

OCCURRENCE OF POROCEPHALUS CROITALI HUMBOLDT IN FLORIDA

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There has recently been added to the collections of the Museum of Comparative Zoology a long series of Pentastomida collected by Mr. George Nelson in Florida. These were found in the lungs of a very large water Moccasin (*Agkistrodon piscivorus* [Lac.]) from the St. Johns river marsh at Fellsmere, Indian River County, Florida. This snake was the largest of its kind ever seen by Mr. Nelson.

From the fine material that he obtained, numbering 21 specimens (16 ♀; 5 ♂) I have had no difficulty in determining the parasites as *Porocephalus crotali* Humboldt by comparison with the descriptions of Miss Hett ('24) and Heymons ('35). Pentastomida are mainly tropical and are far from common in the United States. Just recently Venard and Bangham ('41) have given an account of *Sebekia oxycephala* (Diesing) which occurs in South American crocodiles and alligators, but extends also into the southeastern United States. They found the immature stages in a number of species of Florida fishes, and Holl ('28) had previously reported the same form from fish in North Carolina.

The history of *Porocephalus crotali* goes back almost to the beginning of our knowledge of the Pentastomida. It is antedated only by the accounts of Wrisberg (1765) and others which relate to the European *Linguatula serrata* Frölich that lives as an adult in dogs or more rarely in some other mammals. *Porocephalus* was first discovered by Alexander von Humboldt during the course of his travels in the American tropics and described by him in 1808 from specimens found in *Crotalus cumanensis* (= *C. terrificus* Laur.). Rudolphi also applied several names to the same form within the next few years and for over a century considerable confusion remained as to the taxonomic status of the species. This matter has been reviewed by Hett ('24) and also less completely by Heymons in his later extensive contribution ('35) on Pentastomida, so that it is unnecessary to repeat it here.

According to Heymons ('35) *Porocephalus crotali* has previously been recorded from four species of rattlesnakes, *Crotalus terrificus* Laur., *C. horridus* Linn., *C. atrox* B. & G., and *C. adamanteus* Pal. The specimens studied by Miss Hett were from the last three snakes mentioned and as these were ones that had been in the Gardens of the London Zoological Society no accurate data on their original provenience is available, although it is probable that they actually came from the southern United States. The record of *C. terrificus* as a host is based on a specimen collected by Heymons, ('35, p. 230) at Butantan, Brazil. Humboldt's original specimens came from Cumaná, Venezuela. I can find no record of the water moccasin as a host after as careful a survey of the literature as I have been able to make, in fact all previous collections have been made from the four species of *Crotalus* mentioned above.

The present note therefore adds another host for this parasite and a definite locality for its occurrence in the United States.

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