left out of the list of locality records - Honduras: Lempira, east slope of Cerro Celaque above Villa Verde, 2530 m, KU 200998. Two other speci-

mens (KU 209345-46) have subsequently been collected at the same locality, one of which extended the known elevational range of the species to 2620 m.

Data from two other recently-collected specimens (FMNH 236408-09) from a previously-known locality (Honduras: Depto. Ocotepeque, El Portillo de Ocotepeque, 1900 m) are included in the Definition section.

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