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NEW RECORD OF RED-BANDED SNAKE *Lycodon rufozonatus* (SERPENTES: COLUBRIDAE) IN PRIMORSKY KRAY, RUSSIA

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Information about a new find of the Red-banded Snake (*Lycodon rufozonatus* Cantor, 1842) in the Primorsky Kray is presented. The new discovery site is located 220 km northeast of previously known finds and is currently the northernmost for *L. rufozonatus* on range.

Keywords: reptiles; Colubridae; *Lycodon rufozonatus*; new record; Primorsky Kray; Russian Far East.

INTRODUCTION

The Red-banded Snake (*Lycodon rufozonatus* Cantor, 1842) is one of the rarest and most beautiful snakes in the Russian fauna (Figs. 1 and 2). In our country, it is reliably known only from the extreme southwest of Primorsky Kray — the Malaya Ananyevka River basin (Maslova et al., 2021a, 2021b), and the main range of this species is in China (Fig. 3). For this reason, the Red-banded Snake is included in the Red Data Books of the Russian Federation (with the status of the 4th category — vulnerable, species with an uncertain status) (Maslova et al., 2021b) and Primorsky Kray (3rd category — rare species on the outskirts of the range) (Kostenko, 2005).

The Red-banded Snake was first mentioned in Russia under the name *Dinodon rufozonatum* (Cantor, 1842) by Kudryavtsev and Mamet (1989) based on a female found in 1987 in the vicinity of Nezhino. The snakes were found several more times in the late 20th century: in May 1988 on the Bolshevistskiy Creek (a tributary of the Malaya Ananyevka River; a male and a female under boards next to a hunting hut), in 1989 (a dead male), and in July 1995 (one female was found in the same area) (Kudryavtsev and Mamet, 1989; Solkin, 1990; Maslov and Kotlobay, 1998). The last find was made in early June 2011 in the middle reaches of the Malaya Ananyevka River (Maslova, 2017). Thus, all reliable encounters with *L. rufozonatus* are known in the Nadezhdensky District of Primorsky Kray: in the middle reaches of the Malaya Ananyevka River and its tributary, the Bolshevistskiy Creek (Maslova et al., 2021b).

Outside of Russia, the Red-banded Snake is found in Eastern and Southern China (Zhao and Adler, 1993; Chen et al., 2007), the islands of Hainan and Taiwan (Dieckmann et al., 2010; Wallach et al., 2014), the Korean Peninsula (Won, 1971), the Tsushima Island and the south of the Ryukyu Archipelago in Japan (Goris and Maeda, 1997; Ashimine, 2009), Northern Vietnam (Janssen et al., 2019) and Northern Laos (Uetz and Hošek, 2024).

NEW RECORD OF THE RED-BANDED SNAKE

On May 21, 2024, we made an unexpected discovery of a young Red-banded Snake (snake length 33 – 34 cm) at the northern end of the Siny Ridge, not far from the confluence of the Ussuri and Arsenyevka rivers (Figs. 1 and 2). The discovery site is located 220 km northeast of the middle reaches of the Malaya Ananyevka River and is currently the northernmost location for *L. rufozonatus* in its range (Fig. 3).

The snake was found on a forest road at the bottom of the slope of Beltsovsky Cliff during a night entomological excursion. The place of discovery is a forest road running across a steep slope and rising above the Arsenyevka River bed by about 15 – 20 m. The vegetation in this area is mainly represented by oak-birch forest with Korean pine and broad-leaved trees.

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Fig. 1. The front part of the body of the Red-banded Snake *Lycodon rufozonatus* Cantor, 1842, Beltsovsky Utes, Siny Ridge, Primorsky Kray, Russia. Photo by A. V. Makarov.

Geographical data of the snake's discovery. "Russia, Primorsky Kray, Yakovlevsky District, Beltsovsky Utes, forest road ~1 km north of Beltsovo, 44.842408 °N 133.575549 °E, 21.05.2024."

That same night (from 10:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.) on the same road, two young (one alive and one dead, which was being eaten by two ground beetles *Carabus canaliculatus* Adams, 1812) and one adult *Elaphe dione* (Pallas, 1773), one adult *Gloydius intermedius* (Strauch, 1868) and an adult *Rhabdophis tigrinus* (Boie, 1826) crushed by a car were noted. During the daytime, one *Elaphe schrenckii* (Strauch, 1873) was also encountered here.

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Fig. 2. Red-banded Snake *Lycodon rufozonatus* Cantor, 1842, Beltsovsky Utes, Siny Ridge, Primorsky Kray, Russia. Photo by K. V. Makarov.

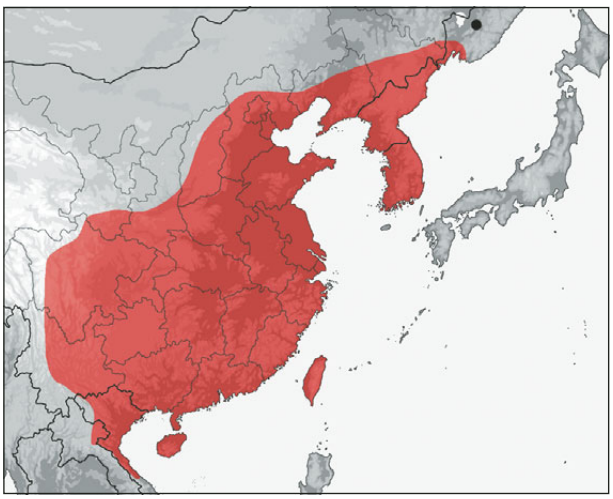

Fig. 3. The modern range of the Red-banded Snake *Lycodon rufozonatus* Cantor, 1842 (red fill) (after: Midtgaard, 2024) and its new find in Primorsky Kray, Russia (black dot).

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