

## PLATE 23, FIG. 1.

## DIEMENIA SUPERCILIOSA (FISCHER).

## THE COMMON BROWN SNAKE.

[Genus DIEMENIA (GRAY). (Sub-kingd. Vertebrata. Class Reptilia. Order Ophidia. Fam. Elapsidae.)

*Gen. Char.*—Body and tail moderately stout; head subquadrate, muzzle blunt. *Plates*: rostral moderate, vertex plate narrow; loreal replaced by deflected posterior frontal, anterior ocular, second labial, and posterior nasal; oculars one, sometimes two, anterior, and two posterior; two nasals with nostril between them. Scales smooth, 15 or 17 rows on back; subcaudals in two rows. A row of small, equal, solid teeth behind the grooved fang. Australasia and New Guinea.]

*DESCRIPTION.*—*Form*: body moderately stout, cylindrical; head only moderately exceeding the width of the neck, flat above, sides nearly vertical, converging to a narrow, rounded, blunt muzzle. *Scales*: 17 rows of scales across middle of back, large, flat, rhombic, and smooth; ventral plates, 190 to 216; subcaudals, 57 to 73; anal plate double. *Plates*: rostral shield one-fourth broader at base than high, obtuse-angled behind; anterior frontals small, quadrangular, nearly twice as wide as long; posterior frontals nearly twice the length of the anterior ones; vertex plate hexagonal, anterior angle so obtuse as to be scarcely marked, the length equalling the inner sides of the anterior and posterior frontals, the width in front nearly twice the width behind, or about two-thirds of the length. Parietal and occipital shields moderate. *Color*: color of head and upper part of body and tail nearly uniform olive-brown or warm sepia, with a slight bronze reflection; the lower surface of a lighter tint, or pale yellowish-grey, the edges of the scales darker colored, with a glassy lustre; the anterior part of the belly freckled with pale-brownish spots, the hinder part dotted with grey; eyes black, with a yellow line round pupil; skin between the scales greyish. *Teeth*: 17 small, solid, equal palatine teeth on the left side, and 18 on the right in the specimen (Fig. 1); 6 small solid teeth behind the fang on the left side, and 7 on the right in same specimen.

The following are the numbers of scales in seven specimens counted in the Museum collection:—

Specimens.	Scales of Back.		Plates.		Length.	
	Across Middle.	Over Base of Tail.	Abdomen.	Tail.	Total.	Tail.
1. Young, S. Brighton ...	17	15	190	46·46*	1 10	3½
2. Average sp., Heidelberg...	17	14	204	57·57†	4 3	7½
3. Queenscliff ...	17	15	197	63·63‡	5 6	11
4. Murray Downs ...	17	14	200	57·57	3 6	6½
5. Sebastian, Sandhurst ...	17	15	201	73·73	3 6	7
6. Footscray ...	17	14	206	60·60§	4 5	9
7. Figured Pl. 23, fig. 1 ...	17	15	202	62·62	5 2	9½

\* Third and fourth subcaudal plates single.

† Tip of tail absent.

‡ Four first single.

§ Second, third, fourth, and fifth single.

REFERENCE.—*Pseudoelaps superciliosus* (Fischer), Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der Naturwissenschaften, h. v. d., naturwissenschaftlichen Verein in Hamburg; vol. 3, t. 2, f. 3.

This is one of the largest of the poisonous and very dangerous snakes of the colony, and is more generally distributed than any of the others, being equally common from the south coast to our northern Murray boundary. In the experiments made by Dr. Halford on snake-poisoning, tabulated in the *Medical Society's Journal* for March 1875, all the cases of people bitten by the Brown Snake and treated by the injection of ammonia recovered; but in one of the last cases mentioned in the public journals (*Bendigo Advertiser*, 27th October 1877), a snake of this species, 3 feet 6 inches long (the fifth in above table of measurements), bit Mrs. Eleanor Ingleby, residing at Sebastian, in the hand, and she died from the effects within fifty minutes. The acting coroner, Mr. Strickland, who held the inquest, sent the specimen to the Museum, where it is now deposited, so that the species is determined with certainty.

#### EXPLANATION OF FIGURES.

PLATE 23.—Fig. 1, average specimen, one-fifth the natural size. Fig. 1a, side view of head, natural size (the groove in front of the eye not sufficiently shaded to indicate the projection of the eyebrow and apparent division of the first ocular). Fig. 1b, same, with mouth closed, groove in front of the eye not sufficiently shaded. Fig. 1c, view of the top of the head, natural size, to show the form and disposition of the plates. Fig. 1d, same viewed from below. Fig. 1e, nasal plates with nostril. Fig. 1f, inside of palate of same specimen, natural size, showing the two small fangs with the row of smaller solid teeth behind on each side, and the two palatine rows of small, solid teeth.