TROPIDONOTUS TAXISPILOTUS.—Holbrook.

Characters. Head sub-oval, elongated, covered with large plates above; body elongated, but thick, light chocolate-brown, with a triple series of sub-quadrate and oblong black spots. Pl. 144. Sc. 79.

Description. The head is elongated, sub-oval, flattened above, and covered with large plates. The vertical plate is very regularly quadrilateral; the superior orbital is irregularly oblong, obtusely pointed anteriorly. The occipital are broad, rounded, and notched irregularly posteriorly; behind these are two large temporal plates on each side. The frontal are regularly hexagonal; the anterior frontal elongated and triangular, with their apices truncated. The rostral plate sub-pentagonal, rounded above, concave below. There are two nasal plates, quadrilateral; the anterior hollowed behind, and the posterior concave in front, to form the nostril. There are two quadrilateral posterior orbital plates, nearly of the same size; there is but one anterior orbital, nearly a parallelogram. The inferior wall of the orbit is completed by the superior labial plate; there are eight of these, quadrilateral, the smallest anterior.

The nostrils are large, and open upwards and outwards, and near the snout. The eyes are large and prominent, the pupil dark, the iris gray. The posterior part of the head and neck is covered with small carinated scales. The neck is much contracted. The body is elongated, but large, and covered with hexagonal and very strongly carinated scales, notched posteriorly. The tail is thick at the root, sub-triangular, and long.
Colour. The head is dark brown; the whole superior surface of the neck and body is a light chocolate-brown. Along the vertebral line is a series of sub-quadrate black spots, lighter in the centre, and on each flank a row of oblong spots or blotches of the same shade—the different series of spots are occasionally confluent, so as to form bars. The abdominal plates are dirty white, most of them with a black spot near the extremity, and the centre dotted minutely with black.

Dimensions. Length of head, 1 inch 5 lines; length of body, 28 inches; length of tail, 5 inches 6 lines: total length, 35 inches. The individual here described had one hundred and forty-four abdominal plates, the posterior bifid, and seventy-nine sub-caudal bifid plates.

Habits. This animal is quite new to me; consequently I am ignorant of its habits. Dr. Geddings, however, informs me that it is a water-snake.

Geographical Distribution. As yet only two specimens of this serpent have come under my observation; one from the sea-board of South Carolina, the other from the neighbourhood of the Altamaha river in Georgia.

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