

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

V. RICK MCDANIEL and JOHN P. KARGES. 1983. *Farancia abacura*.

***Farancia abacura* (Holbrook)
Mud snake**

Coluber abacurus Holbrook, 1836:119. Type-locality "South Carolina," restricted to Charleston, South Carolina by Schmidt (1953). Holotype, Acad. Natur. Sci. Philadelphia 5146, female, collected in South Carolina, collector and date unknown (not examined by authors).

Homalopsis Reinwardtii Schlegel, 1837:173, 357-358. Type-locality restricted to the range of *Farancia abacura reinwardtii* by Karges and McDaniel (1982). Lectotype, Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Paris 3399, adult female donated by Teinturier before 1837, collector, date and exact locality unknown (not examined by authors).

Farancia Drummondii Gray, 1842:68. Type-locality "California" (in error), restricted to the range of *Farancia abacura reinwardtii* by Karges and McDaniel (1982). Holotype, British Museum (Natural History) 1946.1.6.42, juvenile female donated by Drummond, collector, date and exact locality unknown (not examined by authors).

Hydrops reinwardtii: Gray, 1842:68.

Helicops abacurus: Holbrook, 1842:111.

Farancia fasciata Gray, 1849:74. Type specimen not designated (see Karges and McDaniel, 1982).

Farancia abacura: Baird and Girard, 1853:123.

Calopisma abacura: Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril, 1854:342.

Hydrops abacura: Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril, 1854:342.

Calopisma Reinwardtii: Jan, 1865:242.

• CONTENT. Two subspecies are currently recognized: *abacura* and *reinwardtii*.

• DEFINITION. *Farancia abacura* is a stout-bodied colubrid, with a total length rarely exceeding 2 m. The subelliptical head (in cross section) is only slightly distinct from the neck. The scales of 19 (rarely 18, 20, or 21) dorsal rows are unreduced and smooth, except for some keeled supranals. The anal plate and subcaudals are usually divided. The tail tip is a sharp, spine-like scale. Head scalation includes single semi-divided nasals, a single internasal, and no preoculars. There are usually 2 postoculars, 7 (6-8) supralabials, and 9 (7-10) infralabials. The lustrous blue-black dorsum, with lateral red bars extending from red (occasionally white) ventral blotches, and the red and black venter with either a sub-rectangular checkerboard pattern or with complete transverse ventral bars, are particularly diagnostic.

• DESCRIPTIONS. Holbrook (1836, 1842), Cope (1900), Smith (1938), Wright and Wright (1957), Smith (1961), Anderson (1965), and Barbour (1971) provided morphological descriptions of adults. Hatchlings and juveniles were described by Conant and Downs (1940), Reynolds and Solberg (1942), Hellman and Telford (1956), Wright and Wright (1957), and Hahn and Wilson (1966); oviducal eggs by Kennedy (1959).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Black and white photographs include: both subspecies (Smith, 1938; Wright and Wright, 1957), *abacura* (Cochran and Goin, 1970), *reinwardtii* (Smith, 1961; Anderson, 1965), intergrade (Mount, 1975), juvenile (Smith, 1938), hemipenes (Burger, 1948). Color plates appear in Holbrook (1842), Conant (1975), and Martof et al. (1980). Line drawings of hemipenes are in Cope (1895) and Wright and Wright (1957); of the head, in Cope (1900) and Schmidt and Davis (1941); of the skull in Boulenger (1894).

• DISTRIBUTION. *Farancia abacura* occurs from southeastern Virginia southward along the Atlantic coastal plain through peninsular Florida and westward across the Gulf states to eastern Texas, and northward to southeastern Oklahoma and in the Mississippi River Valley to southern Illinois and southwestern Indiana. Isolated localities north of the continuous range (approximating the Fall Line) in Alabama and Georgia are represented by the following specimens: Madison Co., Alabama (Univ. Alabama 23787) reported by Mount (1975); Bartow Co., Georgia (Nat. Mus. Natur. Hist. 7293) and DeKalb Co., Georgia (Carnegie Mus. 54763).

• FOSSIL RECORD. In part, because of osteological similarities and past and present sympatry between *F. abacura* and the congeneric *F. erythrogramma*, fossil specimens are difficult to assign to species. Pleistocene and/or Recent materials from archaic deposits in Florida are reported in Gilmore (1938), Brattstrom (1953), Holman (1959), and Auffenberg (1963).

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. Recent taxonomic reviews are provided by Smith (1938) and Karges and McDaniel (1982). Neill (1964) discussed evolution and subspeciation. Comprehensive natural history information is found in Wright and Wright (1957) and Tinkle (1959). Reproductive information is summarized in Fitch (1970), and Riemer (1957) described natural nests. Neill (1951), Mount (1975), and Martof et al. (1980) described habitat preferences. Other important references include: food (Dabney, 1919; Buck, 1946; Tschambers, 1948; Sisk, 1963; Mount, 1975), predators (Auffenberg, 1948; Rossman, 1959), aberrant individuals (Heiser, 1931; Etheridge, 1950; Hellman and Telford, 1956; Hensley, 1959; Neill, 1964), habits (Meade, 1935; Schmidt and Davis, 1941; Davis, 1948; Smith, 1961; Anderson, 1965; Mount, 1975), parasites (Harwood, 1932; Hughes et al., 1941; Hughes et al., 1942), physiology (Reynolds and Solberg, 1942; Goin and Jackson, 1965; Jacob and McDonald, 1976; Bowler, 1977).

• ETYMOLOGY. The specific epithet is probably derived from the Greek *abakos* (an abacus), in reference to the tessellated red and black venter.

1. *Farancia abacura abacura* (Holbrook)

Coluber abacurus: Holbrook, 1836:119. See species synonymy.

Farancia abacura abacura: Smith, 1938:112.

• DEFINITION. Ventral red bars extend almost dorsolaterally on sides, forming 53 or more triangular bars on body.

2. *Farancia abacura reinwardtii* Schlegel

Homalopsis Reinwardtii: Schlegel, 1837:173.

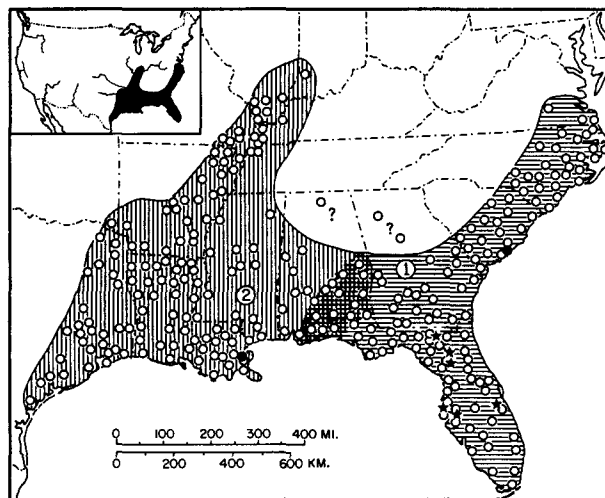
Farancia Drummondii Gray, 1842:68. See species synonymy.

Farancia abacura reinwardtii: Smith, 1938:116.

• DEFINITION. Ventral red bars extend upwards only ventrolaterally, forming 52 or fewer rounded bars on body.

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MAP. Solid circles mark type-localities, open circles indicate other records. Stars indicate Pleistocene and/or Recent fossil records. Question marks indicate records north of the Fall Line (see DISTRIBUTION). Overlapping shading patterns indicate zone of intergradation.

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