

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Henderson, R.W. and R. Powell. 1996. *Chironius vincenti*.

*Chironius vincenti* Boulenger

*Herpetodryas carinatus* var. *vincenti* Boulenger, 1891:355.

Type-locality, "St. Vincent." Dixon et al. (1993) designated British Museum of Natural History (BMNH) 90.11.25.21B as the lectotype, an adult female (SVL 706 mm), collected by H.H. Smith and donated by F.D. Godman in 1890 (not examined by authors).

*Chironius vincenti*: Schwartz and Thomas, 1975:180. First use of present combination.

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

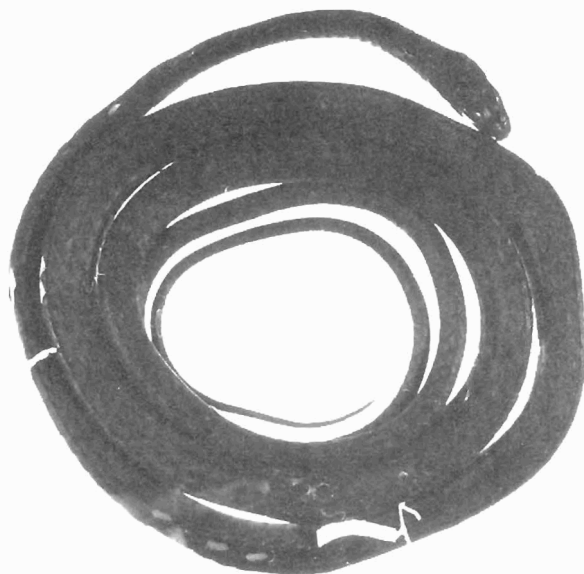
• **Definition.** This moderately to large-sized (maximum known SVL 1260 mm) colubrid has 12 dorsal scale rows at midbody, 163-171 (males) or 164-167 (females) ventrals, 152-158 (males) or 157 (female) paired subcaudals, 9 supralabials, 9-12 infralabials, 1 preocular, 2-3 postoculars, 1 loreal, 1+2 temporals, and a divided cloacal scute (= anal plate).

The dorsum is uniformly black. The mouth, chin, and ventrals are pale yellow. Proximal subcaudals have a pale central area, but margins are black; distal subcaudals are black.

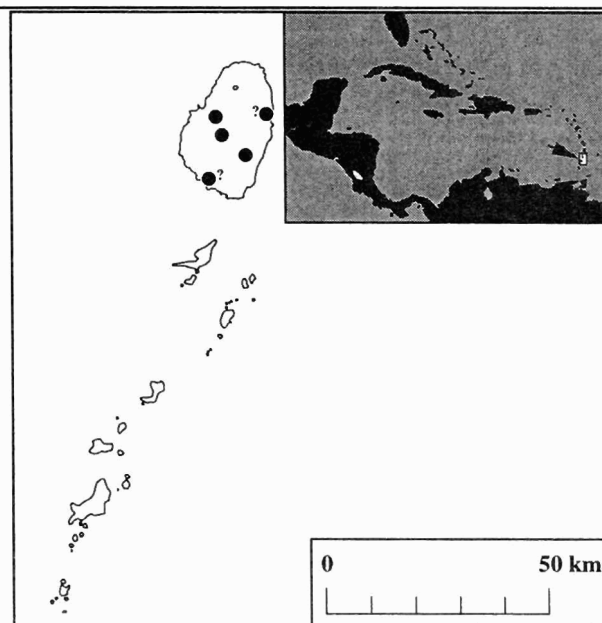
• **Diagnosis.** *Chironius vincenti* can be distinguished from all other West Indian colubrids by having only 12 dorsal scale rows at midbody.

• **Descriptions.** In addition to that of Boulenger (1891), descriptions are in Schwartz and Henderson (1991) and Dixon et al. (1993).

• **Illustrations.** Henderson and Haas (1993) provided an illustration as it appeared on a postage stamp issued in St. Vincent. Dixon et al. (1993) included a black-and-white photograph of a preserved specimen.



**Figure.** *Chironius vincenti* (MPM 26155) from Vermont Forest Reserve, St. Andrew, St. Vincent.



**Map.** Range of *Chironius vincenti* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The type-locality is too imprecise to plot, dots denote other known localities, question marks indicate records of uncertain validity.

• **Distribution.** The species is known only from St. Vincent, Lesser Antilles, where it inhabits mesic forests with a probable elevational distribution ranging from about 275-600 m. *Chironius carinatus* was reported from Guadeloupe by Boulenger (1894), but no subsequent records exist.

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Henderson et al. (1988) described the first specimen to reach a museum in over 100 years. Schwartz and Henderson (1991) presented information on distribution and natural history. Henderson (1992) suggested that the mongoose may be responsible for the rarity or possible extinction of this snake. Henderson and Haas (1993) described habitat and distribution, diet, and discussed conservation status. Dixon et al. (1993), in a revision of the genus *Chironius*, provided a description, notes on life history, speculated on its future on St. Vincent, and discussed interspecific relationships and zoogeography. Hedges (1996) suggested a probable South American origin by dispersal in the late Cenozoic.

The species is included in notes, checklists, and guides by Barbour (1914, 1930, 1935, 1937), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), Henderson and Crother (1989), and Powell et al. (1996).

• **Remarks.** Frank and Ramus (1995) proposed use of the common name "Vincent's sipo" for "*C. vicinus* Boulenger, 1915." *Chironius vicinus* was described as *Herpetodryas vicinus* by Boulenger (1915), but was placed in the synonymy of *C. grandisquamis* (Peters, 1868) by Dixon et al. (1993). As a result, *C. vicinus* is not currently a valid name. However, the use of "Vincent's" in the common name suggests that Frank and Ramus (1995) may, in fact, have been referring to *C. vincenti*, but confused the specific epithet by erroneously using a patronym instead of a reference to the island of St. Vincent. Because of

the confusion generated by the combination of an invalid name and a possible misunderstanding of the species name, we prefer to avoid the use of any common name at this time.

• **Etymology.** The name *vincenti* is reference to St. Vincent, the only island from which this species is known.

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