

A NEW GENERIC NAME FOR THE HUNDRED-PACE VIPER

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Abstract.—The genus *Deinagkistrodon* is established for the species now known as *Agkistrodon acutus*.

Studies on the Asian species of the genus *Agkistrodon* (*sensu lato*) with which I have been involved for several years indicate that the group should be divided among four genera, *Agkistrodon* (*sensu stricto*), *Calloselasma*, *Hypnale*, and a monotypic genus for which a name is proposed below.

Calloselasma of Cope (1860) was revived by Chernov (1957) for the species long known as *Agkistrodon rhodostoma*, an action with which I concur. *Calloselasma* was also used by Campden-Main (1970) and Burger (1971). Recently I resurrected *Hypnale* for the three small snakes that are restricted to Sri Lanka and peninsular India (Gloyd 1977). Most of the other Asian forms remain in the genus *Agkistrodon* but one, *acutus*, is distinctively different and requires a new generic name, for which I propose.

Deinagkistrodon, new genus

Diagnosis.—A large pit viper attaining a length of almost a meter and a half; tip of snout with an acute, blunt-pointed protuberance formed by the greatly elongated rostral and internasals; scales of the middorsal and upper lateral rows strongly tuberculate in adults; scales of the lowermost row near the tip of the tail higher than wide; dorsal process on the palatine bone high; reproduction presumably oviparous.

The range of *Deinagkistrodon acutus*, the type species, includes east central China, northern Vietnam, and Taiwan.

Burger (1971) lumped two species, *acutus* and *rhodostoma*, together in *Calloselasma*, an action with which I cannot agree. In *rhodostoma* the dorsal scales are smooth, the scales of the lowermost row near the tip of the tail are not higher than wide, and the dorsal process on the palatine bone is more acute and pointed. The protuberance on the snout of *acutus* is unique among pit vipers that have large scales on the crowns of their heads.

The partitioning of the genus *Agkistrodon* (*sensu lato*) results in the grouping of the species as follows:

Agkistrodon: *bilineatus*, *blomhoffii*, *caliginosus*, *contortrix*, *halys*, *himalayanus*, *intermedius*, *monticola*, *piscivorus*, and *strauchi*.

Calloselasma: *rhodostoma*

Deinagkistrodon: *acutus*

Hypnale: *hypnale*, *nepa*, and *walli*

Keys to the genera and the many taxa (several species are polytypic) will be included in a monograph on the group that is nearing completion.

The name *Deinagkistrodon* (from the Greek *deinos* = "terrible") is chosen in reference to the fear and awe with which this very dangerous snake is held in many parts of its range, and the common belief that after being bitten a human victim can walk only 100 paces before collapsing in death.

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