

#### 4. NUCRAS INTERTEXTA.

##### FORMA TYPICA.

*Lacerta intertexta*, A. Smith, Mag. N. H. (2), ii, 1838, p. 93.†

*Lacerta delalandii*, var. *b*, Dum. & Bibr. Erp. Gén. v, p. 243 (1839).

*Nucras tessellata*, part., Bouleng. Cat. Liz. iii, p. 52 (1887); Hewitt, Ann. Transv. Mus. ii, 1910, p. 112.

*Nucras tessellata*, var. *ocellata*, Bouleng. Ann. S. Afr. Mus. v, 1910, p. 475.

*Nucras delalandii*, part., Hewitt, t.c., p. 111.

*Nucras intertexta*, Bouleng. Ann. S. Afr. Mus. xiii, 1917, p. 205, pl. vi.

Head small, slightly broader than deep,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{3}{5}$  times as long as broad, its length 4 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  times in length to vent; snout obtuse. Pileus  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as long as broad. Body feebly depressed. Limbs moderate, the hind limb reaching the wrist or the elbow; foot as long as the head; digits feebly compressed. Tail tapering from the base,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as long as head and body.

\* Tail probably regenerated. In the specimen noticed by Nieden it is nearly twice as long as head and body.

† The type specimen, described by A. Smith and by Duméril and Bibron, was presented to the British Museum by the former author in 1865, under the name of *L. delalandii*, along with the types of the other *Nucras* in his private collection, and its absolute concordance with the original description was overlooked by me when, following Smith himself, I placed *L. intertexta* in the synonymy of *N. delalandii*. Although not labelled as such, the specimen is certainly A. Smith's type. It was referred by me to *N. tessellata*.

Nasals forming a short or very short suture behind the rostral; frontonasal broader than long, broader than the internarial space; prefrontals forming a short or very short suture; frontal as long as its distance from the end of the snout,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{2}{3}$  times as long as broad, narrower, behind, than the supraoculars; frontoparietals much shorter than the frontal or than their distance from the posterior border of the pileus; parietals  $1\frac{2}{3}$  times as long as broad, outer border sometimes emarginate for the accommodation of the anterior upper temporal; interparietal narrow, 3 times as long as the occipital, which may be broader or rudimentary and pushed back behind the pileus; parietals and interparietal shorter in proportion to their width in the very young. Four supraoculars, first and fourth small; first narrowly in contact with the frontal; 5 or 6 superciliaries; 2 to 4 small scales between the supraoculars and the superciliaries. Two superposed postnasals; anterior loreal barely half as long as second; 4 upper labials anterior to the subocular, which is usually narrower beneath than above; an elongate upper temporal, in contact with the fourth supraocular, followed by 2 or 3 smaller shields; temple covered with small hexagonal or granular scales, which are about as large as the dorsals; a round or oval tympanic shield. Lower eyelid with 5 or 6 vertically enlarged scales in the middle.

Parietal foramen and pterygoid teeth present.

Gular scales small, juxtaposed, increasing in size and imbricate towards the collar, 27 to 36 in a straight longitudinal series; no gular fold. Collar even-edged or feebly serrated, composed of 10 to 13 plates.

Scales on body oval, juxtaposed, smooth, 40 to 44 across the middle of the body, 2 and 3 on the side corresponding to a ventral plate. Ventral plates in 6 or 8 longitudinal series, those of the second series from the median line the broadest, and 29 to 34 transverse series. Preanal plate large, with a smaller one on each side and a large pair in front, or two subequal preanals, one in front of the other.

A series of 4 to 7 transversely enlarged plates on the lower surface of the fore limb. Scales on upper surface of tibia smaller than the dorsals. 11 to 14 femoral pores on each side. 20 to 25 lamellar scales under the fourth toe.

Caudal scales forming whorls of nearly equal length, upper rather narrow, the median pair sometimes broader, rather strongly keeled, truncate behind, with distinct sensory pits.

The type specimen, a female from Latakoo, near Kuruman, now rather bleached, has the markings well preserved, although the black has turned to a pale brown, and answers to A. Smith's diagnosis: "Colour

above, reddish-brown, with two rows of circular white spots, discontinued about half way between the anterior and posterior extremities, each spot surrounded by a black ring; sides chequered, black and white, the latter colour disposed in narrow vertical stripes. Tail light brown, with a dotted black line on each side, and the space between them above marked with small black spots. Under parts white." This description is supplemented by a very good account of the same specimen by Duméril and Bibron, of which this is a translation:—

Instead of a great number of small black spots with white pupils (as in *L. delalandii*), there are only two series, spots a little larger, on each side of the back. Two or three irregular blackish spots on the upper lip. Two vertical blackish stripes on the temple, which is white; a third above the ear, and three or four on the neck. Others along the flanks, but shorter; on examining them carefully, one may guess how they were formed. It is probably that, in early youth, white spots mingled with black existed on the flanks; gradually, as they enlarged, the black circle opened above and beneath; then each of the two portions became raised and fused with the other, whilst simultaneously the white central spot enlarged vertically; thus producing alternately black and white vertical bars. Upper surface of hind limbs with some white spots incompletely surrounded with blackish. Here and there some black spots on the upper surface of the base of the tail; others, similar, are present on the sides, so regularly arranged and so crowded as to form a longitudinal stripe (cf. Ann. S. Afr. Mus. xiii, pl. vi, fig. 8).

The interpretation given to the markings by the authors of the *Erpétologie Générale* is fully confirmed by the examination of the young, with which we are now acquainted (var. *ocellata*, Blgr.).

Very young specimens (37–40 millim. to vent) from Pietersburg, Transvaal, are dark brown above and blackish on the sides, with numerous white ocelli in three or four series on the back and three series on each side; a white vertebral streak on the nape, which may be continued, interrupted, on the body; sides of head and neck with black and white vertical lines; upper orbital border whitish; a white streak on each parietal shield, continuous with the outer dorsal series of ocelli; tail coral-red. In a larger young (43 millim.) from Kokong, Bechuanaland, the dorsal markings are the same, but the ocelli on the sides of the body are fused to form vertical bars (l.c., fig. 7).

A half-grown female from Pietersburg is reddish-brown above, with an interrupted light, black-edged vertebral streak, a dorso-lateral series of ocelli, and three series of ocelli on each side, the lower of which

are more or less confluent into a longitudinal streak from the shoulder to the root of the hind limb; head and neck as in the preceding (l.c., fig. 6).

A half-grown male from Rustenburg, Transvaal, is similar to the preceding, but the white eyes of the ocelli on the nape are in the form of longitudinal lines, whilst the black borders of the ocelli run together to form cross-bands on the back, as is frequent in *N. delalandii*, from the young of which it is hardly to be distinguished, so far as the coloration is concerned.

Measurements (in millimetres):

|                           | 1.  | 2.  | 3.  |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| From end of snout to vent | 80  | 63  | 55  |
| " " " fore limb           | 25  | 21  | 17  |
| Length of head            | 17  | 14  | 12  |
| Width of head             | 11  | 9   | 8   |
| Depth of head             | 9   | 7.5 | 7   |
| Fore limb                 | 22  | 20  | 16  |
| Hind limb                 | 34  | 29  | 26  |
| Foot                      | 17  | 15  | 13  |
| Tail                      | 117 | 106 | 112 |

1. ♀, type, Latakoo. 2. ♀, Pietersburg, Transvaal. 3. ♂, Rustenburg, Transvaal.

Under the name of var. *holubi*, I group together a number of specimens which, whilst agreeing essentially in structure with *N. intertexta*, differ from the type in the back being striated throughout life.