

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Powell, R. and R.W. Henderson. 1994. *Ialtris*.

***Ialtris* Cope**

Ialtris Cope, 1862 (1863):73. Type-species (by monotypy): *Ialtris vultuosa* Cope = *Ialtris dorsalis* (Günther).

Jaltris: Cope, 1863:594. Unjustified emendation, but see Remarks.

• **Content.** Three species are recognized: *agyrtes*, *dorsalis*, and *parisbi*.

• **Definition.** *Ialtris* is comprised of moderately large colubrids (maximum known SVL of males to 905 mm, females to 990 mm). Scales are smooth, not elongate, in 19 rows at midbody, and with 2 apical pits. Head scale counts are 1 preocular (not reaching the frontal), usually 2 postoculars (the lower is smaller), usually 7 supralabials (the 3rd and 4th entering the orbit), and 9 infralabials (the 4th and 5th are largest). The cloacal scute (anal plate) is divided, the nasal entire, the loreal single, and the temporals 1+2. Ventrals range from 179-191 (males), 160-192 (females), and subcaudals from 99-115 (males), 98-109 (females), with no substantial sexual dimorphism. The enlarged posterior maxillary teeth bear prominent grooves. The pupil is round.

The dorsal pattern is variable both within and between species. Dorsal ground color ranges from very dark to pale olive or gray, black and yellow, or uniformly medium gray or brown. Lighter colored snakes often are blackish brown posteriorly. Equally variable, the dorsal pattern may consist of single or paired black blotches, often grading anteriorly into the dorsal ground color. The area of gradation may be mottled or speckled. Alternately, the pattern may consist of 39-48 light vertical bars on the sides and tail. The venter is similar in color to the dorsum, although often lighter anteriorly. The venter may be patternless, or with scattered black spots extending onto the throat and chin, or with a series of black blotches often forming a pair of ventral lines. The head is essentially patternless with a distinct supralabial band or with a conspicuous black W, the arms of which originate at the level of the nostrils or eyes and extend onto the nape.

Schwartz and Rossman (1976) provided an extensive examination of regional variations in both scalation and dorsal patterning.

The bilobed hemipenis has a divided sulcus, apical flounces, and proximal spines.

• **Diagnosis.** *Ialtris* can be distinguished from all other Hispaniolan colubrids by the following combination of characters (in order): posterior dorsal scale rows 15 or more (13 or fewer in *Uromacer*), snout rounded in profile (snout acuminate and slightly upturned in *Hypsirhynchus*), dorsal scale rows at midbody 19 (17 or 21 in *Alsophis*), cloacal scute (anal plate) divided (entire in *Darlingtonia*), and supralabials 7 with a divided nasal (supralabials 8 and nasal entire in *Antillopbis*) (Henderson and Schwartz, 1984; Henderson et al., 1984).

• **Descriptions, Illustrations, and Fossil Record.** See species accounts.

• **Distribution.** Endemic to Hispaniola, snakes in this genus are presumably found islandwide and are known also from the satellite islands of Île-à-Vache, Île de la Gonâve, and Île de la Tortue. These snakes are widely distributed yet locally rare. Elevational distribution is from sea level at many localities to about 1000 m in Haiti. Ranges of the three species were illustrated by Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Pertinent Literature.** Maglio (1970) speculated on the origin and phylogeny of *Ialtris* and suggested that the genus may have been derived from *Alsophis*. Schwartz and Rossman (1976) challenged that conclusion in their examinations of interspecific and intergeneric relationships of the genus, reevaluated Maglio's data, and concluded that substantive evidence supporting the derivation from *Alsophis* is lacking. Schwartz (1971) provided a systematic review of the genus, and Schwartz (1980) discussed zoogeography.

Ecological and systematic treatments of species are noted in the species accounts, which also list various keys, lists, checklists, and guides in which the genus and/or species are mentioned.

• **Key to Species.** The number in parentheses following the species name refers to the Catalogue account number.

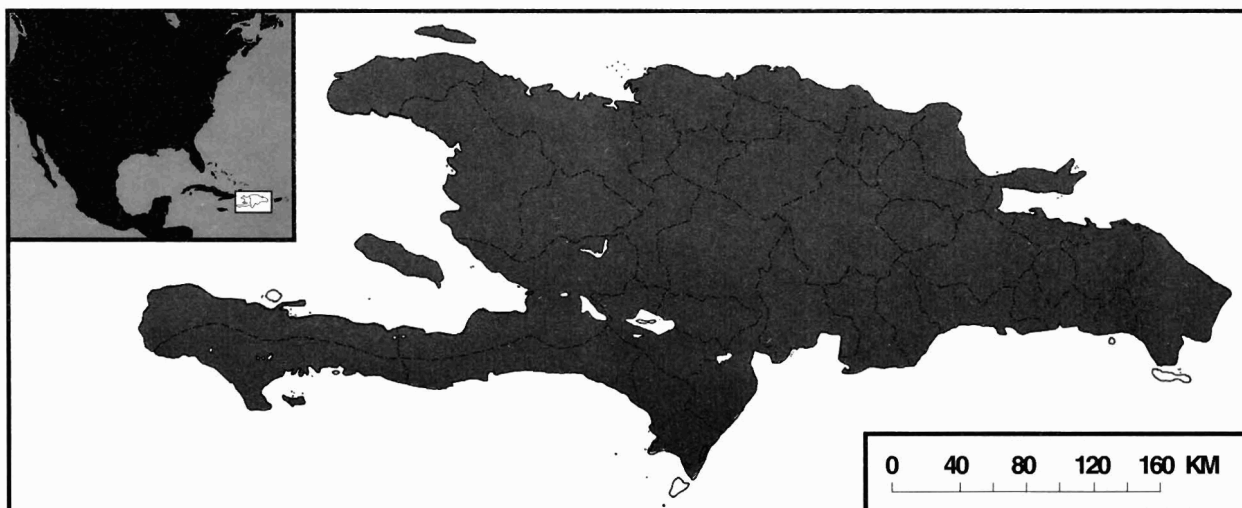
1. a. Light supralabial band absent, head usually with a prominent black W, 179-192 ventrals *I. dorsalis* (592)
- b. Light supralabial band present (incomplete in *I. parisbi*), head lacking a prominent black W, 160-175 ventrals ... 2
2. a. Light supralabial band encircling snout, venter obscurely patterned *I. agyrtes* (591)
- b. Light supralabial band stopping at the region of the eye, venter distinctly patterned *I. parisbi* (593)

• **Remarks.** Cochran (1941) listed Cope's (1879) use of *Jaltris dorsalis* as an emendation, but made no further comment. Smith and Wallach (1993) noted that Cope (1863) used *Jaltris* in the "Errata and Addenda" section of Volume 14 of the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; but the corrigenda were not included in the original publication itself, so *Jaltris* must stand as an unjustified emendation.

• **Etymology.** The derivation of the name *Ialtris* is uncertain and further confused by Cope's (1863) emendation to *Jaltris*. The name as used is masculine.

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