

SHORT COMMUNICATION

# Notes on the reproduction of *Kentropyx altamazonica* (Squamata: Teiidae) and *Imantodes lentiferus* (Serpentes: Dipsadidae) from southeast Peru

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Field observations on the reproductive biology of squamate reptiles are important to understanding the life history, ecology, and evolution of this diverse group (Vitt 1991, Ramírez-Bautista *et al.* 2000, Vitt *et al.* 2001, Werneck *et al.* 2009); however, these data remain sparse for many tropical species (Figueroa *et al.* 2013, Sousa *et al.* 2014). Seasonality, clutch frequency, clutch size, egg size, and body size are important factors related to the life history of oviparous squamates (King 2000, Nelson *et al.* 2004, Kratochvíl and Frynta 2006a,b, Wang *et al.* 2011). Here, we present important information on the reproductive cycles of two, little-known Amazonian reptiles, *Kentropyx altamazonica* (Cope, 1876) and *Imantodes*

*lentiferus* (Cope, 1894). Neither species has been assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

*Imantodes lentiferus*, the Amazon Basin tree snake, is an arboreal and nocturnal dipsadid. It occurs in lowland rainforest of the Amazon Basin and Guiana region, having been reported from French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil (Frota *et al.* 2015, Uetz and Hošek 2015). The snake produces clutches of two or three eggs (Duellman 1978, Myers 1982). *Kentropyx altamazonica* is an active-foraging, heliothermic teiid lizard that is associated with water edges (Vitt *et al.* 2001). It is distributed throughout Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil (Duellman 2005, Uetz and Hošek 2015). The species is reported to have a clutch size of three to nine eggs (Duellman 2005, Werneck *et al.* 2009).

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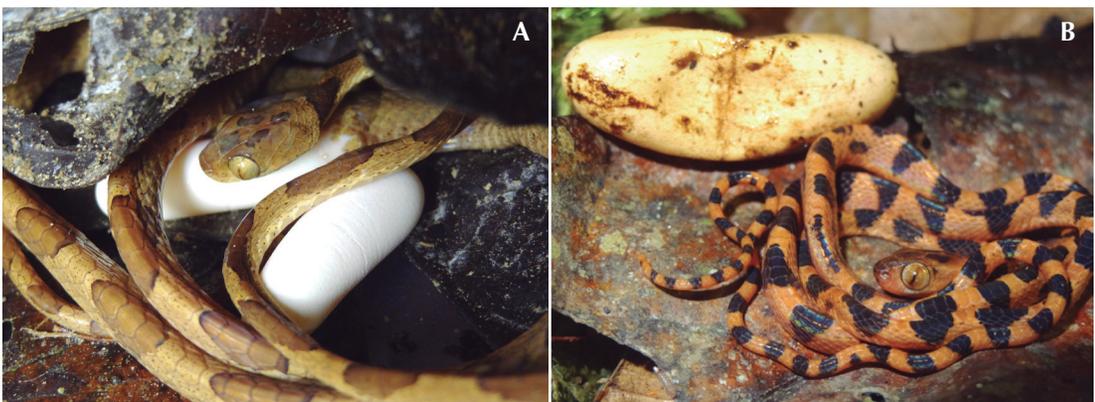
Distributed June 2016.

The study area is in the Crees Foundation's Mascoitania Reserve (643 ha; 12°47'21" S, 71°23'28" W; 460 m a.s.l.), Madre de Dios, Amazonian southeast Peru. The reserve is situated on the banks of the Alto Madre de Dios River, in the cultural zone of the Manu Biosphere Reserve and is the site of a research station, the Manu Learning Centre (MLC). The reserve has a highly diverse reptile assemblage (Whitworth *et al.* 2016). *Imantodes lentiferus* and *K. altamazonica* have been recorded at numerous sites in the Manu Biosphere Reserve (Catenazzi *et al.* 2013).

On 27 September 2012 at 21:40 h, we encountered an adult female *Imantodes lentiferus* 190 cm above ground on a branch in a secondary regenerating forest. The snake was gravid and while being housed overnight in a container it laid two elliptical eggs (Figure 1A). The snake was 820 mm SVL, 380 mm in tail length, and weighed 32 g prior to oviposition. The next day we released the adult female in the same location it was found. We placed the eggs into a plastic tub with leaf litter substrate, and maintained at ambient temperature and humidity. Incubation lasted 125 days. Neonates emerged along the sidewalls of the egg (Figure 1B). One week later, we released the neonates at the site where the mother was found.

Oviposition occurred at the end of the dry season (September) and hatching in the wet season (January). This concurs with Duellman's (1978) report of one female that deposited three eggs on 14 August (dry season), with two of these hatching on 25/26 November (wet season). Similar clutch sizes for *I. lentiferus* also were reported by Duellman (1978) and Myers (1982) as well as for other species of *Imantodes* (e.g., *I. cenchoa*; Duellman 2005).

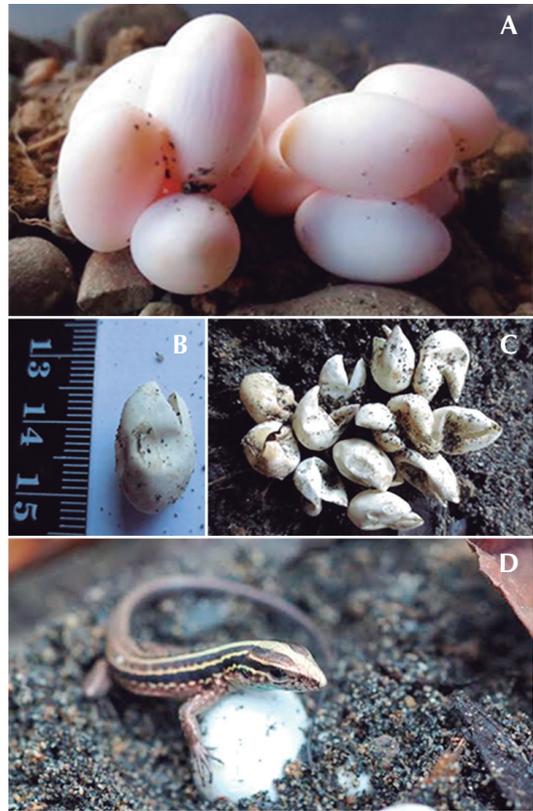
We discovered two egg clutches of *Kentropyx altamazonica* on the grounds of the MLC (Figure 2A)—one on 8 April 2014 and the other on 13 November 2014. The elliptical, shelled eggs were buried 10 cm deep in a sandy substrate beneath one of the buildings. We placed the eggs into a plastic tub (30 × 10 × 10 cm) with a sandy substrate and leaf litter on top. The tub was maintained at ambient temperature and humidity, and checked daily. Eggs that were easily accessible without separating the entire clutch ( $N = 10$ ) were measured to the nearest 0.1 mm;  $17.3 \pm 0.8$  mm mean length and  $10.5 \pm 0.8$  mm mean width (Table 1). Incubation of the April clutch took an average of  $142.5 \pm 1.1$  days, with the first hatching on 23 August 2014 and the last on 1 September 2014. Incubation of the November clutch took an average of  $110.3 \pm 0.2$  days, with all eggs hatching 9–10 March 2015.



**Figure 1.** (A) *Imantodes lentiferus* adult female after depositing the eggs. (B) Newly hatched *I. lentiferus* and an empty egg showing sidewall as exit point of neonates.

All neonates emerged from the distal end of the egg (Figure 2B). Hatching success was 100% for both clutches (Figure 2C, D). We measured SVL and tail lengths to the nearest 0.1 mm and weighed to the nearest 0.1 g. The average SVL of neonates ( $N = 19$ ) was  $33.7 \pm 0.0$  mm; the average tail length was  $59.7 \pm 0.5$  mm and the weight  $0.8 \pm 0.0$  g (Table 1). We released the hatchlings near the egg deposition site. Incubation times differed between the two clutches; however, we do not know when the eggs were laid.

Oviposition and hatching in *Kentropyx altamazonica* occurs in both dry (e.g., April) and wet (e.g., November) seasons. Likewise, hatching also occurs in wet and dry seasons (March and August, respectively). Duellman (2005) reported a female containing three oviductal eggs in December (wet season) and another female with four well-developed eggs in February (wet season). This variety of oviposition dates may suggest aseasonal reproductive cycles in *K. altamazonica*. Duellman (2005) reported a small clutch size of two or three eggs for *K. altamazonica*, whereas Werneck *et al.* (2009) reported larger clutch size of three to nine eggs (mean  $5.45 \pm 1.11$ ,  $N = 38$ ). This latter value is more similar to the clutch we found in November ( $N = 6$ ). A possible explanation for the 13 eggs found in April might be communal nesting. Communal nesting is a reproductive strategy



**Figure 2.** (A) Clutch of 13 eggs of *Kentropyx altamazonica* found at the MLC research station on 8 April 2014. (B) An empty egg of *K. altamazonica*, showing the distal exit point. (C) *K. altamazonica* hatchling success was 100%. (D) Newly hatched *K. altamazonica*.

**Table 1.** Morphometrics of *Kentropyx altamazonica* eggs and hatchlings.

Clutch	Eggs			Hatchlings			
	<i>N</i>	Length (mm)	Width (mm)	<i>N</i>	SVL (mm)	Tail Length (mm)	Weight (g)
April 2014	4	18.1	11.4	13	33.8	59.6	0.8
November 2014	6	16.4	9.7	6	33.7	58.5	0.8
Mean	–	17.3	10.5	–	33.7	59.1	0.8
SD	–	1.2	1.1	–	0.0	0.7	0.0
SE	–	0.8	0.8	–	0.0	0.5	0.0

common among reptiles, often in response to environmental constraints (Rand 1967, Swain and Smith 1978) or adaptations (Blouin-Demers *et al.* 2004, James and Henderson 2004, Zbinden *et al.* 2006). A congener, *K. calcaratus*, displays communal-nesting behavior (Magnusson and Lima 1984, Filadelfo *et al.* 2013). Nevertheless, additional field data are needed to verify the possibility of communal nesting in *K. altamazonica*.

Although much remains to be learned about the ecology of tropical forest reptiles (Böhm *et al.* 2013), these observations contribute important information about two poorly known Amazonian species.

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