

REPTILIA: SQUAMATA: NATRICIDAE

REGINA ALLENI

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Dorcas, M.E., S.M. Poppy, C.H. Ernst, and J.W. Gibbons. 2003.
Regina alleni.

Regina alleni
Striped crayfish snake

Helicops alleni Garman 1874:92. Type locality, "Hawkinsville, Florida, correctly 2 miles south of Crow's Bluff, Lake County (R.E. Hellman, pers. comm.)" (Schmidt 1953). Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ) 2255, a 65 cm, wet adult specimen, collected by J.A. Allen, date of collection unknown (not examined by authors).

Liodytes alleni: Cope 1885:194.

Helicops allenii: Boulenger 1893:273.

Liodytes alleni alleni: Auffenburg 1950:13.

Liodytes alleni lineapiatus Auffenburg 1950:13. Type locality, "15 miles southwest of Miami, Dade County, Florida." Holotype, Auffenberg coll. 3119 (see **Remarks**), an adult male, collected by L.H. Babbitt, 15 March 1948 (not examined by authors).

Regina alleni: Rossman 1963: 8. First use of present combination.

L[iodytes]. alleni: Price 1983:294.

• **CONTENT.** No subspecies are recognized (see **Remarks**).

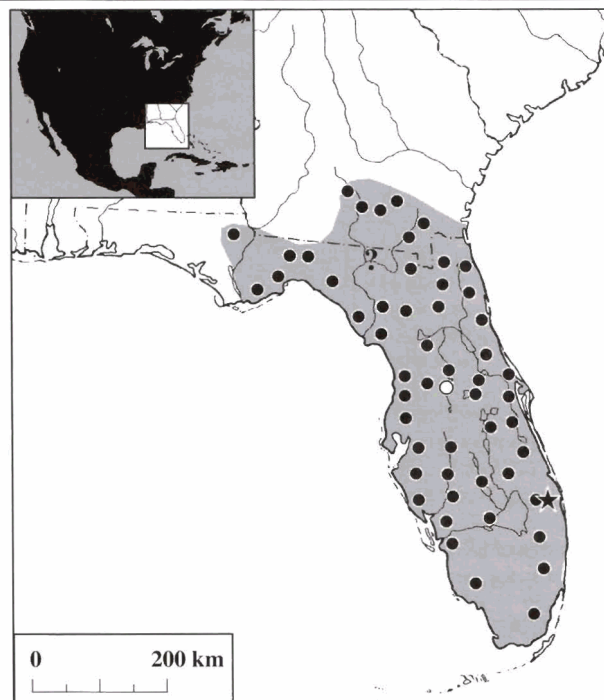
• **DEFINITION.** *Regina alleni* is a small snake with three brown dorsal stripes running the length of its body. The head and neck are usually dark olive or brown, the throat usually yellowish, and the venter usually buff or straw-colored, but may be pink or orange. Some individuals have a midventral row of spots. The dorsum may appear to be iridescent, especially when wet.

Average adult TL ranges from 50–60 cm, and the maximum reported TL is 70.5 cm (Demuth 1997). Neonates are 15.3–29.1 cm in TL. The head is not much wider than the body. The nares are directed dorsolaterally, and, compared to congeners, the eye is large with a small pupil. The scales are smooth, except on the dorsal area of the tail, where they are always keeled. Females have 110–133 ventrals (males average 2–3 fewer) and 53–61 subcaudals (males have 59–69). Dorsal scale counts are 19-19-19 (or 19-19-17 in some males). A single internasal, coupled with smooth dorsal scales, distinguishes *R. alleni* from other members of the genus. Other scale characteristics include 2 prefrontals, a single preocular, 2 nasals (partially divided by the nostril), 3–4 postoculars, loreal present, 1 + 2 temporals, 8 (sometimes 7 or 9) upper labials, 11 (sometimes 9 or 10) lower labials, and a divided cloacal scute (= anal plate).

The hemipenes are relatively short (to the 7th or 8th subcaudal, *in situ*), are slightly bilobed with a simple (undivided) sulcus spermaticus, and have no plicae. Two large basal hooks are on the same side as the sulcus, as are many small spines that decrease distally. The apical region is nude.

Rossman (1963) reported that each maxilla has 26–29 (mean 27) stout teeth with chisel-like tips, but Wright and Wright (1957) stated that *R. alleni* has 16–18 maxillary teeth, and Auffenburg (1950) reported 12–15 teeth on each maxilla. Other teeth counts are: dentary 28–32 (mean 29), palatine 14–18 (mean 16.5) and pterygoid 17–23 (mean 20).

• **DIAGNOSIS.** Within its range, the only striped natricine snakes with which *Regina alleni* might be confused are the Striped Crayfish Snake (*R. rigida*), Eastern Ribbon Snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*), and Common Garter Snake (*T. sirtalis*),



MAP. Distribution of *Regina alleni*; the circle represents the type locality, dots indicate other localities, and stars mark fossil sites.



FIGURE. Adult *Regina alleni* from DeLeon Springs, Volusia County, Florida. Note the smooth dorsal scales, body stripes, and the single internasal; the latter distinguishes *R. alleni* from its extant congeners. (photographs by Peter May).

all of which differ from *R. alleni* by having keeled scales the entire length of the dorsum. Juvenile Rainbow Snakes (*Farancia erytrogramma*), which also might be confused with *R. alleni*, have bright red stripes running the length of their dorsum and an undivided cloacal scute (= anal plate).

• **DESCRIPTIONS.** Descriptions of **general morphological characters** are in Garman (1874), Cope (1885, 1891, 1898), Boulenger (1893), Blanchard (1925), Perkins (1940, 1949), Schmidt and Davis (1941), Auffenberg (1950), Martof (1956), Wright and Wright (1957), Duellman and Schwartz (1958), Rossman (1963), Ernst and Barbour (1989), Conant and Collins (1998), Tennant and Bartlett (2000), and Holman (1962), Auffenberg (1963), Rossman (1963), Wilson (1968), and Meylan (1982, 1995) described the **skeleton**. Other descriptions include: **teeth** (Rossman 1963, Rojas and Godley 1979), **chromosomes** (Eberle 1972), **cranial musculature** (Varkey 1979), **dorsal scale microdermatoglyphics** (Blaney 1977; Price 1982, 1983), and **hemipenis** (Rossman 1963).

• **ILLUSTRATIONS.** **Color photographs** are in Behler and King (1979), Ashton and Ashton (1981), Jackson (1983), Ernst and Barbour (1989), Tennant (1997), Gibbons and West (1998), Tennant and Bartlett (2000), and Ernst and Ernst (2003). **Black-and-white photographs** are in Ditmars (1936) and Wright and Wright (1957). **Colored drawings** are in Smith and Brodie (1982) and Conant and Collins (1998). Garman (1874), Schmidt and Davis (1941), and Wright and Wright (1957) provided **drawings** of the head. Auffenberg (1950) provided drawings of the head, dorsum, and venter.

Eberle (1972) illustrated the karyotype. Varkey (1979) included drawings of the muscles of the posterior region of the skull and anterior region of the vertebral column. Auffenberg (1963) illustrated vertebrae and Meylan (1982) showed photographs of vertebrae. Rossman (1963) provided drawings of a caudal vertebra, a maxilla, a maxillary tooth, a parietal bone, a basioccipital, and the dorsal pattern. Price (1983) provided photographs of the plicate microdermatoglyphic pattern and Blaney (1977) showed a black-and-white photomicrograph of dorsal scales. Cope (1898) provided drawings of the hemipenis. Franz (1977) illustrated feeding behavior.

• **DISTRIBUTION.** *Regina alleni* is found throughout Florida, except in the western portion of the Florida panhandle and the Florida Keys, and extends northward into southeastern Georgia. The following sources contain maps: Auffenberg (1950), Wright and Wright (1957), Behler and King (1979), Ashton and Ashton (1981), Smith and Brodie (1982), Jackson (1983), Ernst and Barbour (1989), Conant and Collins (1998), Tennant and Bartlett (2000), Ernst and Ernst (2003), and Gibbons and Dorcas (2003).

• **FOSSIL RECORD.** Vertebrae of *Regina alleni* have been found in Pleistocene (Irvingtonian) deposits in Hillsborough County, Florida (Meylan 1995, Holman 2000), and Pleistocene (Rancholabrean) or Holocene fossils are known from Columbia, Dade, and St. Lucie counties, Florida (Auffenberg 1963; Hirshfeld 1968; Holman 1995, 2000).

• **PERTINENT LITERATURE.** Summaries of **natural history** are in Ditmars (1936), Carr (1940), Schmidt and Davis (1941), Ditmars (1945), Wright and Wright (1957), Duellman and Schwartz (1958), Behler and King (1979), Ashton and Ashton (1981), Jackson (1983), Ernst and Barbour (1989), Tennant (1997), Ernst and Ernst (2003), and Gibbons and Dorcas (2003). Details of **distribution** are in Cope (1877), Brimley (1910), Barbour (1920), Schmidt (1953), Neill (1958), Babbitt and Babbitt (1962), and Gibbons and Dorcas (2003). Other references are as follows: **systematics and taxonomy** (Schmidt 1953; Nakamura and Smith 1960; Smith and Huheey 1960; Rossman 1963, 1985; Rossman et al. 1982; Price 1983), **karyotype** (Eberle 1972, Kilpatrick and Zimmerman 1973), **sexual dimorphism** (Fitch 1981, Rossman et al. 1982), **maximum length** (Boundy 1995, Demuth 1997), **morphology** (Marx and Rabb 1972,

Rossman et al. 1982), **visceral organ topography** (Rossman et al. 1982), **skull form and function** (Dwyer and Kaiser 1997), **vertebrae** (Johnson 1955), **cranial muscles** (Varkey 1979), **tooth structure** (Rojas and Godley 1979), **lungs** (Wallach 1998), **scales** (Cope 1891, Blanchard 1931), **biochemical evaluation** (Dowling et al. 1983), **hemoglobin values** (Goin and Jackson 1965), **reproduction** (Brimley 1903, Tschambers 1950, Neill 1951, Telford 1952, Wright and Wright 1957, Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Godley 1980, Ashton and Ashton 1981, Fitch 1981, Seigel and Ford 1987, Enge and Wood 1999–2000), **species diversity** (Dalrymple et al. 1991a), **ecology** (Auffenberg 1950, Godley 1980, Wilson and Porras 1983, Gibbons and Semlitsch 1987, Mushinsky 1987, Parker and Plummer 1987, Reinert 1993), **populations** (Godley 1980, Bancroft et al. 1983, Dalrymple et al. 1991a), **thermal ecology** (Brattstrom 1965), **habitat** (Wright 1926; Van Hynning 1933; Carr 1940; Goin 1943; Martof 1956; Duellman and Schwartz 1958; Neill 1958; Franz 1977; Godley 1980, 1982a; Dalrymple 1988; Dodd and Charest 1988; Reinert 1993; Wilson 1995; Tennant 1997), **activity** (Auffenberg 1950, Godley 1980, Ernst and Barbour 1989, Dalrymple et al. 1991b, Bernardino and Dalrymple 1992), **diet and feeding behavior** (Van Hynning 1932; Auffenberg 1950; Penn 1950; Bogert 1954; Franz 1977; Godley 1976, 1980; Godley et al. 1984; Mushinsky 1987; Dwyer and Kaiser 1997), **predation and defense** (Loennberg 1894; Wright and Wright 1957; Jackson et al. 1976; Godley 1980, 1982b; Dye 1982; Bancroft et al. 1983; Godwin 1992; Greene 1988; Spears 1977; Szelistowski and Meylan 1996; O'Brien 1998), **parasites** (Franz 1977, Stunkard and Franz 1977), **captive maintenance** (Franz 1977, Godley 1980, Rossi and Rossi 1995), **management and conservation issues** (Dodd and Charest 1988, Wilson 1995), **color morphs** (Cooper 1948), **checklists** (Cope 1875, Yarrow 1882, Stejneger and Barbour 1943, Schmidt 1953), and **common names** (Banks et al. 1987, Crother 2000, Collins and Taggart 2002).

• **REMARKS.** Price (1983) studied the microdermatoglyphics of the genus and concluded that *Regina alleni* and *R. rigida*, which possess micro-scale patterns he described as plicate with punctations, should be placed in the old genus *Liodytes*. Rossman (1985) refuted Price by listing a large series of characters, other than those microdermatoglyphic in nature, that both *R. alleni* and *R. rigida* share with the other members of the genus. Similar tooth morphology shared by *R. alleni* and *R. rigida* does indicate that they are most probably each other's closest relatives, as do recent studies of their skull morphology (Dwyer and Kaiser 1997). Whether this warrants allocation of *R. rigida* and *R. alleni* to a genus separate from *Regina* is equivocal.

Auffenberg (1950) assigned *R. alleni* from southern Florida to the subspecies *R. a. lineapitatus*, characterized by having ventral spots. Individuals from various parts of the range have either no ventral spots, spots only on the posterior half of the venter, or spots on the entire venter. Duellman and Schwartz (1958) examined specimens from throughout the range and determined that south Florida *R. alleni* are part of a continuous cline showing decreased ventral spotting toward the north. Auffenberg supposedly placed the holotype in the Florida Museum of Natural History, but it was never catalogued and is now missing (F.W. King and K. Auffenberg, *in litt.*).

• **ETYMOLOGY.** The specific epithet is a patronym in honor of J.A. Allen, the zoologist who collected the holotype.

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