

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

HOLMAN, J. ALAN. 1971. *Ophisaurus compressus*.

Ophisaurus compressus Cope
Island glass lizard

Ophisaurus ventralis compressus Cope, 1900:501. Type-locality, "South Island, Georgetown County, South Carolina." Holotype, U. S. Natl. Mus. 21359, a male, collected by E. P. Alexander in October, 1893 (not examined by author). Neill, 1948:155.

Ophisaurus ventralis: Stejneger and Barbour, 1917 (part). See Remarks.

Ophisaurus compressus: McConkey, 1952:1. See Remarks.

• CONTENT. The species is monotypic.

• DEFINITION. *Ophisaurus compressus* is a medium-sized (maximum snout-vent length 171 mm, maximum total length 610 mm), legless, serpentine lizard with a distinct lateral fold. Scales along the lateral fold number 97 or less. The frontonasal is usually divided and the upper labials enter the orbit. The anterior part of the body is marked with white spots, generally one on each scale, and always on the edges rather than in the middle of the scales. The dorsal area of the body is usually unpatterned, but there may be a middorsal stripe of variable intensity. There are no stripes or pigmentation below the lateral fold. Distinct white neck bars are usually present. Caudal vertebrae lack fracture planes and secondary neural spines, and the tail does not appear especially brittle (Etheridge, 1967). The angle between the anterior border of the caudal transverse processes and the longitudinal axis of the centrum is 50 to 65 degrees. In body vertebrae the angle between the posterior border of the neural spine and the longitudinal axis of the centrum is 78 to 91 degrees. Palatine teeth are present. The hemipenis has two ridges, one on each side of the sulcus, that run the entire length of the organ.

• DESCRIPTIONS. Cope (1900) and Neill (1948, 1949) described *O. compressus*. McConkey (1954) provided the most complete description, including redescription of the holotype, analysis of color pattern ontogeny, data on variation in scutellation, and a description of the hemipenis. Osteological descriptions were supplied by Auffenberg (1955) and Etheridge (1961).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Black and white photographs were provided by McConkey (1954: pl. 1) and Carr and Goin (1955: pl. 53, same photograph). Neill (1949: fig. 3) included a photograph showing the general habitus of the species, but none of the diagnostic characters. Cope (1900: fig. 90) provided six line drawings of the head and tail scutellation. Neill (1949: figs. 1-2) gave line drawings of the top and side of the head. A drawing of the snout showing scutellation was provided by McConkey (1954:137), who also illustrated the hemipenis (1954:138). Conant (1958: fig. 23) gave a simple diagram showing head and neck pattern.

• DISTRIBUTION. *Ophisaurus compressus* is found in disjunct populations in scrub associations in coastal areas of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Isolated populations occur in scrub vegetation on old dunes in the interior of Florida. Habitat in Florida has been characterized as pineland and pineland-Everglades ecotone (Duellman and Schwartz, 1958), and rosemary-palmetto scrub (Telford, 1959). In Georgia, the species is abundant under tidal wrack on sandy beaches (Neill, 1948).

• FOSSIL RECORD. Auffenberg (1955) found *O. compressus* in Pleistocene (probably Irvingtonian) deposits of Alachua County, Florida, and Weigel (1962) recorded it from the late Pleistocene of Vero, Florida.

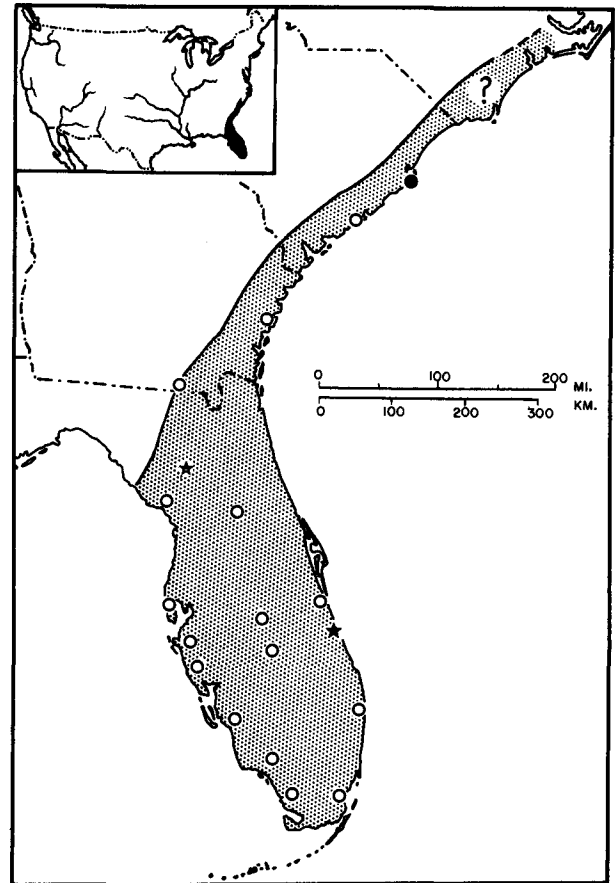
• PERTINENT LITERATURE. Neill's (1948, 1949) accounts include information on variation, taxonomy, and distribution. Geographic distribution was also mentioned by Martof (1963; Sapelo Island, Georgia) and Duellman and Schwartz (1958, southern Florida). Habitat of *O. compressus* in central Florida was discussed by Lee (1968). Geographic relationships and origin of *O. compressus* were discussed by Neill (1957) and Telford (1959). The osteology of caudal vertebrae was treated by Etheridge (1961, 1967). The most comprehensive systematic account is that of McConkey (1954).

• REMARKS. Cope (1900:501) described *Ophisaurus ventralis compressus* from a single South Carolina individual. Stejneger and Barbour in their check lists (1917, et seq.) did not recognize *compressus*, with the result that information on *compressus* published between 1900 and about 1950 is obscured in accounts of the composite "*Ophisaurus ventralis*." Neill (1948, 1949) validated *O. ventralis compressus* Cope. McConkey (1952) elevated *compressus* to species rank, and elaborated his reasons in a later paper (McConkey, 1954).

• ETYMOLOGY. The name *compressus* (Latin, *compressare*) probably refers to the compressed appearance of the desiccated type-specimen (McConkey, 1954:145).

COMMENT

Ophisaurus compressus is the least-known of the three United States species of glass lizards. Since *O. compressus* lacks fracture planes in the caudal vertebrae and therefore lacks a brittle tail, it may represent a distinct lineage among New World *Ophisaurus*.



MAP. The solid symbol marks the type-locality; hollow symbols show other locality records; question mark indicates presumed range; star mark Pleistocene fossil localities.

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