

SHORT NOTE:

ASPIDURA IN THE MALDIVES

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Laidlaw (1902) in reporting on the amphibians and reptiles of the Maldives, noted a unique record of *Aspidura*, a genus of Sri Lankan snakes (cf. Phillips, 1958). Gans and Fetcho (1982) later cast the record in doubt in reviewing the genus, as the record was undocumented by a specimen and the occurrence otherwise unlikely.

Through the courtesy of Dr. K. A. Joysey I was recently able to examine the reptilian materials in the collections of the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology. To my surprise I discovered their R7.357/2 catalogued as from Male Atoll, Maldive Islands and accessioned as from J. S. Gardiner, M. A., on 20 June 1900. Clearly this is the specimen referred to. It has been identified as *Aspidura trachyrocta*, as it has a preocular, undivided subcaudals and 15 rows of dorsal scales. It measured only 78 + 12mm (snout-vent plus tail length), suggesting that it must be a recent hatchling (cf. Gans and Fetcho, 1982, Fig. 1).

Discovery of a single hatchling individual cannot be used as evidence for the occurrence of this species in as unlikely a location. *Aspidura trachyrocta* is not only a

montane form, but the most common and widely distributed species of the genus. Unlike *A. guentheri* it neither occurs in the southern lowlands, nor does it reach coastal localities. The specimen likely represents an individual transported in trade with horticultural materials, either as an egg or as a hatchling. Supported by grant G-BSR-850940 from the U.S. National Science Foundation.

REFERENCES

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