

ON A NEW SPECIES OF TROPIDONOTUS FOUND IN WASHINGTON.

By E. D. COPE.

A small water-snake was taken near the central station of the U. S. Fish Commission known as the old Armory, in Washington, and was sent to the National Museum by Mr. J. B. Brown. After considerable examination of the specimen I have concluded that it cannot be properly referred to any of the species of the genus to which it belongs, the *Tropidonotus* of authors. I therefore, with considerable surprise at the necessity for so doing, name and describe it as follows:

Tropidonotus bisectus, sp. nov. (U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 14643.)

Scales in twenty-five longitudinal rows, all keeled. Form moderately robust. Internasals nearly triangular; prefrontals wider than long; frontal with parallel sides, which are longer than the anterior border. Rostral broad, low, divided in two by a vertical suture. Loreal higher than long. Oculars 2-3, the superior anterior shorter than the inferior; the inferior posterior so produced forward as to exclude the fifth superior labial from the orbit. Superior labials nine, the fourth only entering the orbit. Temporals 1-3, the superior of the second series elongate. Gastrosteges, 143; urosteges, 67. The color is olive-brown above, dirty white below. There is a row of blackish spots along the sides, of small size, which cover the adjacent parts of three scales of the first and second rows, and which are separated by an interspace of one and a half scales. These spots are wanting from the anterior fourth of the length. Above the interval between them there is, on each side, a longitudinal dusky spot, which is entirely separate from that of the opposite side. These longitudinal spots commence at the head and disappear near the middle of the length, after acquiring a tendency to extend obliquely downwards and backwards. Head without marks, except three pale spots on the parietals; one on each side of the median suture, and one at the angle of the frontal. Belly unicolor, except at the lateral spots, which extend over the posterior angle of the gastrosteges. Inferior surface of tail black-speckled. Total length, 271^{mm}; of tail, 66^{mm}.

The only North American species with which this form can be compared is the *Tropidonotus woodhousei* B. & G., of Texas. That species only has twenty-five series of scales and nine superior labials, but it has but one preocular plate and a totally different coloration, which is like that of the *T. sipedon*. The peculiar vertical division of the rostral plate may be abnormal, but it is associated with a depressed form which is not found in the *T. woodhousei*.

Of the true habitat of this species no conjecture can be made. Its apparent immaturity renders it probable that it is native to the region in which it was found, but it may have been brought to the Armory concealed in freight. In any case it is North American, and belongs to the group of which *T. fasciatus* is the type.