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2022. *Ambystoma bishopi*.

Ambystoma bishopi Goin
Reticulated Flatwoods Salamander

Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi Goin 1950:300.
Type-locality, “about 5 miles north of Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida, [USA].” [34.158731, -117.995482]. Holotype, Carnegie Museum 29137, adult female, collected 7 May 1949 by Harvard E. Nygren (not examined by authors).

Ambystoma (Linguaelapsus) cingulatum bishopi Tihen 1958:3.

Linguaelapsus cingulatum Freytag 1959:84 [by implication].

Ambystoma bishopi Pauly, Piskurek, and Shaffer 2007:426.

Ambystoma (Linguaelapsus) bishopi Dubois and Raffaëlli 2012:148.

CONTENT. No subspecies are recognized.

DESCRIPTION. *Ambystoma bishopi* is a moderately-sized (up to 76 mm SVL and 135 mm TL), slender-bodied ambystomatid salamander having a relatively short, pointed snout, with adults weighing from 4.5 to 10.5 grams (adult male and gravid female, respectively; Palis 1996, 1997a). The dorsum of the head, body, and tail is generally bluish-black to black and covered with fine, irregular, light gray lines that form a net-like or cross-banded pattern (Figure 1). Ventro-lateral gray flecks are concentrated on the body and tail. The venter is gray-black with gray specks. Teeth are arranged as follows: vomerine in 2–3 rows, premaxillary-maxillary in 3–6 rows, and mandibular in 3–5 rows (Goin 1950). The number of costal grooves ranges from 14–16; general-



FIGURE 1. Adult *Ambystoma bishopi* from Santa Rosa County, Florida. Photograph by Pierson Hill.



MAP. Distribution of *Ambystoma bishopi*. The white circle represents the type locality, and the black circles indicate sites where this species has been documented since 2010 (six breeding sites in three counties). Shaded counties are those for which *Ambystoma bishopi* has been documented.

ly 14 (Pauly et al. 2007). Males have a slightly enlarged cloacal region during breeding season. Males also have a slightly taller and wider tail, but sexual dimorphism is not pronounced (Pauly et al. 2007).

The aquatic, pond-type larvae are boldly patterned with stripes from the mid-dorsum down the sides as follows: pale tan mid-dorsal stripe, grayish-black dorsolateral stripe, pale cream midlateral stripe, blue-black lateral stripe, and pale yellow ventrolateral stripe (Figure 2; Palis 1996). The head has two distinct black stripes, one extending from the snout, through the eyes, to the base of the gills and the other extending along the length of the upper jaw. The throat is unpigmented and the venter similar or dusky in appearance. Larvae are capable of attaining 47 mm SVL and 96 mm TL before metamorphosis (Palis 1996).

DIAGNOSIS. The following morphological characters separate *Ambystoma bishopi* from its sister species, *Ambystoma cingulatum*: *Ambystoma bishopi* has, on average, fewer costal grooves; a shorter tail, forelimbs, hindlimbs, and head; and a narrower, shallower head (Goin 1950, Pauly et al. 2007). *Ambystoma bishopi* also tends to have vomerine teeth arranged in two rows with an average of 13.2 teeth per patch, whereas *Ambystoma cingulatum* tends to have vomerine teeth arranged in three rows with an average of 15.6 teeth per patch (Goin, 1950). Larvae of *Ambystoma talpoideum* are most likely to be confused with larval *Ambystoma bishopi* because both exhibit a light, midlateral stripe. *Ambystoma talpoideum* larvae, however, are crossbanded dorsally, and large individuals have a dark, midventral stripe.

PHYLOGENETIC RELATIONSHIPS. *Ambystoma bishopi* is most closely related to the Frosted Flatwoods Salamander, *Ambystoma cingulatum* (Pauly et al. 2007, 2012; J. Williams et al. 2013; see Nomenclatural History for further discussion). All relevant morphological, allozyme, and DNA sequence studies have also recovered *Ambystoma annulatum* as the sister taxon of the two flatwoods salamanders (T. Jones et al. 1993; Kraus 1988; Shaffer et al. 1991; J. Williams et al. 2013).

Relationships of the *annulatum-cingulatum-bishopi* clade to other ambystomatid salamanders are not yet well established (T. Jones et al. 1993; Shaffer et al. 1991; J. Williams et al. 2013). Tihen (1958) proposed that *Ambystoma cingulatum cingulatum*, *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi*, *Ambystoma annulatum*, *Ambystoma barbouri*, *Ambystoma mabeei*, and *Ambystoma texanum* are in the subgenus *Linguaelapsus*. This result is strongly supported by morphological analyses (T. Jones et al. 1993;

Kraus 1988; Shaffer et al. 1991), but not by analyses of allozymes or DNA sequences (Bogart 2003; Shaffer et al. 1991; J. Williams et al. 2013), many of which recover strong support for the non-monophyly of *Linguaelapsus*.

PUBLISHED DESCRIPTIONS. The most detailed descriptions of variation in morphological characters were provided by Goin (1950), Martof and Gerhardt (1965), and Pauly et al. (2007). Descriptions focused mostly on color patterns were published by Bartlett and Bartlett (2011), Conant (1958), Mitchell and Gibbons (2010), and R. Powell et al. (2016); variation in color pattern was discussed by Enge (2019) but the morphometric and meristic traits of *A. bishopi* and *A. cingulatum* were inversely assigned. A general summary of previous descriptions was provided by LaClaire (2008) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2009). Descriptions of young larvae were provided by Goin (1950), Orton (1942), and Pa-



FIGURE 2. Larval *Ambystoma bishopi* from Santa Rosa County, Florida. Photograph by Pierson Hill.

lis (1995b). Larval descriptions of *Ambystoma bishopi* were compared to Frosted Flatwoods Salamander larvae by Mecham and Hellman (1952). A description of *Ambystoma bishopi* larvae published by Telford (1955) was subsequently determined to be based upon misidentified specimens (Kuss 1988). Eggs have not been described in the literature but, based on unpublished field observations and on published photographs (Gorman et al. 2014), appear to be similar to eggs of *Ambystoma cingulatum* (Anderson and Williamson 1976).

ILLUSTRATIONS. The information below details illustrations verified as *Ambystoma bishopi*; illustrations labeled as *Ambystoma cingulatum* but lacking locality data were excluded even though there is a chance they might be of *Ambystoma bishopi* (see Nomenclatural History).

Color photographs of adult *Ambystoma bishopi* were published by Bailey et al. (2006), Bartlett and Bartlett (1999, 2011), Buhlmann (2016), Buhlmann et al. (2010), Conant and Collins (1998), Enge (2019), Graham et al. (2015), Hipes and Printiss (2002), Hipes et al. (2001), Jackson and Hipes (2005), Jensen and Stevenson (2008), C. Jones et al. (2018), Krysko et al. (2011), Means (2004), Mitchell and Gibbons (2010), Palis and Jensen (1995), R. Powell et al. (2016), Surdick (2016), and Walls and Farmer (2020). **Black-and-white photographs** of adults were provided by Ashton (1992), Carr and Goin (1955), and Mount (1975, 1996). A black-and-white photograph labeled as *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi* was included in a field guide published by Conant (1958). That same photo was later treated as “pattern variation” within *Ambystoma cingulatum* by Conant (1975), then colorized and still treated as “pattern variation” within *Ambystoma cingulatum* by Conant and Collins (1991a, 1991b, 1998), and then later labeled as *Ambystoma bishopi* by R. Powell et al. (2016). **Black-and-white drawings** of dorsolateral and ventral views of adults, as well as the open mouth of an adult were provided by Goin (1950).

Color photographs of juvenile *Ambystoma bishopi* were presented by Buhlmann (2016), Buhlmann et al. (2010), Fenolio et al. (2014), Krysko et al. (2011), Mitchell and Gibbons (2010) and Walls and Farmer (2020). **Black-and-white photographs** of juveniles were published by Altig and McDiarmid (2015) and K. Jones et al. (2012).

Color photographs of larval *Ambystoma bishopi* were published by Altig and McDiarmid (2015), Buhlmann (2016), Buhlmann et al. (2010), Crump (2015), Fenolio et al. (2014), Floyd and Stevenson (2018), Hipes and Norden (2003), Hipes and Printiss (2002), Hipes et al. (2001), Jackson and Hipes (2005), Krysko et al. (2019), Means (2004), O'Donnell et al. (2017), Palis (1993a), Printiss and Hipes (2000), Surdick (2016) and Walls and Farmer (2020). A **black-and-white photograph** of a larva was published by Ashton (1992). **Black-and-white drawings** of larvae were presented by Hardy and Olmon (1974) and Orton (1942). Images taken with a scanning electron microscope of premaxillary tooth morphology, premaxilla of the adult, and premaxilla of the metamorphosing larva were provided by Beneski and Larsen (1989; John Beneski, personal communication).

Images of **eggs** were published by Gorman et al. (2014) and Walls and Farmer (2020).

DISTRIBUTION. *Ambystoma bishopi* inhabits longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*)-wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) flatwoods and savannas on the Gulf Coastal Plain of the United States, and breeds in isolated wetlands, typically dominated by pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) (Palis 1996, 1997b). Historically *Ambystoma bishopi* ranged westward from the Apalachicola-Flint River system from extreme southwestern Georgia across the Florida Panhandle and extreme southern Alabama to Mobile County, in southwestern Alabama (Pauly et al. 2007; R. Powell et al. 2016; O'Donnell et al. 2017; Semlitsch et al. 2017). A record from New Orleans, Louisiana (Boulenger 1882, 1896) was considered like-

ly to be *Ambystoma talpoideum* (Goin 1950; see also Martof 1968). Similarly, three larval specimens from Newton County, Mississippi (Telford 1955) and a verbal report from Harrison County, Mississippi are also claimed to be misidentifications (Kuss 1988, Stuart et al. 2008; see also Lohoefer and Altig 1983). The species was last documented in Alabama in 1981 (T. Jones et al. 1982), and it is hypothesized to be extirpated from the state (Anonymous 2017; Bailey et al. 2004; Graham et al. 2015; Means 2004; Semlitsch et al. 2017; Walls and Farmer 2020). A purported 2003 sighting in Alabama (Stuart et al. 2008) was based on a misidentified larval *Ambystoma talpoideum* (Godwin 2003).

State-level or rangewide distribution maps for *Ambystoma bishopi* were provided by Ashton and Ashton (1988), Bartlett and Bartlett (1999, 2011), Enge (2019), Goin (1950), Hipes et al. (2001), Jensen (1999), Krysko et al. (2011), Means (1986, 2004), Mount (1975, 1996), Pauly et al. (2007, 2012), O'Donnell et al. (2017), Semlitsch et al. (2017), and Walls and Farmer (2020). The range of *Ambystoma bishopi* was incorrectly mapped as strictly west of the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee rivers by Mitchell and Gibbons (2010), thus inadvertently excluding southwestern Georgia. Maps of critical habitat were provided by LaClaire (2008) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2009).

The map provided in this account differs from that of O'Donnell et al. (2017) and Semlitsch et al. (2017), which was also published in Walls and Farmer (2020). The distributions mapped in those studies were based upon the United States Geological Survey's North American Amphibian Atlas (Katie O'Donnell and Jaime Barichivich, personal communications). Those studies reported three localities of *Ambystoma bishopi* in southeastern Lee County, Georgia (two of which are only 320 m [0.2 mi] apart and are not visible as distinct localities in the published maps). Those would represent the northeasternmost records of *Ambystoma bishopi*. However, all three plot-

ted localities actually relate to a single specimen, University of Georgia (UG) 1627, collected 3 March 1962 by H. Carl Gerhardt 12.7 mi NE of Albany in Worth County. That specimen was transferred to the North Carolina State Museum (NCSM), then to the Savannah Science Museum (SSM), and then possibly to Georgia Southern University (GSU; data were transferred but it is not currently clear whether the specimen reached GSU). The specimen is currently lost (Lance McBrayer, personal communication). Through these various transfers, several errors were introduced into the locality data such that localities of 12.5 and 11.0 mi NE of Albany also exist in databases (e.g., Martof and Gerhardt [1965] reported this specimen as NCSM 15, collected 12.5 mi NE of Albany, Worth County). The specimen is from Worth County (Carl Gerhardt, personal communication), collected only a short distance east of the Flint River. Thus, this specimen is not *Ambystoma bishopi* but *Ambystoma cingulatum* and is the northwesternmost locality for that species.

FOSSIL RECORD. None (Holman 2006).

PERTINENT LITERATURE. Assessing the flatwoods salamander literature is complicated by the changing taxonomy of this lineage. Although populations inhabiting the Gulf Coastal Plain west of the Apalachicola-Flint Rivers are now referred to as *Ambystoma bishopi* (Pauly et al. 2007), they have previously been referred to as *Ambystoma cingulatum* (prior to 1950 and then again 1965 through 2006) or as *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi*, (generally 1950 to 1964). For works treating all flatwoods salamanders as belonging to a monotypic *Ambystoma cingulatum*, we have attempted to determine the geographic origin of specimens examined or the location of relevant fieldwork so that we can classify the work as being about *Ambystoma bishopi* or *Ambystoma cingulatum* (sensu Pauly et al. 2007). We have attempted to include all research pertaining to flatwoods salamanders west of the Apalachicola-Flint

Rivers in this account. Work not sufficiently addressed elsewhere in this account is listed here by topic: **activity/activity cycles** (Brooks et al. 2019b; Erwin et al. 2016; Palis 1997a; Palis and Means 2005; S. Powell et al. 2015), **anatomy and morphology** (Beneski and Larsen 1989), **behavior** (Beneski et al. 1995; K. Jones et al. 2012; S. Powell et al. 2015), **cap-tive husbandry** (Fenolio et al. 2014), **conser-vation and management** (Bishop 2005; Bishop and Haas 2005; Brooks and Haas 2021; Brooks et al. 2019a; Chandler 2014; Chandler et al. 2016, 2017, 2021; Cox et al. 1994; Cox and Kautz 2000; Endries et al. 2009; Enge 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry 2010; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 2001; Gorman 2009; Gorman and Haas 2013, 2014, 2015; Gorman et al. 2009, 2013; Jensen 1999; C. Jones et al. 2018; K. Jones et al. 2015, 2018; LaClaire 2008; Miranda-Castro 2021; Mount 1976; O'Donnell et al. 2017; Palis 1996; Palis and Enge 2005, 2006; Palis and Hammerson 2008; Semlitsch et al. 2017; Sutter et al. 2001; United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2009, 2015), **diet** (Goin 1950; Jensen 1999; Whiles et al. 2004), **disease** (S. Williams et al. 2020), **ecology and natural history** (Brooks et al. 2019a, 2019b; Chandler et al. 2015; Erwin et al. 2016; Gorman et al. 2014; Jensen 1999; K. Jones et al. 2012; Means 1972; Palis 1995b, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; S. Powell et al. 2013, 2015; Sutter et al. 2001), **evolution and phylogeny** (McKnight and Shaffer 1997), **general accounts** (Bartlett and Bartlett 1999, 2011; Endries et al. 2009; Enge 2019; Floyd and Stevenson 2018; Means 1986, 2004; Mitchell and Gibbons 2010; Mount 1975, 1996; Palis and Hammerson 2008; R. Powell et al. 2016; Reichling 2008; Shupe 2019), **genetics** (Pauly et al. 2007, 2012; Shaffer et al. 1991, Wendt 2017; Wendt et al. 2021; S. Williams et al. 2020, 2021), **geographic distribution** (Carr 1940; Jensen and Johnson 1998; Jensen and Stevenson 2008; T. Jones et al. 1982; Mesh-

ka and Babbitt 2005; Mount 1976; Mount et al. 1984; Palis 1995a; Shupe 2019; Sutter et al. 2001; Williamson and Moulis 1994a, 1994b), **growth** (Brooks et al. 2020), **habitat** (Jensen 1999; Palis 1996, 1997b, 1997c; Palis and Means 2005), **key – adults** (Carr 1940; R. Powell et al. 2012, 2019), **key – eggs** (Altig and McDiarmid 2015), **key – larvae** (Altig and Ireland 1984; Altig and McDiarmid 2015), **larval descriptions** (Hardy and Olmon 1974; Orton 1942; Palis 1996, 1997c), **lar-val growth** (Palis 1995b), **larval period** (Palis 1995b), **longevity** (Brooks et al. 2020; Palis and Means 2005), **parasitism** (Whiles et al. 2004), **reproduction** (Gorman et al. 2014), **surveys and habitat assessments** (Bishop 2004; Buhlmann 2016; Buhlmann et al. 2010; Cox and Kautz 2000; Farmer et al. 2016; Godwin 1993, 1994, 2003; Gorman et al. 2016; Guyer 2001; Haas and Gorman 2011, 2013; Haas et al. 2012, 2014; Hipes 2003; Hipes and Printiss 2002; Jackson and Hipes 2005; Means 2013; Moulis 1995; Mount 1980; Palis 1993b, 1994; Palis and Jensen 1995; Printiss and Hipes 1997, 2000; Seyle 1994; Smith et al. 2006; Surdick 2016; Vitt 1981; Walters et al. 2006a, 2006b), **systematics and taxonomy** (Goin 1950; Martof and Gerhardt 1965; Pauly et al. 2007, 2012), **survey methods** (Bishop et al. 2006; Goldberg et al. 2018; McKee et al. 2015; Palis 1996, 1997c), and **vulnerabil-ity assessment** (Millsap et al. 1990; Palis and Hammerson 2008; Reece and Noss 2014).

NOMENCLATURAL HISTORY. All flat-woods salamanders were originally described as the single species, *Ambystoma cingula-tum* by Cope (1867). Later, after examining specimens across much of the known range of flatwoods salamanders, Goin (1950) proposed recognizing two distinct subspecies: *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi*, the Reticu-lated Salamander, for populations on the Gulf Coastal Plain from southwestern Georgia and the Panhandle of Florida west to Mobile Bay, and *Ambystoma cingulatum cingulatum*, the

Frosted Salamander, for populations on the Atlantic Coastal Plain, from Duval County, Florida north to southern coastal South Carolina. At that time, flatwoods salamanders were not known from the Gulf Coastal Plain east of the Apalachicola River such that a 105-km gap was thought to exist between the ranges of the two subspecies. Standard reference works followed the proposed subspecies of Goin (1950): Carr and Goin 1955; Chermock 1952; Conant et al. 1956a, 1956b; Conant 1958; Martof 1956; and Schmidt 1953. However, although the common names recommended by Goin (1950) were used by Carr and Goin (1955) and Schmidt (1953), Bishop's Reticulated Salamander was used to refer to *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi* by Chermock (1952), the Western Reticulated Salamander was used for *Ambystoma cingulatum bishopi* and the Eastern Reticulated Salamander was used for *Ambystoma cingulatum cingulatum* by Martof (1956), and the expanded common names, Reticulated Flatwoods Salamander and Frosted Flatwoods Salamander, were used by Conant et al. (1956a, 1956b) and Conant (1958).

Morphological variation across the range of flatwoods salamanders for both adults and larvae were examined by Martof and Gerhardt (1965). Based on their examination and the discovery of flatwoods salamanders on the Gulf Coastal Plain immediately east of the Apalachicola-Flint Rivers, they concluded that subspecies were not warranted. Standard reference guides followed this recommendation, once again recognizing a monotypic *Ambystoma cingulatum* (Ashton 1976; Collins et al. 1978 [and subsequent editions through Collins and Taggart 2002 and Highton et al. 2001]; Conant 1975; Petranksa 1998). Although most of the morphological study conducted by Martof and Gerhardt (1965) was based on adults, it is important to note that larvae were also examined; eight of those larvae were thought to be *Ambystoma cingulatum cingulatum* (Schwartz and Etheridge

1954), but were later determined to be *Ambystoma mabeei* (Hardy and Olmon 1974).

The nomenclature changed again when Pauly et al. (2007) proposed recognizing *Ambystoma bishopi* and *Ambystoma cingulatum* as distinct species based on studies of morphology, mitochondrial DNA sequences, and allozymes, with the Apalachicola-Flint River system, a common biogeographic barrier in the southeastern United States, as the boundary separating the ranges of these two species. This result was supported by later studies of nuclear sequence data (Pauly et al. 2012, J. Williams et al. 2013). Pauly et al. (2007, 2012) recommended the common names Reticulated Flatwoods Salamander for *Ambystoma bishopi* and Frosted Flatwoods Salamander for *Ambystoma cingulatum* (note however an inadvertent error that reverses the common names on p. 424 of Pauly et al. 2007). The recognition of two species of flatwoods salamanders and the recommended common names have been followed in standard references (Collins and Taggart 2009; Highton et al. 2017; R. Powell et al. 2016; Tilley et al. 2008, 2012). The SSAR names lists, however, incorrectly list Pauly et al. (2007) as being published in 2006 (Highton et al. 2017; Tilley et al. 2008, 2012). The common name Reticulated Gerrymander was proposed by Mitchell (2017).

ETYMOLOGY. The specific epithet *bishopi* refers to Sherman C. Bishop (Beolens et al. 2013; Goin 1950).

COMMENT. The two species of flatwoods salamanders, *Ambystoma bishopi* and *Ambystoma cingulatum*, are some of the most imperiled salamanders in the United States (LaClaire 1999, 2008; Palis and Hammerson 2008; United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2009, 2015; Walls and Farmer 2020). Flatwoods salamanders were listed as federally threatened in 1999 (LaClaire 1999). Following taxonomic separation of *Ambystoma bishopi*

and *Ambystoma cingulatum*, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service uplisted *Ambystoma bishopi* to federally endangered (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). *Ambystoma bishopi* are likely extirpated from Alabama (Anonymous 2017; Bailey et al. 2004; Graham et al. 2015; Means 2004; Semlitsch et al. 2017), are currently known from only two breeding wetlands on a single state managed area in southwestern Georgia, and from 25 breeding wetlands distributed among five public properties in western Florida (Katie O'Donnell, personal communication; Walls and Farmer 2020). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service considers all breeding wetlands within 3.2 km (2 mi) of each other to be the same breeding site; thus, at present there are only six known breeding sites (Map).

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