

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

WILSON, LARRY DAVID. 1978. *Coluber constrictor*.

***Coluber constrictor* Linnaeus**
Racer

Coluber constrictor Linnaeus, 1758:216 (part). Type-locality, "America septentrionale," restricted to "Canada" by Schmidt (1953), but Dunn and Wood (1939) indicated that the type-locality is probably in the vicinity of Philadelphia. Holotype not designated.

Bascanion constrictor: Baird and Girard, 1853:93.

Coryphodon constrictor: Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril, 1854:18 (part).

Zamenis constrictor: Boulenger, 1893:387 (part).

• CONTENT. Eleven subspecies are recognized: *anthicus*, *constrictor*, *etheridgei*, *flaviventris*, *foxii*, *helvigularis*, *latrunculus*, *mormon*, *oaxaca*, *paludicola*, and *priapus*.

• DEFINITION. *Coluber constrictor* has seven or eight supralabials with two entering the orbit, a divided anal plate, two preoculars and postoculars, dorsal scale reduction pattern consisting of two lateral reductions, 15 dorsal scale rows at the vent, and a spotted or uniform adult color pattern.

• DESCRIPTIONS. Ortenburger's (1928) review, the most recent of the entire species, is long out of date. Auffenberg (1955a) reviewed the eastern subspecies (*constrictor*, *helvigularis*, *paludicola*, and *priapus*). Wilson (1966) discussed the largely Mexican subspecies and synonymized *C. oaxaca*, *C. ortenburgeri*, and *C. constrictor stejnegerianus* as *C. c. oaxaca*. Wilson (1970) studied the racers occurring in Louisiana and eastern Texas (*anthicus*, *etheridgei*, *flaviventris*, *latrunculus*, and *priapus*). Additional descriptions are as follows: *C. c. constrictor*—Huheey and Stupka (1967), Barbour (1971); *C. c. anthicus*—Dowling (1959), Walker (1963); *C. c. flaviventris*—Anderson (1965), Webb (1970); *C. c. mormon*—Van Denburgh (1922), Woodbury (1931), Stebbins (1966); *C. c. oaxaca*—Muliak and Muliak (1942), Auffenberg (1949), Etheridge (1952), Smith (1971), Hoervers and Henderson (1974); *C. c. paludicola* and *C. c. priapus*—Duellman and Schwartz (1958), Carr and Goin (1959), Truitt (1962). Descriptions of various aspects of morphology (hemipenis, osteology, myology) are in Ortenburger (1928), Auffenberg (1955a), Fitch (1963), Wilson (1966, 1970), Smith (1971), and Pregill (1977).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Conant (1975) provided color illustrations of *C. c. constrictor*, *C. c. anthicus*, and *C. c. flaviventris*. Stebbins (1966) presented a painting of *C. c. mormon*. Barbour (1971) depicted *C. c. constrictor* in color. Black-and-white photographs of some subspecies are in the following works: *constrictor*—Huheey and Stupka (1967); *anthicus*—Wright and Wright (1957); *flaviventris*—Smith (1950), Schmidt and Inger (1957); *mormon*—Van Denburgh (1922), Ortenburger (1928), Stebbins (1954); *paludicola* and *priapus*—Truitt (1962). Illustrations of juveniles of *C. c. constrictor* appeared in Conant (1975) and Barbour (1971); of *C. c. flaviventris* in Smith (1950) and Schmidt and Inger (1957); and of *C. c. mormon* in Stebbins (1966).

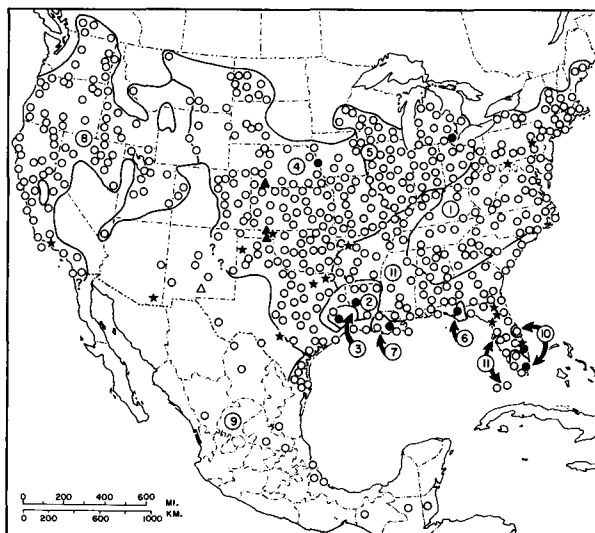
• DISTRIBUTION. *Coluber constrictor* occurs from southern Maine and extreme southern Ontario westward to Washington and southern British Columbia (excluding northern Wisconsin, most of Minnesota, and the eastern half of North and South Dakota), thence southward to the Gulf of Mexico, eastern Colorado and New Mexico, Utah, northern Nevada, and northern and western California (avoiding the arid portions of the southwestern United States). The range in Mexico and northern Central America is disjunct (Wilson, 1966; Smith, 1971; Hoervers and Henderson, 1974) but confined to the Atlantic versant. There are reliable records for Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Durango, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz and Chiapas (the record for "Colima" was discounted by Smith, 1971, and the record for "Oaxaca" is imprecise). There are single records for southwestern Belize (Hoervers and Henderson, 1974) and northern Guatemala (Stuart, 1934).

• FOSSIL RECORD. The fossil record of *Coluber constrictor* is comparatively well known, even though it is difficult to distinguish vertebrae from those of the genus *Masticophis* (Dowling,

1958; Holman, 1962; Auffenberg, 1963). The fossil record of *Coluber constrictor* extends from the Pliocene through the Aftonian, Kansan, Yarmouth, Illinoian, Sangamon, and Wisconsin glacial and interglacial periods of the Pleistocene into the Recent. The only fossil localities for the species outside the Recent range are Curtis Ranch, Cochise County, Arizona (Brattstrom, 1955a) and Shelter Cave, Organ Mountains, Dona Ana County, New Mexico (Brattstrom, 1964). Pliocene records have been reported from Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma by Brattstrom (1967) and from Texas by Rogers (1976). Definite Pleistocene or Recent fossil records are as follows: Arkansas (Dowling, 1958); California (Brattstrom, 1955b); Florida (Hay, 1917; Gilmore, 1938; Brattstrom, 1953; Holman, 1958, 1959; Auffenberg, 1963); Kansas (Brattstrom, 1967); Maryland (Holman, 1977); Oklahoma (Brattstrom, 1967); Pennsylvania (Auffenberg, 1955b); Texas (Holman, 1969).

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. Recent and comprehensive taxonomic works are by Auffenberg (1955a) and Wilson (1966, 1970). Fitch (1963) and Brown (1973) provided much information on many aspects of the ecology of *Coluber constrictor*. Data on reproductive cycles are in Fitch (1970). For information on the biology of hibernation in *C. constrictor mormon*, see Parker and Brown (1973), Brown, Parker, and Elder (1974), and Brown and Parker (1976). Brown and Parker (1974) studied population structure and demography in *C. c. mormon*.

• ETYMOLOGY. The inappropriate name *constrictor* derives from a Latin masculine noun meaning "something that constricts"; *anthicus* is from the Greek verb *anthidza* meaning "to be strewn with flowers, dyed, or metaphorically, sprinkled with white" in reference to the speckled color pattern of adults; *etheridgei* is a patronym honoring Richard Etheridge; *flaviventris* is from the Latin adjective *flavus* meaning "yellow" and the masculine Latin noun *venter* meaning "belly" referring to the yellowish color of the venter of members of this subspecies; *foxii* is a patronym honoring C. Fox; *helvigularis* is from the Latin adjective *helvus* meaning "honey-yellow" and the feminine Latin noun *gula* meaning "throat," in reference to the pale brown labials, chin, and throat of the members of this subspecies; *latrunculus* is a masculine Latin noun meaning "highwayman or bandit," in reference to the black eye mask characterizing this subspecies; *mormon* refers to the religious sect inhabiting the area from which the holotype came; *oaxaca* is a literal use of the name of the Mexican state from which the holotype purportedly came. The last two names are used as nouns in apposition and are not adjectival modifiers of the generic name; therefore, the name "*oaxaca*" should not be formed as "*oaxacae*." The name *paludicola* is derived the feminine Latin noun *palus* meaning "swamp or marsh" and the Latin suffix *-icola* meaning "inhabitant" referring



MAP. Solid circles mark type-localities, open circles indicate other records. Localities in Arizona, New Mexico and Southwestern Texas are 4 × 9 intergrades. Fossil localities are: solid triangles, Pliocene; stars, Pleistocene; open triangles, Recent.

to the distribution of this subspecies in the Everglades, among other places. The name *priapus* is from the Latin proper noun *Priapus*, the name of the Roman god of male creative power, referring to the differences between *C. c. priapus* and *C. c. constrictor*, both black racers, in hemipenial structure.

1. *Coluber constrictor constrictor* Linnaeus

Coluber constrictor Linnaeus, 1758:216 (part). See species synonymy.

?*Bascanion fremontii* Baird and Girard, 1853:95. Type-locality, "California," in error (Williams, 1962:142). Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 1798 (now lost), adult (sex unknown), collected by J. C. Fremont, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Coryphodon constrictor vetustus: Jan and Sordelli, 1867:livr. 22, pl. 4, fig. 3 (part).

Bascanion constrictor flaviventris: Yarrow and Henshaw, 1878:213 (part).

Bascanion flaviventris: Bocourt, 1890:697.

Zamenis constrictor flaviventris: Ditmars, 1907:285 (part).

Zamenis constrictor constrictor: Ellis and Henderson, 1913:103 (part).

Coluber constrictor constrictor: Stejneger and Barbour, 1917:79 (part).

Coluber constrictor flaviventris: Ortenburger, 1928:175 (part).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a slaty black dorsal and ventral coloration, almost completely black supralabials, and with the enlarged hemipenial spine no more than 2.5 times the length of the adjacent proximal spines.

2. *Coluber constrictor anthicus* (Cope)

Bascanium anthicum Cope, 1862:338. Type-locality unknown, possibly "Siam," restricted to "Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana," by Schmidt, 1953:187. Syntypes, Acad. Natur. Sci. Philadelphia 5367-5368 (Malnate, 1971), erroneously stated to be in U.S. Nat. Mus. by Cope (1900), collector and date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Zamenis constrictor: Cope, 1900:793 (part).

Coluber constrictor flaviventris: Ortenburger, 1928:176 (part).

Coluber constrictor anthicus: Dunn and Wood, 1939:1.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with usually a dark blue to dark blue-black to blue-green dorsum (coloration of posterior portion of body some shade of pale brown) speckled with a variable number of gray, white, or pale yellow spots. The venter is white to grayish-white, sometimes with a few pale yellow spots.

3. *Coluber constrictor etheridgei* Wilson

Coluber constrictor etheridgei Wilson, 1970:75. Type-locality, "Dallardville, 11 miles north of the junction of Texas highways 1276 and 943, Polk County, Texas." Holotype, Louisiana State Univ. Mus. Zool. 16462, adult male, collected by L. D. Wilson, 30 April 1967 (examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a pale tan dorsal coloration covered with a variable number of pale spots.

4. *Coluber constrictor flaviventris* Say

Coluber flaviventris Say, 1823:185. Type-locality, "west bank of the Missouri . . . three miles above the mouth of Boyer's River"; restated by Rossman (1963:109) as "approximately 3 miles ENE Fort Calhoun, Washington County, Nebraska." Three syntypes, not now known to exist, collected by T. Say on 12 December 1819.

Bascanion flaviventris: Baird and Girard, 1853:96 (part).

Coryphodon flaviventris: Hallowell, 1856:241.

Coryphodon constrictor flaviventris: Jan and Sordelli, 1867:livr. 22, pl. 3, fig. 1.

Bascanion constrictor vetustum: Yarrow, 1875:541 (part).

Bascanium constrictor flaviventris: Yarrow and Henshaw, 1878:213 (part).

Bascanium flaviventris: Coues and Yarrow, 1878:284.

Bascanion constrictor flaviventris: Hurter, 1883:4.

Coluber constrictor flaviventris: Garman, 1883:42.

Zamenis constrictor flaviventris: Brown, 1903:553.

Zamenis constrictor constrictor: Ellis and Henderson, 1913:103.

Coluber constrictor constrictor: Stejneger and Barbour, 1917:79 (part).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a pale bluish, bluish-green, greenish, olive green, or olive brown dorsum and yellowish venter, usually seven supralabials, and less than 99 subcaudals.

5. *Coluber constrictor foxii* (Baird and Girard)

Bascanion foxii Baird and Girard, 1853:96. Type-locality, "Grosse Isle, [Wayne County] Mich[igan]." Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 4445, immature female, collected by C. Fox, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Bascanion constrictor var. *Foxii*: Smith, 1879:vii.

Coluber constrictor foxi: Schmidt, 1953:187.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a pale bluish or bluish-green dorsum and a whitish, grayish-white or bluish-cream venter.

6. *Coluber constrictor helvigularis* Auffenberg

Coluber constrictor helvigularis Auffenberg, 1955a:105. Type-locality, "8 miles west of Wewahitchka, Gulf County, Florida." Holotype, Carnegie Mus. 21462, adult female, collected by Coleman J. Goin, 9 April 1942 (not examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a slaty black dorsal and ventral coloration, pale brown or tan pigment on the labials, chin, and throat, and with the enlarged hemipenial spine at least 3 times the length of the adjacent proximal spines.

7. *Coluber constrictor latrunculus* Wilson

Coluber constrictor latrunculus Wilson, 1970:78. Type-locality, "St. James, St. James Parish, Louisiana." Holotype, Louisiana State Univ. Mus. Zool. 19283, adult female, collected by Claude Gravois, 30 April 1967 (examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a slate gray dorsal coloration, a pale grayish-blue venter, and a black postocular stripe.

8. *Coluber constrictor mormon* Baird and Girard

Coluber Mormon Baird and Girard, 1852:70. Type-locality, "Valley of the Great Salt Lake," Utah. Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 2012, juvenile male (?), collected by H. Stansbury, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Masticophis mormon: Baird and Girard, 1853:101.

Bascanion vetustus Baird and Girard, 1853:97. Type-localities, "San Jose, California," "Puget Sound," and "Oregon," restricted to San Jose, [Santa Clara County] California by Schmidt, 1953:188. Five syntypes originally listed by Baird and Girard (1853), but current location of lectoholotype unknown.

Bascanion flaviventris: Baird and Girard, 1853:96 (part).

Coryphodon constrictor vetustus: Jan and Sordelli, 1867:livr. 22, pl. 4, figs. 1, 2 (part).

Bascanium constrictor vetustum: Cope, 1875:40.

Bascanium constrictor flaviventris: Yarrow and Henshaw, 1878:213 (part).

Bascanium flaviventris: Coues and Yarrow, 1878:284 (part).

Bascanium constrictor: Yarrow, 1883:108 (part).

Bascanium vetustum: Cope, 1883:17.

Coluber flaviventris: Garman, 1884:26 (part).

Zamenis constrictor vetustus: Cope, 1896:1018.

Bascanion constrictor vetustum: Van Denburgh, 1897:183.

Bascanion constrictor flaviventris: Hurter, 1911:171 (part).

Zamenis constrictor flaviventris: R  thling, 1915:4.

Coluber constrictor vetustus: Grinnell and Camp, 1917:189.

Coluber constrictor flaviventris: Stejneger and Barbour, 1917:79 (part).

Coluber constrictor mormon: Van Denburgh and Slevin, 1921:28.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with a green, olive-green yellowish-brown, or reddish-brown dorsum and a yellowish venter, usually eight supralabials, and 13 to 14 maxillary teeth.

9. *Coluber constrictor oaxaca* (Jan)

Coryphodon oaxaca Jan, 1863:63. Type-locality, "Mexico." Oaxaca inferred. Holotype, Mus. Nat. Hist. Natur., Paris 7378, adult male, collected by Ghuisbreght, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Zamenis stejnegerianus Cope, 1895:678. Type-locality, "Cameron C[ounty]., Texas." Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 17065, adult male, collected by C. K. Worthen, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Zamenis conirostris Cope, 1895:679. Type-locality, "Matamoras, [Tamaulipas] Mex[ico]." Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 1768, adult male, collected by D. N. Couch, date of collection unknown, probably March 1853 (Conant, 1968), (not examined by author).

Coluber oaxaca: Ortenburger, 1923:2.

Coluber constrictor flaviventris: Ortenburger, 1928:175 (part).

Coluber ortenburgeri Stuart, 1934:1. Type-locality, "Kalto Sabana, 3 miles west of La Libertad, El Peten, Guatemala." Holotype, Univ. Michigan Mus. Zool. 75588, adult male, collected by L. C. Stuart, 9 June 1933 (examined by author).

Coluber constrictor stejnegerianus: Muliak and Muliak, 1942:13. *C[oluber]. oaxacae*: Fitch, 1963:371. Unjustified emendation.

Coluber constrictor oaxaca: Wilson, 1966:45.

● DEFINITION. A subspecies with a green or olive-green to grayish-green dorsum and yellowish to yellowish-green venter, usually eight supralabials, and 15 to 20 maxillary teeth.

10. *Coluber constrictor paludicola* Auffenberg and Babbitt

Coluber constrictor paludicola Auffenberg and Babbitt, 1953:44. Type-locality, "three miles west of Kendall, Dade County, Florida." Holotype U.S. Nat. Mus. 131900, adult male, collected by L. H. Babbitt, 23 March 1950 (not examined by author).

● DEFINITION. A subspecies with a bluish-gray, greenish-gray, or occasionally brownish-gray dorsum and a whitish or powder blue venter, usually seven supralabials, and more than 99 subcaudals.

11. *Coluber constrictor priapus* Dunn and Wood

Coluber constrictor priapus Dunn and Wood, 1939:4. Type-locality, "West Palm Beach, [Palm Beach County] Florida." Holotype, Acad. Natur. Sci. Philadelphia 16111, adult male, collected by G. B. Wood, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Coluber constrictor haasti Bell, 1952:21. Type-locality, "southern end of Big Pine Key, Monroe County, Florida." Holotype, L. Neil Bell (private collection) 3495, adult male, collected by L. N. Bell, 18 August 1951 (not examined by author).

● DEFINITION. A subspecies with a slaty black dorsal and ventral coloration, almost completely dark supralabials, and with the enlarged hemipenial spine at least 3 times the length of the adjacent proximal spines.

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