

GRAYIA CAESAR (African Banded Water Snake). **SEXUAL DIMORPHISM.** The rare and poorly-studied aquatic colubrid *Xenurophis caesar* Günther, 1863 was described on the basis of an adult female (BMNH 1946.1.6.38). *Grayia tholloni* Mocquard, 1897 seemed to bridge so well the gap between *X. caesar* on the one hand and *Grayia smithii* and *G. ornata* on the other hand that Mocquard (1897. Bull. Soc. Philom. Paris 8[9]:5–20) and later Boulenger (1901. Ann. Mus. Congo Belge. Zool. Sér. I Tome II, fasc. I:1–14) stated that these four species had to be placed in a single genus. While studying the relationships between these forms, we examined all 27 available specimens of *G. caesar* in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (MNHN, Paris), Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale (MRAC, Tervuren), British Museum of Natural History (BMNH, London); and Institut Royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique (IRSNB, Brussels): 16 females and 11 males whose sex was determined by tail dissection.

Four notable sexually dimorphic characters were revealed in *G. caesar*: anal scale state, number of white bands on body, number of ventral scales, and number of subcaudal scales. All males have an undivided anal, while all females but one (BMNH 1912.6.27.24) have a divided anal. This represents an original and new sexually dimorphic character among snakes. The males have fewer white bands on the body than females (males: mean \pm SD = 24.0 ± 2.1 , range = 21–28, N = 11; females: mean \pm SD = 27.6 ± 1.5 , range = 26–30, N = 16). This difference was statistically significant (Mann-Whitney U Test, $P \leq 0.05$). The bands are also present on the tail, which is rarely entire, as in many other aquatic snakes. Dowling's system (1951. Brit. J. Herpetol. 1:97–99) was used for counting ventrals. The number of ventrals ranges from 123 to 127 in males (125.0 ± 1.2 , N = 11) and from 136 to 145 in females (139.8 ± 2.4 , N = 16). Thus, ventral counts are non-overlapping (Mann-Whitney U, $P \leq 0.05$). The number of subcaudals in specimens with an entire tail ranges from 151 to 162 in males (157.5 ± 4.2 , N = 6) and from 140 to 146 in females (143.3 ± 2.8 , N = 4); thus, this character also separates the sexes ($P \leq 0.05$).

We thank C. McCarthy and B. Clarke (BMNH), and G. Lenglet (IRSNB) for reception in their museums, and A. Dubois, I. Ineich, and B. Hughes for constructive discussions. G. Josens provided working facilities at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

Submitted by **OLIVIER PAUWELS**, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Laboratoire de Zoologie (Reptiles et Amphibiens), 25 rue Cuvier, F-75005 Paris, France, **DANNY MEIRTE**, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Vertebrate Section (Herpetology), Steenweg op Leuven, B-3080 Tervuren, Belgium, and **FRÉDÉRIC CHÉROT** (Grant F.R.I.A., contract F 3/5/5-FC-18256), Université Libre de Bruxelles, Laboratoire de Zoologie systématique et d'Ecologie animale, CP 160/13, 50 Av. F.-D. Roosevelt, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium.