

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Henderson, R.W. and R. Powell. 1996. *Alsophis sanctaecrucis*.

Alsophis sanctaecrucis Cope
St. Croix Racer

Alsophis sancticrucis: Cope, 1862:76. Type-locality, "St. Croix Id., W. Indies." Syntype, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (ANSP) 5404 (others unlocated), ca. 775 mm SVL, sex undetermined, donated by E.D. Cope, date of collection unknown (not examined by authors).

Dromicus sanctae-crucis: Boulenger, 1894:122. Emendation.
Alsophis sanctaecrucis: Schwartz and Henderson, 1988:206.

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition.** This large (maximum known SVL 1025 mm) colubrid has 191-198 ventrals (females), 140-145 subcaudals (females), 17 dorsal scale rows at midbody, 8/8 supralabials, 10/10 infralabials, 1/1 preoculars, 2/2 postoculars, and 1+2/1+2 or 1+1/1+1 temporals. The cloacal scute (= anal plate) is divided.

The head in preserved specimens is dark with a pale yellow snout and lores. A black mask is outlined by a variable, bold yellow line, which extends to behind the temporals. The dorsal ground color is black. The neck has a series of 15-20 pale, transverse bars, each less than 1 scale in length. The rest of the dorsum has pale flecks or pale anterior scale edges. The venter and subcaudal area are pale, but the margins of the ventrals and subcaudals are marked with black, and dark smudges on the rest of the scales may connect to dark ventral margins.

• **Descriptions.** In addition to that of Cope (1862), descriptions are in Schwartz (1966) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Illustrations.** Schwartz (1966) provided an illustration of the midbody pattern.

• **Distribution.** This species is found on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and may occur on Green Cay (but see Remarks). The

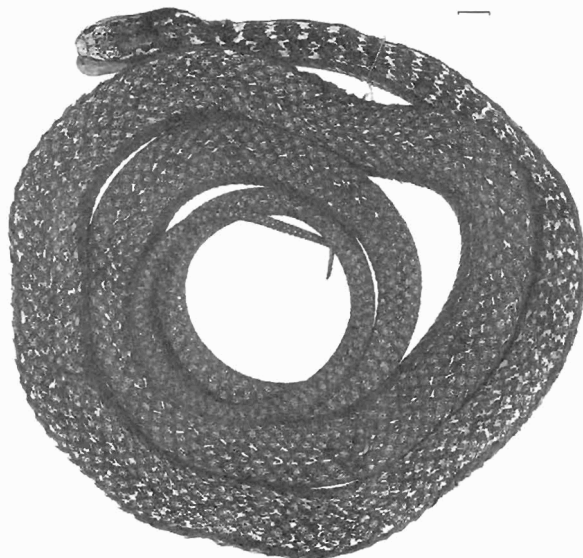
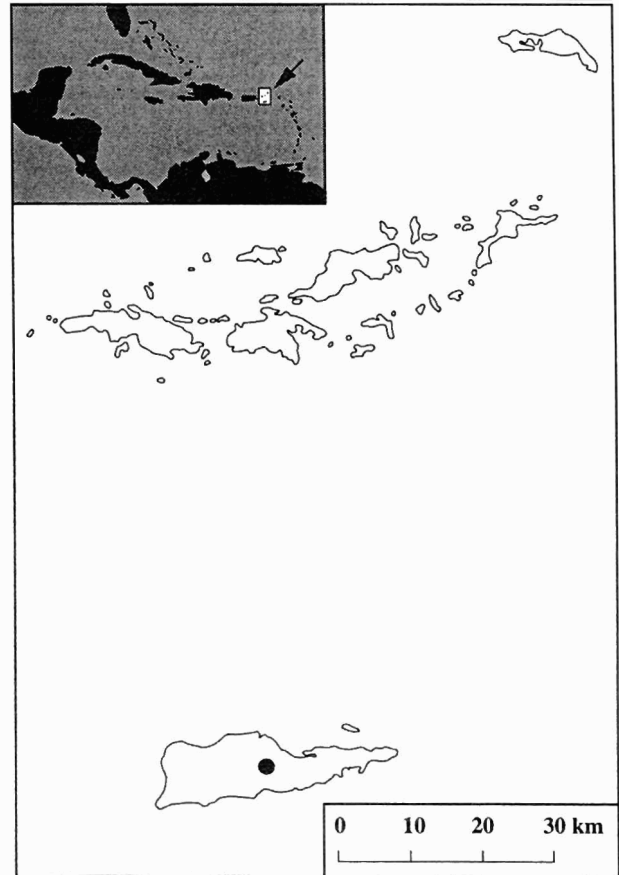


Figure. *Alsophis sanctaecrucis* (ANSP 5542) from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Scale = 1 cm.



Map. Range of *Alsophis sanctaecrucis* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The type-locality is too imprecise to plot.

range has been illustrated in Schwartz (1966) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Maglio (1970) discussed origin, phylogeny, and zoogeography based primarily on osteological and hemipenial morphology. Schwartz and Henderson (1991) presented information on distribution and natural history. Rodríguez-Robles and Greene (1996) included this species in their study of ecological relationships of Greater Antillean snakes.

The species is included in notes, checklists, and guides by Barbour (1914, 1930, 1935, 1937), Schwartz and Thomas (1975), MacLean (1982), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), Henderson and Crother (1989), Powell et al. (1996), and Henderson and Sajdak (1996).

• **Remarks.** Despite claims of evidence of this species on St. Croix (MacLean, 1982) and Green Cay (MacLean et al., 1977), we are dubious of its continued survival. It is a large snake and St. Croix has a dense human population; surely the paths of humans and snakes would have crossed in the past 100 years. Grant (1936 [1937]) and Henderson (1992) discussed the species' history on St. Croix.

We use the common name listed by Frank and Ramus (1995).

• **Etymology.** The name *sanctaerucis* refers to St. Croix, the only island from which this species is known.

• **Acknowledgments.** We thank Ted Daeschler (Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia) for his assistance.

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