Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Powell, R. 2014. *Cubophis vudii*.

Cubophis vudii (Cope)
Bahamian Racer, Bahamian Brown Racer

Alsophis vudii Cope 1862:74. Type locality, "New Providence Id., Bahamas." Syntypes, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP) 5567, 5569–71, 5598–99, four adults (or subadults) and two juveniles (based on SVL measurements of 53.3 cm, 43.5 cm, 41.3 cm, 24.1 cm, 28.9 cm, and 40.5 cm, respectively; all measurements on preserved specimens), sexes unknown, donated by Dr. H. C. Wood, Jr. on 7 May 1861 (examined by N. Gilmore at the request of the author).

Dromicus angulifer: Boulenger 1894:120 (part).

Alsophis angulifer vudii: Stejneger 1905:337.

Alsophis rudii: Engelmann and Obst 1981:185. *Lapsus*.

Alosophis vudii: Buckner 1993:19. *Lapsus*.

Ocyophis vudii: Zaher et al. 2009:147. See **Phylogenetic Relationships**.

Cubophis vudii: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

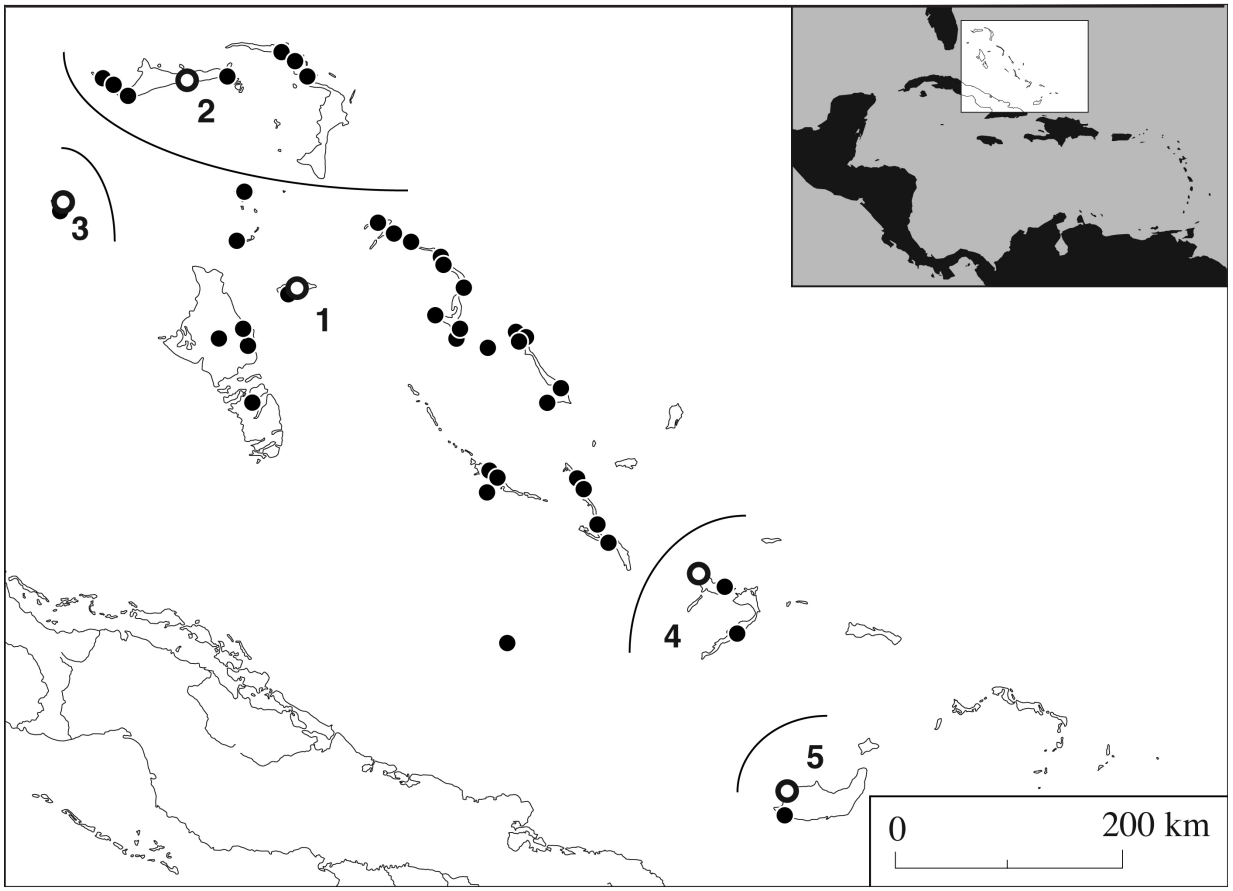
CONTENT. Five subspecies are currently recognized: *Cubophis vudii vudii*, *C. v. aterrimus*, *C. v. picticeps*, *C. v. raineyi*, and *C. v. utowanae*, but see **Remarks**.

DEFINITION. *Cubophis vudii* is a relatively small "racer," reaching a maximum known SVL of 84 cm (Franz and Dodd 1994). Dorsal scales are in 17 rows at midbody; ventrals number 169–181 in males and 159–166 in females, subcaudals 112–120 in males and 101–120 in females. Supralabials usually number 8/8, infralabials usually 10/10, preoculars 1/1, postoculars 2/2, temporals 1 + 2/1 + 2, and loreals 1/1 (Schwartz and Henderson 1991).

Dorsal ground color varies from tan, sandy, taupe, gray, and reddish to reddish brown, dark brown, and black. Variable dorsal patterns include uniform coloration, faint lateral stripes, flecked or suffused with darker color, irregular, diffuse banding, combinations of flecking and banding, or a combination of faint lateral stripes and flecking. Tops of heads can be unpatterned or with a diffuse or sharply defined patterns that might or might not include preorbital stripes but almost always with dark postorbital stripes that terminate on the temporals. In some populations, supralabials are bright orange, with the orange color extending onto the neck. Ventral ground color varies from white, pale yellow, cream, and pinkish tan to reddish brown, reddish, orange, pale orange, orange-gray, and brown, sometimes grading into black posteriorly. Venters range from unpatterned to variably suffused or spotted with tan (with dark borders), dark brown, or black. Undersides of tails are pale yellow with various modifications based on the nature of the ventral pattern. The color of the iris is usually creamy tan above and reddish brown below.

Figure 1. An adult *Cubophis vudii vudii* from Cape Eleuthera, Eleuthera. Photograph by the author.

DIAGNOSIS. *Cubophis vudii* is the only "racer" in the Bahamas. Considering the variability in color, pattern, and ventral/subcaudal scale counts, geographic origin



Map 1. Distribution of *Cubophis vudii*. Circles mark type localities and dots denote other records. Some symbols may represent multiple proximate locations. Guide to subspecies (numbered and demarcated by solid lines): 1. *C. vudii vudii*, 2. *C. v. aterrimus*, 3. *C. v. picticeps*, 4. *C. v. raineyi*, 5. *C. v. utowanae* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson 1991).

is the best way to distinguish this species from its congeners (*C. cantherigerus*, Cuban Archipelago; *C. caymanus*, Grand Cayman Island; *C. fuscicauda*, Cayman Brac; *C. ruttyi*, Little Cayman).

PHYLOGENETIC RELATIONSHIPS.
Cubophis vudii evolved as part of a monophyletic West Indian radiation that probably originated from a single Mid Cenozoic dispersal event from South America (Cadle 1985; Hedges 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Vidal et al. 2000). Until recently, the generic arrangement within that radiation generally followed Maglio (1970). He had included *C. vudii* in the widely distributed genus *Alsophis*, to which it had been assigned originally by Cope (1862), although Boulenger (1894) had placed it in the genus *Dromicus* (which is now in the synonymy of several West Indian alsophiine genera). Zaher et al. (2009), based on hemipenial morphology, resurrected the genus *Ocyophis* Cope for *Hypsirhynchus ater* (type species) and five other species, including *C. vudii*. Hedges et al. (2009) disagreed because that grouping was not supported by an expanded molecular data set. They instead described the new genus *Cubophis* with five species (including *C. vudii*). Grazziotin et al. (2012) recovered a polyphyletic *Ocyophis* (*sensu* Zaher et al. 2009) and supported the recognition of *Cubophis*. Pyron et al. (2013) found *Cubophis* monophyletic, not a sister group to either *Alsophis* or *Hypsirhynchus*.

Figure 2. Syntypes of *Alsophis vudii* Cope 1862 (1863) from New Providence Island, Bahamas. All specimens accessioned at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP). Specimens in first column, top to bottom: ANSP 5567, 5569, 5570; specimens in second column, top to bottom: ANSP 5571, 5598, 5599. Images are not at same scale. Photographs by Ned Gilmore (ANSP).

PUBLISHED DESCRIPTIONS. In addition to the original descriptions in Barbour and Shreve (1935), Conant (1937), and Cope (1862), detailed descriptions are in Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

ILLUSTRATIONS. Color photographs are in Bimini Biological Field Station (2004), Calsbeek and Cox (2010, eating a Brown Anole, *Anolis sagrei*; available in supplementary information), Coborn (1991), EOL (2014), Hedges (2013), Knapp and Pagni (2011, eating an Andros Iguana, *Cyclura cychlura cychlura*; that photograph was reproduced in Lemm and Alberts 2012), Mehrtens (1987), and Uetz and Hallermann (2014). Additional color photographs are on websites of the Bahamas National Trust (2012), Bahamas National Trust Education Office (2009), and The Center for Snake

Conservation (Young 2011). **Black and white photographs** are found in Engelmann and Obst (1981, electrophoretic blood albumin separation) and Franz et al. (1996). **Black and white illustrations** include line drawings of individuals in Attrill et al. (1983) and Gape and Sweeting (2004); Schwartz and Rossman (1976) illustrated a left prefrontal bone.

DISTRIBUTION. *Cubophis vudii* is endemic to and widely distributed in the Bahama Islands, where it occurs in essentially every available habitat (Schwartz and Henderson 1991). Detailed island-by-island lists are in Buckner et al. (2012). The range was illustrated previously in Schwartz and Henderson (1991), Wieg (2009), and Hedges (2013).

FOSSIL RECORD. Late Pleistocene vertebrae from two individuals on New Providence Island were assigned to this species, with the largest individual having an estimated snout-vent length of 880 mm (Pregill 1982). Steadman et al. (2014) reported late Holocene fossils from Abaco Island.

PERTINENT LITERATURE. Relevant citations are listed by topic: **biogeography** (Maglio 1970; Schwartz 1968; Wieg 2009), **diet** (Barbour 1906; Bauer and Russell 1992; Calsbeek and Cox 2010, 2012; Calsbeek et al. 2010; Cox and Calsbeek 2010a, 2010b; Franz and Dodd 1994; Henderson and Bourgeois 1993; Henderson and Crother 1989; Knapp 2005; Knapp and Hines 2006a, 2006b; Knapp and Pagni 2011; Knapp et al. 2004, 2005, 2010; Henderson and Sajdak 1986; Henderson et al. 1987; Meshaka 2001; Olson 2011; Olson et al. 2012), **distributional record** (Crother and Slowinski 1987), **eponym** (Beolens et al. 2011; Shea 2012), **growth** (Franz and Dodd 1994), **meristics and morphology** (Burton 1939; Maglio 1970; Wieg 2009), **natural history (overviews)** (Henderson and Powell 2009;Schwartz and Henderson 1991), **nomenclature** (Follett 1958), **overwater dispersal** (Knapp 2000), **parasites** (Franz 1976), **phylogenetics and systematics** (Cadle 1984; Crother 1999b; Crother and Hillis 1995; Grazziotin et al. 2012; Hedges et al. 2009; Maglio 1970; Vidal et al. 2000; Zaher et al. 2009), **predation** (Mittermeier 2011), and **venom** (Hayes 2008; Weinstein et al. 2011).

The species also has been included in checklists, keys, general works, faunal accounts, indices, and popular works by Attrill et al. (1983), Barbour (1904, 1906, 1914, 1916, 1930, 1935, 1937), Barbour and Loveridge (1929, 1946), Bright (2006), Buckner (1993), Buckner et al. (2012), Buden (1981), Butterfield et al. (1997), Cochran (1934, 1961), Cope (1894a, 1894b), Crother (1999a), Cundall and Irish (2008), de Queiroz and Rodríguez-Robles (2006), Dodd (2003), Dodd and Franz (1996), Frank and Ramus (1995), Franz and Buckner (1998), Franz et al. (1993), Frye (1991, 1994, 1995), Hass et al. (2001), Hayes et al. (2004), Henderson and Binder (1980), Henderson and Powell (2004, 2009), Henderson and Sadjak (1986), Hutchins et al. (2003), James (2008), Kluge (1984), Knapp and Owens (2005), Knapp et al. (2011), Lawing et al. (2012), MacLean et al. (1977), Malnate (1971), Matthews (1959), Mehrtens (1987), Meshaka (2003), Miller (1968), Obst et al. (1984, 1988), Pavlidis (2002), Powell et al. (1996), Pregill (1986), Pyron et al. (2011), Rabb and Hayden (1957), Reinhardt and Lütken (1863), Rodríguez-Robles and Greene (1996, 1999), Rosén (1911), Schmidt (1936), Schwaner and Dessauer (1982), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988, 1991), Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Sheehy (2006), Sokolov (1988), Stejneger (1905), Tipton (2005), Uetz and Hallermann (2014), Wallach (1998), Wallach et al. (2014), Walley (1997), Werner (1929), and Wrobel (2004).

REMARKS. Maglio (1970), based on skeletal morphology, suggested that *C. v. utowanae* might be distinct at the species level, but Wieg (2009) disagreed. Wieg (2009:3), however, suggested that "the current subspecies designations oversimplify the variation

within the species and are not an adequate reflection of variation present among the island populations."

Barbour (1914) stated that *Diadophis rubescens* Cope from New Providence Island, Bahamas (Cope 1885, 1900), belongs to this species (= *A. vudii*). Boulenger (1884) had previously referred this taxon to *Dromicus angulifer*, to which Stejneger (1905) referred as "*Alsophis angulifer* (*vudii*)." The latter (p. 337) also indicated that the single pore on each scale "would preclude its being an *Alsophis*, while on the other hand I can see no good reason why it may not be a form of *Leimadophis* more or less closely allied to *L. andreæ* (Reinhardt and Luetken)."

COMMENT. This species is included in Schedule 4 ("species indigenous to The Bahamas that are not included in Schedule 1 and are believed to be endangered") in Chapter 250A (Wildlife Conservation and Trade Act) of the Statute Law of The Bahamas.

ETYMOLOGY. The specific epithet *vudii* is a patronym honoring "my friend, Dr. H. C. Wood, Jr., author of memoirs on Myriapoda and extinct Cryptogamia" (Cope 1862:74). The subspecific name *aterrimus* is from the Latin *ater* (= black) and *–imus* (= having the quality of), almost certainly pertaining to the dark color of these snakes; *picticeps* is from the Latin (= painted head), presumably in reference to the markings on the heads of these snakes; *raineyi* is a patronym for Mr. Froelich Rainey of the Peabody Museum at Yale University, who served as the archeologist on the 1934 *Utowana* voyage; and *utowanae* commemorates the research yacht *Utowana*.

ADDITIONAL VERNACULAR NAMES. Variations including "Bahamian" or "Bahaman" in combination with "Racer" or "Brown Racer" are not listed. Other English-language vernacular names used in the literature are Brown Runner (Franz and Dodd 1994) and Bimini Racer (not restricted to populations on Bimini Island; EOL 2014; Frank and Ramus 1995; Hayes 2008; Wrobel 2004).

1. *Cubophis vudii vudii* (Cope)

Alsophis vudii Cope 1862:74. See species synonymy.

Diadophis rubescens Cope 1885:403. Type locality, "New Providence, Bahama Islands." Holotype, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP) 3472 (*fide* Barbour 1914), juvenile (sex not determined), donated by Dr. H. C. Chapman (date of collection unknown) (examined by N. Gilmore at the request of the author). See **Remarks**.

Halsophis vudii: Cope 1987(1888):439.

Leimadophis (?) *rubescens*: Stejneger 1905:337. See **Remarks**.

Alsophis vudii vudii: Barbour and Shreve 1935:363 (by inference).

Ocyophis vudii vudii: Zaher et al. 2009:147 (by inference).

Cubophis vudii vudii: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

DIAGNOSIS. This subspecies is characterized by having 159–167 ventrals, 112–117 subcaudals, and a proportional tail length of 0.301–0.319. Dorsal and ventral color and patterns extremely variable, encompassing most of the variations listed in the species description, but usually not dark brown to black above or mostly black below. Tops of heads and dorsum with sharply defined patterns. The former usually includes light-bordered preorbital stripes and almost always include dark postorbital stripes that terminate on the temporals and do not extend onto the neck. Undersides of the tails are pale yellow and range from unpatterned to variously marked with darker pigment.

2. *Cubophis vudii aterrimus* (Barbour and Shreve)

Alsophis vudii aterrimus Barbour and Shreve 1935:362. Type locality, "High

Rock, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 37942, an adult female collected by the "Barbours" on 23 March 1934 (not examined by author).

Ocyophis vudii aterrimus: Zaher et al. 2009:147 (by inference).

Cubophis vudii aterrimus: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

DIAGNOSIS. This subspecies is characterized by having 163 ventrals and ≥ 78 subcaudals (the tail in the holotype was incomplete). The dorsum (except for the head) is black or very dark brown, somewhat lighter anteriorly, and spotted, especially anteriorly, with brown. The head is brown, with lighter spots on the internasals, prefrontals, and to a lesser extent on the supraoculars, and often with a reddish area posteriorly. Dark pre- and postorbital stripes are present, with the latter extending onto the neck. The venter is suffused with dark red anteriorly and black posteriorly, variously marked and spotted with white, which fades near the vent. Subcaudals are black, sometimes spotted with white near the tip of the tail.

3. *Cubophis vudii picticeps* (Conant)

Alsophis vudii picticeps Conant 1937:82. Type locality, "Bimini Islands, Bahamas." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 43150, an adult female collected by Y. H. Olsen in September 1935 (not examined by author).

Ocyophis vudii picticeps: Zaher et al. 2009:147 (by inference).

Cubophis vudii picticeps: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

DIAGNOSIS. This subspecies is characterized by having 120 subcaudals and a proportional tail length of 0.327. Dorsal and ventral color and patterns are exceedingly variable, but usually well defined and not dark brown to black above or mostly black below (as in *C. v. vudii*), but with a dark lateral stripe extending onto the neck as in *C. v. aterrimus*.

4. *Cubophis vudii raineyi* (Barbour and Shreve)

Alsophis vudii raineyi Barbour and Shreve 1935:363. Type locality, "Landrail Point, Crooked Island, Bahamas." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 37929, a subadult or small adult male (SVL = 592 mm) collected by T. Barbour in March 1934 (not examined by author).

Ocyophis vudii raineyi: Zaher et al. 2009:147 (by inference).

Cubophis vudii raineyi: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

DIAGNOSIS. This subspecies is characterized by having 166–176 ventrals and 120 subcaudals (but parts of the tails of the paratypes are missing in many specimens, precluding an accurate assessment; the holotype has 120 subcaudals). Dorsal markings, including those on the head, are indistinct. Heads with little yellow, and little or no reddish coloration is evident on the sides of the neck. The preorbital stripe is narrower than in the other subspecies and is bordered below by a continuous whitish line comprising the lower edges of the preocular, loreal, and nasal (if such a line is present in other subspecies, it is much less clearly defined).

5. *Cubophis vudii utowanae* (Barbour and Shreve)

Alsophis vudii utowanæ Barbour and Shreve 1935:365. Type locality, "Sheep Cay off northwest coast of Great Inagua Island, Bahamas." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 37941, an adult male collected by J. C. Greenway, Jr. in February 1934 (not examined by author).

Ocyophis vudii utowanae: Zaher et al. 2009:147 (by inference).

Cubophis vudii utowanae: Hedges et al. 2009:9.

DIAGNOSIS. This subspecies is characterized by having a high number of ventrals (181 in the holotype) and subcaudals (129 in the holotype, which is greater than any of the other subspecies despite the holotype missing a small part of the tail). Dorsal markings, including those on the head, are indistinct, as in *C. v. rainey*. However, unlike the latter, tops of heads are distinctly reddish posteriorly, with the coloration extending onto the neck, and the preorbital stripe is much wider and without a prominent whitish lower border.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. Aaron M. Bauer, Robert W. Henderson, and John Virata helped locate elusive references. Ned Gilmore provided Figure 2 and information regarding the type specimens in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP).

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Primary editors for this account, Christopher J. Bell and Travis J. LaDuc.
