

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

ROSSMAN, DOUGLAS A. 1970. *Thamnophis sauritus*.*Thamnophis sauritus* (Linnaeus)  
Eastern ribbon snake*Coluber saurita* Linnaeus, 1766:385. Type-locality, "Carolina."

The holotype is presumed lost. Neotype (designated by Schmidt and Conant, 1956-57), Field Mus. Nat. Hist. 73119, adult female collected 15 miles NNE Charleston, Berkeley County, South Carolina, by John Quinby on 20 July 1953.

*Natrix saurita*: Merrem, 1820:122.*Tropidonotus saurita*: Boie, 1827:535.*Leptophis sauritus*: Holbrook, 1842:21.*Thamnophis saurita*: Fitzinger, 1843:26. [by implication]*Eutaenia saurita*: Baird and Girard, 1853:24.*Eutaenia saurita*: Kennicott, 1859:98.*Eutaenia sackenii* Kennicott, 1859:98. Type-locality, "Florida."

Restricted to Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida by Schmidt (1953). The holotype, collected by Baron Osten Sacken and originally deposited in the collection of Northwestern University, is presumed lost.

*Prymniodon chalcus* Cope, 1860:558. Type-locality, "Siam"

(in error). Holotype, Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 5826, subadult male collected by Ruschenberger (examined by author). This name was mistakenly associated with the western ribbon snake by Dunn (1940); the situation was clarified by Rossman (1961).

*Eutaenia sackeni*: Davis and Rice, 1883:39.*Thamnophis sackenii*: Loennberg, 1894:329.*Thamnophis sauritus*: Stone, 1906:164.*Thamnophis sackeni*: Deckert, 1918:31.*Thamnophis sirtalis*: Klauber, 1948:9. (See Remarks)

- CONTENT. Four subspecies are recognized: *sauritus*, *nitae*, *sackenii*, and *septentrionalis*.

- DEFINITION. A moderately large, long-tailed member of the genus *Thamnophis* characterized by: 19-19-17 dorsal scale rows; a single preocular; 7 or 8 supralabials, the 3rd and 4th or 4th and 5th, respectively, entering the orbit; 143 to 177 ventrals; 94 to 136 subcaudals; lateral stripe on dorsal scale rows 3 and 4 (row 2 is occasionally involved); labials and ventrals without black markings; dark ventrolateral stripe always present and broad; parietal spots frequently lacking, when present they are small and rarely in contact or brightly colored; hemipenes short, extending to the 8th subcaudal when inverted; teeth numerous, averaging about 30 to each maxilla, 37 to each dentary, 21 to each palatine, and 34 to each pterygoid.

- DESCRIPTIONS. Rossman (1963) provided detailed descriptions of external morphology, color pattern, proportions, dentition, and hemipenes, including the individual, geographic, sexual, and ontogenetic variation of each, where applicable. He also furnished descriptions of all four subspecies.

- ILLUSTRATIONS. A drawing of the head appears in Rossman (1963). A colored illustration of *T. s. sackenii* has been published (Conant, 1958), as well as photographs of *T. s. sauritus* (McCauley, 1945; Conant, 1947), *T. s. sackenii* (Carr and Goin, 1955; Wright and Wright, 1957), and *T. s. septentrionalis* (Conant, 1938; Wright and Wright, 1957).

- DISTRIBUTION. From southern Ontario and southern Maine southward east of the Mississippi River to the Florida Keys and to the northern side of Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana. An isolated colony occurs in central Nova Scotia, and perhaps another in northeastern Wisconsin. The species apparently is rare in much of the interior of eastern United States.

- FOSSIL RECORD. None.

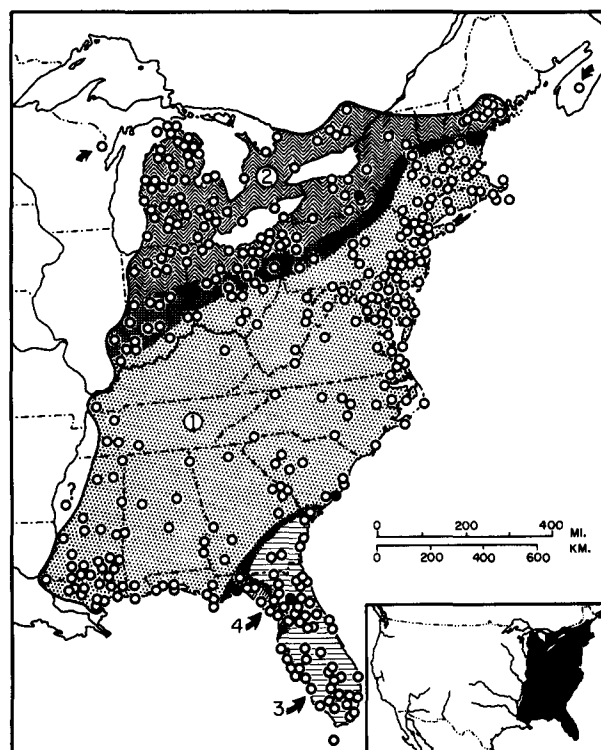
- PERTINENT LITERATURE. The most recent taxonomic revision was that by Rossman (1963), who also reviewed habitat and food preferences, reproduction, and parasites. Cope (1892), Brown (1904), and Ruthven (1908) provided diagrams of possible phylogenetic position. Carpenter (1952a, 1952b, 1953) has given the most comprehensive accounts of ecology and life history.

- REMARKS. Klauber (1948) demonstrated that Linnaeus's description of *Coluber sirtalis* does not fit the common garter snake, and that the name probably should be applied to the eastern ribbon snake. For several years some authors followed Klauber; others did not. The resulting confusion led to a request that the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature conserve the pre-Klauber nomenclature in the interest of stability. The Commission complied and neotypes were subsequently designated (Schmidt and Conant, 1956-57).

- ETYMOLOGY. The specific name *sauritus* is New Latin, meaning lizardlike. The subspecific names are derived as follows: *septentrionalis*, from the Latin *septentrionalis*, of the north; *sackenii*, named for Baron Osten Sacken who collected the holotype; *nitae*, honors Nita J. Rossman who collected part of the type series.

1. *Thamnophis sauritus sauritus* (Linnaeus)*Coluber saurita* Linnaeus. See species account.*Thamnophis sauritus sauritus*: Ruthven, 1908:122. [by implication]*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*: Klauber, 1948:9. (See Remarks)

- DEFINITION. A subspecies of *Thamnophis sauritus* characterized by 7 supralabials, a reddish-brown dorsum, a golden-yellow vertebral stripe, and a relatively long tail.



MAP. The solid circles mark type localities; open circles indicate other records. Areas of intergradation are heavily shaded.

## 2. *Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis* Rossman

*Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis* Rossman, 1963:159. Type-locality, "Michigan Hollow, near Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York." Holotype, Univ. Florida 12179.2, adult female collected by J. A. Bartley on 20 May 1959.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies of *Thamnophis sauritus* characterized by 7 supralabials, a velvety black or dark brown dorsum, a yellow vertebral stripe often overlaid with brown pigment, and a relatively short tail.

## 3. *Thamnophis sauritus sackenii* (Kennicott)

*Eutaenia sackenii* Kennicott. See species account.

*Thamnophis saurita* var. *sackenii*: Duméril & Bocourt, 1893: 759.

*Thamnophis sauritus sackenii*: Ruthven, 1908:107.

*Thamnophis sauritus sackenii*: Blanchard, 1925:18.

*Thamnophis sirtalis sackenii*: Klauber, 1948:9. (See Remarks).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies of *Thamnophis sauritus* characterized by 8 supralabials, a tan to brown dorsum, a tan vertebral stripe often with a metallic luster, a narrow lateral stripe, and a relatively long tail.

## 4. *Thamnophis sauritus nitae* Rossman

*Thamnophis sauritus nitae* Rossman, 1963:163. Type-locality, "McDonald Slough, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Wakulla County, Florida." Holotype, Univ. Florida 12150.2, adult female collected by N. J. and D. A. Rossman on 16 May 1959.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies of *Thamnophis sauritus* characterized by 8 supralabials, a dark brown or black dorsum on at least the anterior part of the body, the vertebral stripe obscure or absent, a bluish-white or light blue lateral stripe, and a relatively long tail.

### COMMENT

The zones of intergradation between the various subspecies require precise definition. The ecological relationships of *Thamnophis sauritus* and *T. proximus* where their ranges are contiguous or overlap warrant careful investigation.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Baird, Spencer F., and Charles Girard. 1853. Catalogue of North American reptiles in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, part I. Serpents. Smithsonian Misc. Coll. 2(5):1-172.
- Blanchard, Frank N. 1925. A key to the snakes of the United States, Canada, and Lower California. Pap. Michigan Acad. Sci., Arts, Letters 4(2):1-65.
- Boie, Friedrich. 1827. Bemerkungen über Merrem's Versuch eines Systems der Amphibien. Isis 20:508-566.
- Brown, Arthur E. 1904. Post-glacial Nearctic centres of dispersal for reptiles. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 56:464-474.
- Carpenter, Charles C. 1952a. Comparative ecology of the common garter snake (*Thamnophis s. sirtalis*), the ribbon snake (*Thamnophis s. sauritus*), and Butler's garter snake (*Thamnophis butleri*) in mixed populations. Ecol. Monogr. 22:235-258.
- 1952b. Growth and maturity of the three species of *Thamnophis* in Michigan. Copeia 1952(4):237-243.
- 1953. A study of hibernacula and hibernating associations of snakes and amphibians in Michigan. Ecology 34:74-80.
- Carr, Archie, and Coleman J. Goin. 1955. Guide to the reptiles, amphibians and fresh-water fishes of Florida. Univ. Florida Press, Gainesville. ix + 341 p., 67 pl.
- Conant, Roger. 1938. The reptiles of Ohio. Amer. Midl. Nat. 20:1-200.
- 1947. Reptiles and amphibians of the northeastern states. Zool. Soc. Philadelphia. 40 p.
- 1958. A field guide to reptiles and amphibians of the United States east of the 100th meridian. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. xv + 366 p., 40 pl.
- Cope, Edward D. 1860. Catalogue of the Colubridae in the Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, part 3. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 12: 553-566.
- 1892. A critical review of the characters and variations of the snakes of North America. Proc. U. S. Natl. Mus. 14:589-694.
- Davis, N. S., Jr., and Frank L. Rice. 1883. North American Batrachia and Reptilia, found east of Mississippi River. Bull. Illinois State Lab. Nat. Hist. (5):1-66.
- Deckert, Richard F. 1918. A list of reptiles from Jacksonville, Florida. Copeia (54):30-33.
- Duméril, Auguste H. A., and M.-Firmin Bocourt. 1893. Recherches zoologiques pour servir à l'histoire de la faune de l'Amérique. Mission scientifique au Mexique et dans l'Amérique Centrale, pt. 3, sect. 1:1-1012.
- Dunn, Emmett R. 1940. Notes on some American lizards and snakes in the Museum of Goteborg. Herpetologica 1:189-194.
- Fitzinger, Leopoldo. 1843. Systema reptilium. Fasciculus primus, Amblyglossae. Braumüller et Seidel, Vienna. 106 + vi p.
- Holbrook, John E. 1842. North American herpetology. 2nd ed. Vol. 4. J. Dobson, Philadelphia. 138 p.
- Kennicott, Robert. 1859. Notes on *Coluber calligaster* of Say, and a description of new species of serpents in the collection of the North Western University of Evanston, Ill. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 11:98-100.
- Klauber, Laurence M. 1948. Some misapplications of the Linnaean names applied to American snakes. Copeia 1948(1):1-14.
- Linnaeus, Carolus. 1766. Systema naturae. Editio duodecima. Stockholm. 532 p.
- Loennberg, Einar. 1894. Notes on reptiles and batrachians collected in Florida in 1892 and 1893. Proc. U. S. Natl. Mus. 17:317-339.
- McCauley, Robert H., Jr. 1945. The reptiles of Maryland and the District of Columbia. Privately publ., Hagerstown, Maryland. 194 p.
- Merrem, Blasius. 1820. Versuch eines Systems der Amphibien. Johann Christian Krieger, Marburg. 191 p.
- Rossman, Douglas A. 1961. Nomenclatural status of the neotropical subspecies of the colubrid snake, *Thamnophis sauritus*. Notulae Naturae (340):1-2.
- 1963. The colubrid snake genus *Thamnophis*: a revision of the *Sauritus* group. Bull. Florida State Mus. 7:99-178.
- Ruthven, Alexander G. 1908. Variation and genetic relationships of the garter-snakes. U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. (61): 1-201.
- Schmidt, Karl P. 1953. A check list of North American amphibians and reptiles. 6th ed. Publ. Amer. Soc. Ichthyol. Herpetol. viii + 280 p.
- , and Roger Conant. 1956-57. Request . . . that the nominal species "*Coluber sirtalis*" Linnaeus 1758, and "*Coluber saurita*" Linnaeus 1766, should be interpreted by the neotypes. . . . P. 224-230. In Opinion 385. Opinions Declarat. Rendered by Internat. Comm. Zool. Nomencl. 12, pt. 6: 191-230.
- Stone, Witmer. 1906. Notes on reptiles and batrachians of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Amer. Nat. 40: 159-170.
- Wright, Albert H., and Anna A. Wright. 1957. Handbook of snakes of the United States and Canada. 2:565-1105. Comstock Publ. Assoc., Ithaca, N. Y.

D. A. ROSSMAN, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70803.

Published 11 September 1970 by the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Publication is supported by National Science Foundation grant G24231.

Primary editor for this account, Herndon G. Dowling.