First Record for the Striped Color Morph of Plethodon cinereus from a Lake Erie Island

Norman Reichenbach
Liberty University, nreichen@liberty.edu

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FIRST RECORD FOR THE STRIPED COLOR MORPH OF Plethodon cinereus FROM A LAKE ERIE ISLAND

High percentages of the unstriped morph of the red-backed salamander, Plethodon cinereus, have been reported from northern Ohio and include a monomorphic unstriped population from South Bass Island (located in the western basin of Lake Erie), Ottawa County, Ohio (Pfingsten and Walker, 1978). During investigations on the ecology of P. cinereus at Victory Woods (1.7 km W Put-in-Bay), South Bass Island, 131 unstriped and 1 striped P. cinereus were collected. The striped morph (SV 25mm) was found with several unstriped morphs under a decaying log in typical woodland habitat for P. cinereus (Heatwole, 1962). This specimen, being the first record for the striped morph from South Bass Island, was released at the capture site after being photographed.

The nearest P. cinereus populations in northern Ohio have greater percentages of striped morphs (7-80% striped; Pfingsten and Walker, 1978) and are now separated from South Bass Island by at least 4 km of water. Twelve thousand five hundred years ago (after the last glaciation), the bottom of Lake Erie was virtually dry and was covered with forests (Forsyth, 1973). During this period, South Bass Island could have been populated by salamanders following the retreating glacier. The subsequent reflooding of the western basin (3,500 to 4,000 years ago) would have isolated South Bass Island with its P. cinereus population (Forsyth, 1973). The progression toward a monomorphic unstriped condition in this isolated population could then have occurred simply by genetic drift. Hence this lone striped P. cinereus may represent a relict gene in the population.

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NORMAN G. REICHENBACH
Department of Zoology
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

AN INTERGRADE Lampropeltis triangulum FROM TEXAS

On 8 August, 1978, the authors secured a DOR specimen of Lampropeltis triangulum during the late morning on Highway 90, 0.8 km west of Sanderson, Terrell Co., Texas. Upon examination the specimen appeared to be an intergrade between L. t. caleanops and L. t. annulata. Personal communication with Dr. Kenneth L. Williams further indicates that this is the first specimen of L. triangulum recorded from this area. It is deposited in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology under the number UM 156483.

The data on lepidosis and coloration of the specimen are given below:

- Supralabials 7-7; infralabials 7-8; preoculars 2-7; postoculars 2-7; loreals 7-8; temporals 2-7. Dorsal scale rows 21-21-19; ventrals 184; subcaudals 48; total length ca. 464mm; tail length 75mm; tail length/total length ratio 0.161.

- Top of head mostly black; white mottling present on supralabials, supraracurals, prefrontals, internasals, rostral, nasals, loreals, preoculars, and temporals. Frontal and postoculars on the left are entirely black; infralabials white with small amounts of black concentrated in the sutures; chin white with sparse amounts of black flecking.

The first white ring extends from the posterior 1/3 of the parietals to 2 1/2 scales back; length of remaining white rings 2 scales middorsally. White bands are all complete across the venter, although the black bands will sometimes encroach to form an imperfect alternating pattern. The number of white annuli on body 18; the number on the tail 5 with one more forming on the side. There is a very light amount of black flecking on all white rings with the least amount occurring on the two rings at each extremity.

- Length of the first black ring 3 1/2 scales; middorsal length of remaining black rings 2-3 scales (mostly 2); lateral length of remaining black rings 1/2-1 scale (mostly 1). Number of black rings on body 35 (plus 1 directly above the vent); number of black rings on tail 7. The black rings never cross the red pigment middorsally, although a light suffusion of black pigment occurs on some red annuli.

- Length of first red ring 8-10 scales; length of remaining red rings 3-5 1/2 scales middorsally. Number of red rings on body 18; number on tail 2.

- The black annuli completely encircle the venter; in addition, the middle 3/5 of each ventral saddle is black. All of these black ventral saddles contain small white blotches or flecks of white. The tail has 3 large solid black annuli instead of saddles. The first 3 saddles on the anterior section of the specimen consist of a double row of black dots connecting the black annuli. This pattern gradually fits in to form the saddle pattern present along the remainder of the specimen.

Several of the features of this specimen suggest intergradation between L. t. caleanops and L. t. annulata (see Williams, 1978).

These are:
1) The intermediate amount of black pigment on the head and chin.
2) The intermediate width of the black ventral saddles.
3) The progressive increase in the black ventral pigment from the throat to the first black ventral saddle.
4) The presence of white markings in the black ventral saddles.

In addition to these definitive intergradation characteristics, the scale counts and lengths of the body annuli fall within the range of variation of both subspecies.

We would like to thank Dr. Kenneth L. Williams for examining the data on this specimen and for his helpful comments.

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FRED KRAUS
1022 Eleanor Ave
Toledo, Ohio 43612

GORDON W. SCHUETT
5061 Sheila Dr.
Toledo, Ohio 43613

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