

STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN REPTILES.

No. 2.*

BY

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(Plates xxv.-xxvi., and Figures 1-9).

The following paper deals with specimens contained in the Australian Museum and includes a new variety of *Notechis scutatus*, from Kangaroo Island, South Australia; a re-examination of Krefft's types of *Hoplocephalus ater*, and *Denisonia ornata*; a discussion on the status of *Dendrelaphis schlenckeri*, Ogilby; and the recording of *Pseudechis mortonensis*, De Vis, and *Denisonia maculata* var. *devisi*, Waite and Longman, from north-western New South Wales. Where necessary, re-descriptions and figures have been added.

NOTECHIS ATER, Krefft.

(Plate xxv., figs. 5-7).

Hoplocephalus ater, Krefft, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1866, p. 370, and Snakes of Australia, 1869, p. 55, pl. xi., fig. 2.

Having examined Krefft's type of *Hoplocephalus ater*, I have no hesitation in reinstating the species, but as *Notechis ater*, under which genus Mr. Boulenger placed it.¹ On comparing the type with the original description and figure, I found that it did not quite agree with either in some of the details of the head shields; furthermore, Krefft's own figure and description do not accord with each other. The colour, as described by Krefft, together with many errors in his description, has led several authors to place this species as a melanotic form of *Notechis scutatus*. As I am fortunate enough to have the type on hand, I am able to extend my examination, for comparative purposes, to a large series of *Notechis scutatus* in the Australian Museum collection, and I find that more than one character, quite apart from the colouration, shows that Krefft's specimen is a very distinct species.

COMPARATIVE.

Temporals.—In *Notechis scutatus* the lower anterior temporal is the largest and it is wedged in between the fifth and sixth upper labials; while in *Notechis ater* the upper posterior temporal is the largest and the lower anterior is wedged in between the fourth and fifth upper labials.

* For No. 1, see Rec. Aust. Mus., Vol. xiii., No. 3, 1920, p. 110.

¹ The errors in Krefft's description led Mr. Boulenger to place *H. ater* in the synonymy of *Notechis scutatus*; see Brit. Mus. Cat. Snakes, 1896, iii., p. 351.