

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Jennings, Mark R. 1990. *Petrosaurus thalassinus*.

***Petrosaurus thalassinus* (Cope)
Baja California Rock Lizard**

Uta thalassina Cope, 1863:104. Type-locality, "Cape St. Lucas" [=Cabo San Lucas, Baja California del Sur, México]. Holotype, Natl. Mus. Nat. Hist. (USNM) 5302, a subadult female collected [in May 1859] by John Xántus (Cochran, 1961) (not examined by author).

Petrosaurus thalassinus: Boulenger, 1885:205. First use of combination.

Petrosaurus thalassina: Stejneger and Barbour, 1943:90. Emendation.

Petrosaurus (Petrosaurus) thalassinus: Lowe, 1955:101. By implication.

Uta (Petrosaurus) thalassinus: Savage, 1958:48.

Uta thalassina: Ryckman and Ryckman, 1967:182. Invalid emendation.

• **Content.** Two subspecies are currently recognized: *thalassinus* and *repens*.

• **Definition.** *Petrosaurus thalassinus* is a very large oviparous sceloporine lizard (adults 87-175 mm SVL) with a flattened head and body, 160-250 rows of smooth rounded dorsal scales, 2 complete gular folds, a single narrow black collar, a banded tail almost twice as long as the body, normally 3 supraocular rows and 15-21 femoral pores. The upper surfaces of the tail and limbs have weakly-keeled, smooth-edged scales. The dorsal color consists of various intensities of blue on the head, shoulders, and tail, and yellow-salmon on the lower back with numerous dusky vermiculations. Some individuals have orange or red spots on the head, neck, and shoulders. The body has 2-3 distinct crossbands, edged at the rear with a lighter color. The ventral color is dull whitish to pale beige with dusky blotches. The throat is yellow-orange with a central dark patch.

• **Descriptions.** Detailed descriptions of *P. thalassinus* are included in Boulenger (1885), Van Denburgh (1895, 1922), Mocquard (1899), Cope (1900), and Stebbins (1985).

• **Illustrations.** Line drawings of *P. t. repens* are in Van Denburgh (1895) and Cope (1900). Black and white and color drawings of *P. t. thalassinus* are included in Mocquard (1899) and

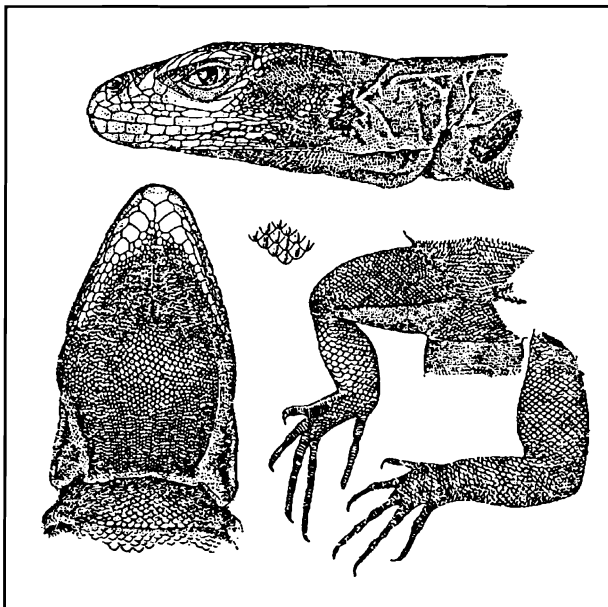
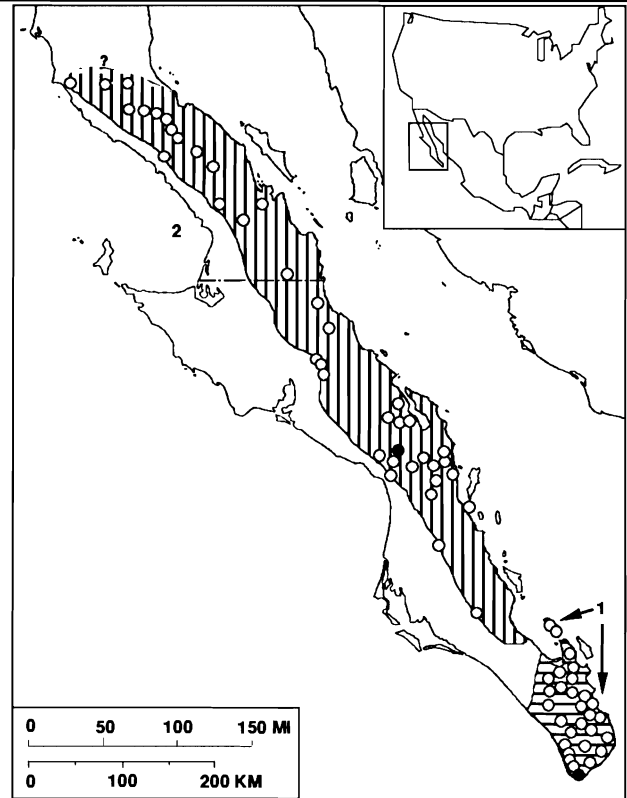


Figure. *Petrosaurus thalassinus repens* from Comondu, Baja California del Sur, México (CAS 633) (from Van Denburgh, 1895).



Map. Solid circles mark type-localities, open circles other localities. Question mark indicates uncertain range boundary.

Stebbins (1985), respectively. Drawings of the pectoral girdle, clavicle, and skull are included in Etheridge (1964); of the teeth in Olson et al. (1986).

• **Distribution.** *Petrosaurus thalassinus* inhabits rocky areas in the southern half of the Baja California peninsula from the northern end of Sierra de Calamajue y San Jose, Baja California del Norte, south to Cabo San Lucas, Baja California del Sur, at elevations from near sea level to about 1740 m (Leviton and Banta, 1964; Stebbins, 1985). The species is apparently absent from the Viscaniño Desert and the lowlands of the Magdalena Plain. Isolated populations are present on Danzante, Espiritu Santo, and Partida Sur islands in the Gulf of California (Soulé and Sloan, 1966; Murphy and Ottley, 1983).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Van Denburgh (1922) and Smith and Smith (1973, 1976) summarized the literature. Specific topics include: osteology (Etheridge, 1964); scleral ossicles (de Queiroz, 1982); dentition (Olson et al., 1986); cochlear duct (Miller, 1966); cloacal and hemipenial muscles (Arnold, 1984); parietal eye (Gundy and Wurst, 1976); tail break frequency (Case, 1983); genetic relationships (Wyles and Gorman, 1978; Murphy, 1982, 1983a; Aguilars-S. et al., 1988); body temperatures (Soulé, 1963); reproduction (Asplund, 1967); food (Bostic, 1971); coloration (Cope, 1863; Van Denburgh, 1895, 1922; Leviton, 1972); parasites (Ryckman and Ryckman, 1967); habitat and general ecology (Belding, 1887; Van Denburgh, 1922; Linsdale, 1932; Murray, 1955; Leviton and Banta, 1964; Ottley and Murphy, 1981; Murphy, 1982, 1983a, 1983b; Stebbins, 1985).

• **Nomenclatural History.** All workers except Boulenger (1885) considered *P. thalassinus* a species of *Uta* prior to 1942. Most workers since Mittleman (1942) have followed Boulenger's generic designation; however, Oliver (1943), Savage (1958), Soulé (1963), and Ryckman and Ryckman (1967) continued to recognize only the single genus *Uta*. Lowe (1955), Etheridge (1964), Ballinger and Tinkle (1972), and Murphy (1983) have convincingly shown that this species is a member of the distinctive genus *Petrosaurus*.

Leviton and Banta (1963) are the sole original source for lowering *P. repens* to subspecific rank, although this is implied and not explicit through the use of the trinomial for *P. thalassinus*. Smith and Taylor (1966) followed Leviton and Banta's taxonomic arrangement and published *P. t. repens* as a trinomial for the first time.

• **Etymology.** The specific name *thalassinus* is derived from the Greek *thalassinos*, meaning sea-green, which apparently refers to the "sea-green" dorsal coloration of the holotype (Cope, 1863). The subspecific name *repens* is from the Latin *repere*, to creep, which refers to the movements of this lizard in its natural rocky habitat.

1. *Petrosaurus thalassinus thalassinus* (Cope) San Lucan Rock Lizard

Uta thalassina Cope, 1863:104. See species synonymy.
Petrosaurus thalassinus thalassinus: Leviton and Banta, 1964:141.
First use of trinomial.

• **Definition.** A subspecies with an orange head, bluish-tinged body, long snout, and normally two rows of scales between the subocular and labials. Three distinct dark crossbands are present towards the front of the body.

2. *Petrosaurus thalassinus repens* (Van Denburgh) Short-nosed Rock Lizard

Uta repens Van Denburgh, 1895:102. Type-locality, "Comondu, Lower [=Baja] California [del Sur, México]." Holotype, California Acad. Sci. (CAS) 633, an adult female collected in April 1889 by Walter [Pierc]E. Bryant (examined by author).
Uta thalassina: Mocquard, 1899: 310 (part).
Petrosaurus repens: Mittleman, 1942:111. First use of combination.
Streptosaurus repens: Smith, 1946:175. *Lapsus* (Smith and Taylor, 1950).
Petrosaurus thalassinus repens: Smith and Taylor, 1966:16. First use of trinomial.

• **Definition.** A subspecies with a brown head, grayish olive body, shortened hind limbs, blunt snout, and normally one row of scales between the suboculars and labials. There are four distinct dark crossbands towards the front of the body.

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