1979

Unusual Concentration of Scarlet Snakes

Keith B. Sutton

V. Rick McDaniel

Arkansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.uark.edu/jaas

Part of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://scholarworks.uark.edu/jaas/vol33/iss1/42

This article is available for use under the Creative Commons license: Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0). Users are able to read, download, copy, print, distribute, search, link to the full texts of these articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author.

This General Note is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the Arkansas Academy of Science by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu, ccmiddle@uark.edu.
UNUSUAL CONCENTRATION OF SCARLET SNAKES (Cemophora coccinea) IN VILLAGE CREEK STATE PARK, ARKANSAS

In Arkansas, the Scarlet Snake (Cemophora coccinea) is not considered abundant at any locality where it has been found. Because of its secretive habits of this species, most no doubt escape the attention of collectors.

One specimen was collected by Dellinger and Black Occas. Pap. Univ. Ark. Mus. No. 611, 1938) in the Ft. Smith area and placed in the Univ. of Arkansas at Fayetteville collection, and several others were reported from the Ft. Smith area. Parker (Proc. Ark. Acad. Sci. 2:15-30, 1947) deposited a single specimen from Greene County in the Univ. of Michigan collection. Dowling (Ocass. Pap. Univ. Ark. Mus. No. 3, p. 31 1957) reported two specimens, UADZ 79 and UADZ 94, from Pike and Washington Counties and mentioned that there were few records of this species listed for Arkansas. Recent reports from central Arkansas were mentioned by Reagan (Ark. Natural Plan Publ. pp. 101-105, 1074). Byrd and Hanebrink (Herp. Review 7:133, 1976) reported two specimens, one from Izard County and one from Sharp County. No more than one specimen has been reported from any one county other than the reports by Dellinger and Black for the Ft. Smith area.

Since 1973, nine additional specimens have been found in Village Creek State Park located in Cross and St. Francis Counties in eastern Arkansas. The first specimen was collected as it crossed a gravel driveway in early July 1975. A second specimen was dug up in about two inches of humus on a ridge top during trail construction in late July of the same year. Two additional specimens were collected during trail construction in midsummer of 1976. In 1977, Scarlet Snakes were collected as they crossed park roads on the nights of 31 May and 1 July. Three more specimens were collected during the summer of 1978. On the evening of 24 June, a Scarlet Snake was found on the road near the park entrance. Another was found dead on the road on 4 July and measured 48.6 centimeters in total length. A final 42.3 centimeter specimen was found dead on the road on 9 July.

Village Creek State Park covers 7000 acres within the Natural Division of Arkansas known as Crowley’s Ridge. The dominant tree species are White Oak, Quercus alba and Beech (Fagus grandifolia). Other common species include various oaks, Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua), Tulip Poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera), Sugar Maple (Acer saccharum), Mockernut Hickory (Carya tomentosa), and Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis).

Despite their striking markings, Scarlet Snakes elude collectors due to their burrowing habits. Nine Scarlet Snakes were collected at Village Creek State Park during the years 1975-1978. This represents the largest number collected in a single locality in Arkansas. All were found on roads during or after rain or were uncovered from forest humus during trail construction.


92 Arkansas Academy of Science Proceedings, Vol. XXXIII, 1979