

Distribution, and Natural History. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas. 437 pp.), as well as conifer woodlands in some areas (Cardwell 2016. *In* Schuett et al. [eds.], *Rattlesnakes of Arizona*, Vol. 1, pp. 563–605. ECO Publishing, Rodeo, New Mexico). Arboreal or climbing behaviors in *Crotalus*, though infrequent, have been documented in several species and are primarily considered a result of foraging behaviors for prey such as birds, eggs, and small mammals (Cunningham 1955. *Herpetologica* 11:217–220; Klauber 1972. *Rattlesnakes: Their Habits, Life Histories, and Influence on Mankind*, Volume 1. Univ. California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California. 740 pp.; Rudolph et al. 2004. *Texas J. Sci.* 56:395–404; Martins et al. 2008. *South Am. J. Herpetol.* 3:162–167). Boone (1937. *Pop. Sci. Monthly* 131:54–55, 13) commented on observing a “Yellow Pacific Rattlesnake,” which may have been *C. scutulatus*, ca. 1.5 m up in a Mesquite (*Prosopis* sp.), but the age and venue of this account makes the species identification uncertain. Here, we report definitive observations of climbing and arboreal behaviors in *C. scutulatus*.

During 40 months of radiotelemetry field work (2001–2004) in western San Bernardino County, California, USA (34.60735°N, 117.16069°W; WGS 84), resulting in > 3700 encounters with free-ranging *C. scutulatus*, one of us (MDC) found them off the ground only a handful of times, usually coiled on low desiccated Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentata*) branches 1–2 cm above the ground. The only exception was on 21 October 2003 at 2039 h PST, when an adult female *C. scutulatus* was encountered crawling slowly through *L. tridentata* branches ca. 40 cm above the ground (Fig. 1A). She exited the shrub within ca. 1 min and crawled away on the ground. These snakes were presumably hunting terrestrial

**CROTALUS SCUTULATUS (Mohave Rattlesnake). ARBOREALITY AND CLIMBING BEHAVIOR.** *Crotalus scutulatus* is a medium-sized, robust species of rattlesnake that is found throughout much of the Chihuahuan, Mojave, and Sonoran deserts of the United States and Mexico (Ernst and Ernst 2012. *Venomous Reptiles of the United States, Canada, and Northern Mexico*, Volume 2: *Crotalus*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 391 pp.). Within this large region, *C. scutulatus* is generally considered a flatland species and is known to occupy a wide range of habitats including grasslands, riparian woodlands, and arid scrublands (Werler and Dixon 2000. *Texas Snakes: Identification,*

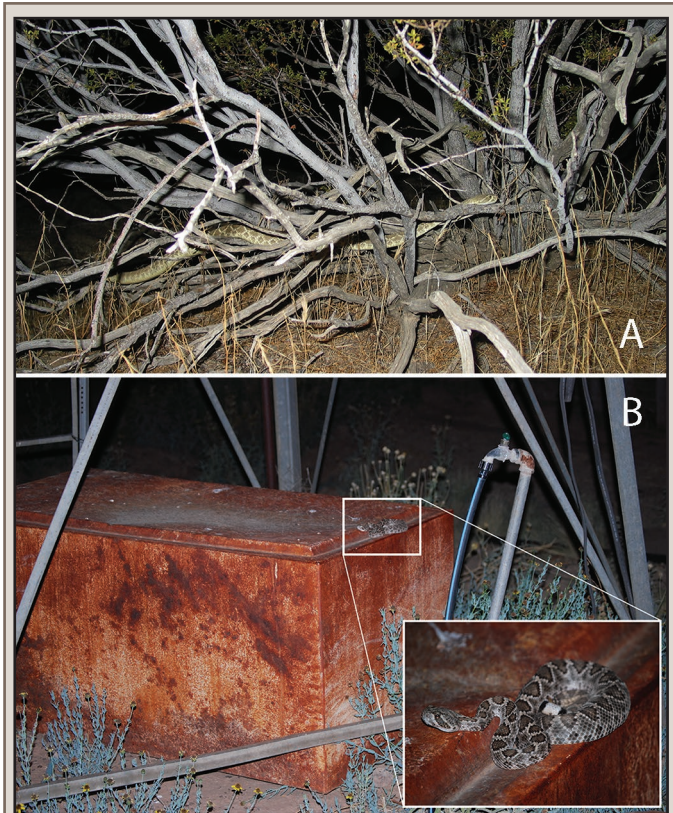


FIG. 1. A) Adult female *Crotalus scutulatus* found on 21 October 2003 in a Creosote Bush in San Bernardino County, California, USA. B) Juvenile *C. scutulatus* found on 1 July 2011 on top of a discarded refrigerator in Jeff Davis County, Texas, USA.

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prey, because no feathers were discovered among 36 prey items in 32 *C. scutulatus* scats (MDC, unpubl. data).

On 1 July 2011 at 2300 h, one of us (DRD) observed a juvenile *C. scutulatus* perched approximately 1 m above the ground on a discarded refrigerator below a windmill at C. E. Miller Ranch, Jeff Davis County, Texas, USA (30.58614°N, 104.63058°W; WGS 84; Fig. 1B). The *C. scutulatus* was partially coiled along the outer edge of the refrigerator with its head facing inward toward the middle of the object, possibly indicating ambush behavior. Projections to assist in climbing (e.g., woody branches, rocks, debris) were absent surrounding this refrigerator and it is unknown how this juvenile ended up on top. The only vegetation surrounding this refrigerator were Desert Marigolds (*Baileya* sp.), which would have provided little climbing support.

While these observations appear to be the first documentation of climbing behavior in *C. scutulatus*, the scarcity of similar reports suggests that, although *C. scutulatus* might occasionally climb a variety of objects, it is probably not a frequent behavior.

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