



Calamaria elapsoidea.

Richard, del.

P. S. David, lith. Phila.

CALAMARIA.—*Boie.*

Genus CALAMARIA.—CHARACTERS. Head small, hardly distinct from the body; mouth small; eyes minute; frontal plates lengthened to form part of the orbit; nasal plates two; no loral, but anterior frontal in some descends to labial; body small, and nearly of equal thickness throughout; tail very short.

CALAMARIA ELAPSOIDEA.—*Holbrook.*

Plate XXVIII.

CHARACTERS. Head small, size of the neck; body scarlet, surrounded by black rings, in the centre of which is a smaller white ring; no loral plate. Pl. 170. Sc. 38.

DESCRIPTION. The head is small and like that of the *Elaps fulvius*, and not very distinct from the body; it is short, with the snout rounded. The vertical plate is triangular and elongated, with the basis directed forwards and the apex backwards. The superior orbital are nearly quadrilateral, pointed anteriorly, and do not project much externally. The occipital plates are oblong, their inner margins straight, their outer margins rounded, broadest in front, and joined to the vertical and superior orbital plates. There are two temporal plates, small, nearly of the same size, and quadrilateral in shape. The frontal plates are pentagonal and broad internally, but pointed externally, where they descend to join the labial plates, as there is no loral; the anterior frontal are small, and nearly quadrilateral. The nasal plates are two in number, nearly quadrilateral,

one lunated behind and the other but slightly so before, for the nostril. The rostral plate is triangular, its basis below, and its apex above and rounded. There are two posterior orbital plates, nearly of the same size, the superior being but slightly the larger. There is but one anterior orbital plate, nearly a parallelogram, with its greatest extent in the vertical direction. The upper jaw is covered with seven plates, nearly quadrilateral; two of which, the third and fourth, form the lower margin of the orbit of the eye.

The nostrils are large, lateral, and placed at the junction of the two plates. The eyes are small but prominent, as the superior orbital plates are not projecting; the pupil is dark, the iris reddish. The neck is cylindrical, and slightly contracted.

The body is a regular cylindroid, a little flattened on the abdomen to near the tail, when it suddenly decreases in size to terminate in a small acuminate tip.

COLOUR. The head is black, with a small spot on each frontal plate; a white band begins at the occiput and descends to the throat, becoming broader in its descent. The ground of the colour of the body is of a beautiful red, surrounded by eighteen jet black rings; between each pair of rings is a narrow white one. The borders of all these rings are very distinct and entire.

DIMENSIONS. Length of head, 5 lines; length of body, 9 inches; length of tail, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches: total length, 11 inches 2 lines. The individual here described had 170 abdominal plates, and 38 sub-caudal bifid plates.

HABITS. This animal is not common; I have met with but few of them, consequently know nothing of its habits. It is a beautiful and harmless little snake.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. As yet I can only give South Carolina and Georgia as the habitat of the *Calamaria elapsoidea*.

GENERAL REMARKS. It is more than probable that Bosc had this animal in view when describing his "Couleuvre écarlate,"* (*Coluber coccineus*.) for his description agrees perfectly well: "body vermilion, with transverse bands of yellowish-white between black bands;" and, besides this, his figure of it corresponds to the one here given, in shape, size, and disposition of the colours. But there is still some confusion, for prior to this he had sent "the animal, accompanied by a description and drawing," to Latreille, who published them both in his *Histoire Naturelle des Reptiles*; in which he says of it, "the snout is obtuse and somewhat of the horse-shoe shape; under part of the body uniform white."

Yet in Bosc's description, quoted above, the rings are represented encircling the body, as in the *Elaps fulvus*, with which the animal seems to have been confounded, but from which it is entirely distinct in the arrangement of its teeth; there being in the *Calamaria elapsoidea*, palatine and maxillary teeth, but no fangs.

The disposition of the colour, too, is different, as may be seen on a careful examination; for in the *Elaps fulvus* we have certainly a crimson groundwork and black rings, but each black ring is bordered with a smaller yellow one, both anteriorly and posteriorly. Should, however, this animal be the *Couleuvre écarlate* (*Coluber coccineus*) of Bosc, still his specific name cannot be retained as it has been previously applied by Blumenbach to another serpent.

* *Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.*, tom. vi. p. 395.



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