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A correlated ab initio study of linear carbon-chain radicals C_nH
($n = 2-7$)

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A correlated ab initio study of linear carbon-chain radicals C_nH ($n = 2-7$)

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Abstract

Linear carbon-chain radicals C_nH for $n = 2-7$ have been studied with correlation consistent valence and core-valence basis sets and the coupled cluster method RCCSD(T). Equilibrium structures, rotational constants, and dipole moments are reported and compared with available experimental data. The ground state of the even- n series changes from $^2\Sigma^+$ to $^2\Pi$ as the chain is extended. For C_4H , the $^2\Sigma^+$ state was found to lie only 72 cm^{-1} below the $^2\Pi$ state in the estimated complete basis set limit for valence correlation. The C_2H^- and C_3H^- anions have also been characterized.

1. Introduction

The acetylenic linear carbon-chain radicals C_nH for $n = 2$ to 6 have all been detected in the interstellar medium (see citations in Refs. [1–3]), with C_2H particularly plentiful. As reactive precursors in chain-lengthening astrochemical processes, they and the related cyanopolyynes C_nN radicals play important roles in the evolution of molecular species within dense interstellar and circumstellar molecular clouds. The members of the odd- n series all have $^2\Pi$ ground states with characteristically high dipole moments, which make them exceptional candidates for astronomical detection. For the even- n series, there are low-lying states of $^2\Sigma^+$ and $^2\Pi$ symmetries, where the $^2\Sigma^+$ state has a much smaller dipole moment than the $^2\Pi$ state, though large enough to be de-

tected. The ordering of the states unquestionably changes as the length of the chain grows. There is no dispute that the ground state of C_2H (ethynyl) is a $^2\Sigma^+$, while that of C_6H (hexatriynyl) is $^2\Pi$. However, the ground state of the C_4H butadiynyl radical lies near the point where the ordering of the two states reverses. The experimental spectra of C_4H are consistent with a $^2\Sigma^+$ ground state [4–7], but the state separation has not been measured. Calculations by Horn and Botschwina included in Ref. [7] found the $^2\Sigma^+$ state to be more stable, while Natterer and Koch [8] asserted that the ground state is of $^2\Pi$ symmetry. Their work, however, left some points unsettled. Thus one goal of the present study is to reexamine this issue in order to ascertain if the proper ground state assignment has been made for C_4H , as well as to compute accurate values for the state separations of C_2H and C_6H .

Although each of the C_nH species containing up to ten carbon atoms has been the focus of previous ab initio studies, there have been only three efforts to

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characterize all or part of the sequence at the same level of theoretical treatment. Cooper and Murphy [1] reported the results of RHF calculations on the odd- n C_3H , C_5H , and C_7H species using very limited basis sets. Subsequently, Pauzat et al. [3] studied both even- and odd- n radicals from C_2H through $C_{10}H$ at the UHF/3-21G and UHF/SVP levels. Finally, the work by Natterer and Koch [8] mentioned above considered the even- n radicals C_2H , C_4H and C_6H . Only the last paper employed correlated methods. The complete series has not been systematically investigated with correlated methods and robust basis sets. Therefore, the second goal of this work is to study C_2H through C_7H with state-of-the-art ab initio theory and substantial basis sets in order to predict molecular properties including structures, rotational constants, and dipole moments.

Finally, the electron affinities (EA) of C_2H and C_3H , the two C_nH species for which experimental values have been measured, were also investigated in this work. The C_2H^- and C_3H^- anions are of potential interest in astrochemistry due to their stability and the well-known importance of ion–molecule reactions under astrophysical conditions. Neither EA has received much theoretical attention. In particular, C_3H^- has only been studied in one previous effort [9], which utilized a moderately-sized basis set (6-31 + + G * *) and limited recovery of correlation (CID) but did not report the EA. It did, however, provide the first evidence that the geometry of the ground state of C_3H^- is not linear and that there is also an intriguing bound excited state. By using larger basis sets and a correlation method [RCCSD(T)] that performs well at describing EAs, we can improve upon earlier predictions.

2. Methodology

The correlation consistent basis sets (cc-pVXZ) of Dunning and co-workers [10–12] have been utilized in this work. An extensive series of benchmark calculations [13–18] on small systems have amply demonstrated the well behaved convergence associated with the use of these basis sets, which makes it possible to estimate complete basis set (CBS) limits for various properties when sets of at least double through quadruple zeta quality can be used. Even in

cases where the larger sets cannot be used, there are systematic trends that may be exploited in order to improve the accuracy of the ab initio predictions.

The primary correlation method employed in this study was the restricted coupled-cluster method RCCSD(T) [19] as implemented in the MOLPRO suite of codes². An RHF zeroth-order wave function was used. For the species with $^2\Pi$ states, the two degenerate components were state-averaged to provide orbitals with the proper symmetry. In order to evaluate the performance of RCCSD(T) for describing the $^2\Sigma^+ - ^2\Pi$ state separations of the even- n series, internally contracted multireference configuration interaction (CMRCI) calculations [20] were carried out for C_2H using a complete active space self-consistent field (CASSCF) reference function [21]. The multireference Davidson correction (CMRCI + Q) was also applied [22]. Although most of the correlation calculations were restricted to the valence electrons, the structures of C_2H and C_3H were reoptimized with the new cc-pCVTZ set for carbon [12], which includes additional optimized functions located in the core and core–valence region.

Dipole moments at the RCCSD(T) level were determined using the finite field approximation. The basis sets were enlarged to include extra diffuse functions by using the aug-cc-pVXZ sets [11] of double or triple zeta quality.

3. Structures, rotational constants, and dipole moments of C_nH species

Optimized equilibrium bond lengths and the associated rotational constants for both even- and odd- n C_nH radicals determined at the RCCSD(T) level of theory are reported in tblr1. The largest valence sets used for each species were dictated by available computational resources. The cc-pVQZ sets were used for the full geometry optimizations of C_2H and C_3H and for single-point calculations on C_4H . The

² MOLPRO is a package of ab initio programs written by H.-J. Werner and P.J. Knowles with contributions by J. Almlöf, R.D. Amos, M.J.O. Deegan, S.T. Elbert, C. Hampel, W. Meyer, K.A. Peterson, R.M. Pitzer, A.J. Stone and P.R. Taylor.

cc-pVTZ sets could be used for C₅H and single points for C₆H, while only the cc-pVDZ sets could be used for optimizing C₇H.

One benefit in examining a large number of species simultaneously is that trends may emerge that are not apparent when examining individual molecules. Here there are a total of 9 C–H and 30 C–C bonds. The latter vary in character from single to triple bonds. When the basis set is improved from cc-pVDZ to cc-pVTZ quality, both C–H and C–C bond lengths decrease, but the effect is remarkably uniform not just for very different C–C bonds, but also for C–C versus C–H bonds. The average ratio ($r_e(\text{cc-pVTZ})/r_e(\text{cc-pVDZ})$) for 6 C–H bonds is 0.9855, but the high–low range is only 0.9853 to 0.9856. The range of 0.9838 to 0.9871 for 13 C–C bonds is larger, but the average is again 0.9855. The predictive power of this parameter for estimating bond lengths at the cc-pVTZ level may be gauged by

considering an example. For C₃H (²Π), the average parameter of 0.9855 produces bond lengths that yield $B_e = 11.030$ GHz, which is essentially the same as the optimized cc-pVTZ result of 11.028 GHz. If the low and high extremes are used, they lead to respective B_e values of 11.065 and 10.995 GHz, an interval of only 70 MHz. The average scaling parameter was used to estimate bond lengths for single point cc-pVTZ calculations for the two states of C₆H in order to produce a more accurate prediction for the state separation (see Section 4).

For the improvement from cc-pVTZ to cc-pVQZ quality, there are only 3 C–H and 4 C–C bond lengths upon which to base scaling factors. Here the average C–H and C–C scaling factors ($r_e(\text{cc-pVQZ})/r_e(\text{cc-pVTZ})$) are somewhat different, 0.9998 for C–H bonds and 0.9970 for C–C bonds. The variation for C–H bonds is again very small, and the range for C–C bonds is only 0.9967 to 0.9978. The

Table 1
Bond lengths r_e and rotational constants B_e for the ²Σ⁺ and ²Π states of C_{*n*}H (*n* = 2–7) at the RCCSD(T) level of theory

Species	State	Basis set	r_e (Å)						B_e (GHz) calc.	B_0 (GHz) exp.
			H–C ₁	C ₁ –C ₂	C ₂ –C ₃	C ₃ –C ₄	C ₄ –C ₅	C ₅ –C ₆		
C ₂ H	² Σ ⁺	cc-pVDZ	1.0801	1.2348					42.341	
		cc-pVTZ	1.0645	1.2148					43.723	
		cc-pVQZ	1.0644	1.2108					43.972	
		est. CBS limit	1.0644	1.2088					44.096	43.675
	² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0876	1.3154					37.917	
		est. CBS limit	1.0712	1.2888					39.443	
C ₃ H	² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0813	1.2661	1.3670				10.712	
		cc-pVTZ	1.0654	1.2484	1.3468				11.028	
		cc-pVQZ	1.0653	1.2456	1.3426				11.085	
		est. CBS limit	1.0653	1.2443	1.3405				11.112	11.186
		cc-pVDZ	1.0793	1.2334	1.3947	1.2396			4.578	
C ₄ H	² Σ ⁺	cc-pVTZ	1.0635	1.2146	1.3787	1.2200			4.708	
		cc-pVQZ ^a	1.0633	1.2104	1.3744	1.2157			4.738	4.759
		est. CBS limit	1.0645	1.2244	1.3402	1.2942			4.642	
	² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0805	1.2470	1.3621	1.3179			4.484	
		cc-pVTZ	1.0648	1.2286	1.3444	1.2984			4.612	
		cc-pVQZ ^a	1.0645	1.2244	1.3402	1.2942			4.642	
C ₅ H	² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0805	1.2457	1.3567	1.2899	1.3371		2.302	
C ₆ H	² Σ ⁺	cc-pVTZ	1.0648	1.2276	1.3392	1.2727	1.3176		2.366	2.395
		cc-pVDZ	1.0796	1.2349	1.3881	1.2397	1.3880	1.2411	1.339	
	cc-pVQZ ^a	1.0639	1.2171	1.3680	1.2217	1.3679	1.2231	1.379		
² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0804	1.2389	1.3734	1.2598	1.3462	1.3185		1.332	
	cc-pVTZ ^a	1.0648	1.2210	1.3535	1.2415	1.3267	1.2994		1.371	1.386
C ₇ H	² Π	cc-pVDZ	1.0804	1.2395	1.3724	1.2608	1.3357	1.2997	1.3288	0.842

^a Single-point calculation at geometry derived from smaller set(s) (see text).

two average scaling factors were used to estimate bond lengths in order to run the cc-pVQZ calculations for C_4H that appear in Table 1 and play an important role in Section 4.

The effect of including core and core–valence correlation can be approximated by running all-electron calculations at the cc-pCVTZ level and observing the changes in bond lengths with respect to valence-electron calculations at the cc-pVTZ level. The structures of C_2H (both states) and C_3H were therefore reoptimized. The C–H bonds are essentially unchanged, but the C–C bonds decrease by an average of 0.0034 Å, which is consistent with shifts observed in C–C bonds in C_2 [23], C_3 [24] and MgCCH [25].

Rotational constants are the principle point of comparison between the present calculations and experimental or astronomical data. Measured B_0 values are indicated in Table 1, as collected by Pauzat et al. [3]. Passing over C_2H for the moment, the agreement is very good between the RCCSD(T) values (valence correlation, CBS limits or largest basis set result) and the empirical data for species where there is no dispute over the ground state assignment. The computed B_e values for C_3H , C_5H and C_6H fall only 74, 29 and 57 MHz below the measurements, where some adjustment for zero-point vibrational motion and other theoretical approximations should be expected. The estimated cc-pVQZ geometries for C_4H yield B_e values that fall 21 and 117 MHz below the result of Gottlieb et al. [5] for the $^2\Sigma^+$ and $^2\Pi$ states, respectively, which offers tentative support for a $^2\Sigma^+$ ground state. When core–valence contractions of 0.0034 Å per C–C bond are added to the valence CBS limits or best basis set results noted above, the values of B_e become 11.165, 4.763, 2.379 and 1.384 GHz for the ground states of C_3H to C_6H , respectively. The respective errors of 21, 4, 16 and 2 MHz are significantly reduced from the valence-only results.

Theory overestimates B_e for C_2H by more than 400 MHz. The RCCSD(T) results were tested against the CMRCI method. The CMRCI estimated CBS limits for the $^2\Sigma^+$ and $^2\Pi$ states were found to be 44.003 and 39.372 GHz, respectively, which differ from RCCSD(T) by 93 and 71 MHz. The behavior of the RCCSD(T) method is not anomalous. The large difference between theory and experiment may

Table 2
Dipole moments μ_e of the $^2\Sigma^+$ and $^2\Pi$ states of C_nH at the RCCSD(T) level

Species	Basis set		μ_e (D)	
	C	H	$^2\Sigma^+$	$^2\Pi$
C_2H	cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	0.766	2.829
	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	0.772	2.965
	aug-cc-pVDZ	aug-cc-pVDZ	0.774	2.968
	cc-pVTZ	cc-pVTZ	0.774	2.960
	aug-cc-pVTZ	cc-pVTZ	0.771	3.006
	aug-cc-pVTZ	aug-cc-pVTZ	0.769	3.004
C_3H	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	–	3.512
	aug-cc-pVTZ	cc-pVTZ	–	3.551
C_4H	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	0.870	4.404
C_5H	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	–	4.881
C_6H	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	0.979	5.536
C_7H	aug-cc-pVDZ	cc-pVDZ	–	5.945

be due to the vibration effects incorporated in the latter value. It is noteworthy that B_e is very sensitive to the C–C bond length: a change of only 0.001 Å shifts B_e by 60 MHz. In fact, including core and core–valence correlation increases the error by more than 200 MHz.

The RCCSD(T) dipole moments μ_e of C_nH radicals are given in Table 2. It is evident from C_2H that μ_e is significantly changed by adding diffuse functions to C, but not to H. Therefore, this pairing of the aug-cc-pVXZ set for C with the standard cc-pVXZ set for H was used for the larger species as well. Furthermore, the results for C_2H and C_3H indicate that there is little to be gained by improving from double to triple zeta quality sets. The impact is negligible for the $^2\Sigma^+$ state of C_2H and only about 0.05 D for the $^2\Pi$ states of C_2H and C_3H . The correlated RCCSD(T) values are expected to be somewhat more reliable than the RHF or UHF values reported in previous work [1,3]; unfortunately, there are no experimental values for comparison. It is of interest to note that although the dipole moments of both states increase with chain length, the magnitude doubles for the $^2\Pi$ state from C_2H to C_7H . Of note: although a large dipole moment improves the likelihood of detecting a species, it also increases the long range attraction for other molecules and may lead to rapid destruction of the longer C_nH radicals that have not been detected.

4. The ${}^2\Sigma^+ - {}^2\Pi$ state separations of C_2H , C_4H , and C_6H

The determination of accurate excitation energies requires a balanced treatment of the two states with respect to both methodology and the one-electron basis sets employed. In order to judge the expected accuracy of RCCSD(T)/cc-pVXZ calculations for describing the ${}^2\Sigma^+ - {}^2\Pi$ equilibrium state separation T_e of C_nH species, we will begin by benchmarking the behavior of C_2H . Although there have been several attempts to measure this quantity, a high accuracy value has not been determined. Values have ranged from 1600 to 3800 cm^{-1} [25]. The best theoretical work on C_2H has been reported by Kraemer et al. [26] ($T_e = 3650 \text{ cm}^{-1}$), Koures and Harding [27] ($T_e = 3550 \text{ cm}^{-1}$), Thümmel et al. [28] ($T_e = 3300 \text{ cm}^{-1}$) and Perić et al. [29], which should be consulted for citations to other previous ab initio work.

Table 3 lists total energies and T_e for CMRCI, CMRCI + Q, and RCCSD(T) calculations on C_2H with the cc-pVDZ, cc-pVTZ, and cc-pVQZ basis sets and the extrapolation to the CBS limit. Given that it is not unusual to find CMRCI and CMRCI + Q calculations bracketing experiment [30], the intermediate location of the RCCSD(T) result lends credibility to using the method for C_4H and C_6H .

Table 3
Total energies E_e and excitation energy T_e of the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ and ${}^2\Pi$ states of C_2H at the indicated levels of theory

Method	Basis set	$E_e (E_h)$		$T_e (\text{cm}^{-1})$
		${}^2\Sigma^+$	${}^2\Pi$	
CMRCI	cc-pVDZ	-76.39842	-76.38398	3169.2
	cc-pVTZ	-76.46115	-76.44492	3562.1
	cc-pVQZ	-76.47958	-76.46280	3682.8
	est. CBS limit	-76.48987	-76.47277	3753
CMRCI + Q	cc-pVDZ	-76.40374	-76.39059	2886.1
	cc-pVTZ	-76.46961	-76.45517	3169.2
	cc-pVQZ	-76.48892	-76.47405	3263.6
	est. CBS limit	-76.49969	-76.48458	3316
RCCSD(T)	cc-pVDZ	-76.40063	-76.38738	2908.0
	cc-pVTZ	-76.46779	-76.45301	3243.8
	cc-pVQZ	-76.48763	-76.47236	3351.4
	est. CBS limit	-76.49872	-76.48316	3415
	cc-pCVTZ	-76.569561	-76.554047	3404.9

Table 4

Total energies E_e and excitation energy T_e of the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ (even n) and ${}^2\Pi$ states of C_nH at the RCCSD(T) level; a positive value of T_e indicates that the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ state is more stable

Species	Basis set	$E_e (E_h)$		$T_e (\text{cm}^{-1})$
		${}^2\Sigma^+$	${}^2\Pi$	
C_3H	cc-pVDZ	-	-114.35711	
	cc-pVTZ	-	-114.45638	
	cc-pVQZ	-	-114.48575	
	est. CBS limit	-	-114.50216	
C_4H	cc-pVDZ	-152.33985	-152.34105	-263
	cc-pVTZ	-152.47463	-152.47487	-53
	cc-pVQZ ^a	-152.50249	-152.50236	29
	est. CBS limit	-152.51664	-152.51631	72
C_5H	cc-pVDZ	-	-190.30893	
	cc-pVTZ	-	-190.47665	
C_6H	cc-pVDZ	-228.28273	-228.28764	-1078
	cc-pVTZ ^a	-228.48539	-228.48946	-895
C_7H	cc-pVDZ	-	-266.25606	

^a Single point calculation was performed using estimated bond lengths (see text).

The computed total energies for C_3H through C_7H as well as the T_e values for C_4H and C_6H are in Table 4. For C_4H , the most recent correlated calculations for T_e are the combined experimental and theoretical study reported by McCarthy [7] and the work of Natterer and Koch [8]. Since the former study is quite similar to the present one, this discussion will focus on the latter work. Natterer and Koch found the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ state to be more stable at the MCSCF and MRCI levels, but the ${}^2\Pi$ state was more stable at the MRCI + Q, ACPF, and RCCSD(T) levels of theory. For the ACPF and MRCI + Q methods, the ${}^2\Pi$ state was more stable than the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ state by 100 to 240 cm^{-1} , depending upon the basis set used. On the other hand, T_e jumped to -1137 cm^{-1} or more for the RCCSD(T) method. The present calculations are at odds with these results. With the smallest cc-pVDZ sets, the ${}^2\Pi$ state is more stable, but only by 263 cm^{-1} . Improving the basis sets lowers the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ state preferentially, and it becomes more stable at the cc-pVQZ level, though only by 29 cm^{-1} . Extrapolating to the CBS limit stabilizes the ${}^2\Sigma^+$ state to 72 cm^{-1} relative to the ${}^2\Pi$ state. The benchmark calculations on C_2H suggest that, if anything, RCCSD(T) may be underestimating T_e . Unfortunately, Natterer and Koch did not report calcula-

tions on the state separation in C_2H , which would have provided a test on the approach they adopted for C_4H . Aside from using different basis sets, they also ran the correlated calculations at their MCSCF optimized geometries. Their bond lengths are roughly comparable to the present RCCSD(T)/cc-pVTZ values, so this cannot account for the 1000 cm^{-1} difference in T_e at either the cc-pVTZ level.

Natterer and Koch were forced by convergence problems in their RHF and UHF calculations to adopt the quasi-RHF (QRHF) method to generate zeroth-order wave functions. When MOLPRO was used to run an RCCSD(T) calculation based on an RHF wave function with the [4321/321] ANO basis set (yielding respective total energies for the $^2\Pi$ and $^2\Sigma^+$ states of -152.47037 and $-152.46864 E_h$), the $^2\Pi$ state was found to be only 378 cm^{-1} more stable than the $^2\Sigma^+$ state, rather than the 1137 cm^{-1} reported in Ref. [8]. The new value is more consistent with the present results and implies that the QRHF wave function introduces a large amount of error. Also, the MRCI and ACPF results noted above are closer to the RHF-based value of T_e .

While the cc-pVTZ and [4321/321] ANO sets yield similar total energies, their respective T_e values differ by more than 300 cm^{-1} . In order to test the accuracy of the ANO sets for describing state separations, the [4321/321] ANO contraction was used to determine T_e for C_2H (again at the cc-pVTZ geometry). A value of 2785 cm^{-1} was obtained (with total energies for the $^2\Sigma^+$ and $^2\Pi$ states of -76.46284 and $-76.45015 E_h$), which is about 460 cm^{-1} below the cc-pVTZ result and in much poorer agreement with typical theoretical values. The trend for both C_2H and C_4H indicates that the [4321/321] ANO set performs less accurately than the cc-pVDZ set. The ANO sets are also much more computationally demanding. The present conclusion that the ground state of C_4H is a $^2\Sigma^+$ state is reinforced, although clearly the $^2\Pi$ state must lie remarkably close.

For C_6H , previous correlated efforts include the CI work of Pauzat and Ellinger [2], where the $^2\Pi$ state was found to be more stable than the $^2\Sigma^+$ state by 6385 and 2379 cm^{-1} in first-order (FOCI) and limited second-order (SOCl) calculations, respectively. Natterer and Koch [8] reported a state separation of 2175 cm^{-1} at the QRHF + CCSD(T)/

[4321/321] level. The best present value, using the cc-pVTZ sets and estimated geometries, places the $^2\Pi$ state 895 cm^{-1} below the $^2\Sigma^+$ state.

Core and core–valence correlation impact excitation energies as well as bond lengths. Table 3 shows that the $^2\Sigma^+$ state of C_2H is stabilized by an additional 160 cm^{-1} with respect to the valence-electron triple zeta result when the cc-pCVTZ sets were used in all-electron calculations. If the trend observed in CH_2 [12] carries over to C_2H , this correction may be too small by about 50% with respect to the CVXZ limit. The shift in C_2H suggests that the state separation in C_4H may be somewhat larger than the $< 100\text{ cm}^{-1}$ valence CBS limit, perhaps reaching the $200\text{--}300\text{ cm}^{-1}$ range.

5. Electron affinities of C_2H and C_3H

The electron affinities of C_2H and C_3H were computed at the RCCSD(T) level by optimizing C_2H^- and C_3H^- with the aug-cc-pVTZ set on C and the cc-pVTZ set on H, which required reoptimizing the neutrals with the same sets. Geometries, energies and EAs are presented in Table 5. This strategy was sufficient to reproduce the EA of C_2H to within the experimental uncertainty ($2.969 \pm 0.006\text{ eV}$, [31]), although the inclusion of a partial zero-

Table 5
Structures (r_e , Å; angle, deg) and total energies (E_e , E_0 , E_h) of C_2H , C_3H and their anions and adiabatic electron affinities (EA, eV) at the RCCSD(T)/(C: aug-cc-pVTZ; H: cc-pVTZ) level; experimental values are C_2H (2.969 ± 0.006) and C_3H (1.858 ± 0.023)

Species	Quantity	Neutral	Anion
C_2H	r_e (C_1-C_2)	1.2152	1.2549
	r_e (C_2-H)	1.0658	1.0726
	E_e	-76.47122	-76.58015
	(EA) _e	2.964	
	E_0	-76.45727	-76.56592
	(EA) ₀	2.957	
C_3H	r_e (C_1-C_2)	1.3468	1.2897
	r_e (C_2-C_3)	1.2484	1.3605
	r_e (C_3-H)	1.0654	1.1142
	\angle ($C_1-C_2-C_3$)	180	174.73
	\angle (C_2-C_3-H)	180	-108.25
	E_e	-114.46241	-114.52949
	(EA) _e	1.825	

point correction (omitting the frequencies associated with the Renner–Teller split bending modes) increases the error slightly, to 0.012 eV. Values of 3.15 and 2.96 eV, computed by Lima and Canuto [32] and Natterer and Koch [8], respectively, have previously been reported. Both C–C and C–H bonds length increase slightly in the anion, a $^1\Sigma^+$ state, but the effect is larger (≈ 0.04 Å) for the C–C bond.

While C_2H^- is linear, C_3H^- is not. The ground state is of $^1A'$ symmetry, and there is a low-lying, bound excited state of $^3A''$ symmetry. For the $^1A'$ state, the C–C–C angle remains quasilinear ($\approx 175^\circ$), but the C–C–H angle has decreased to 141.2° . The C–C–C–H dihedral angle is 180° , making the terminal C and H *trans* with respect to the central C pair. The two C–C bond lengths change significantly with respect to the neutral. The computed equilibrium EA is 1.825 eV, which falls just slightly below the experimental range of (1.858 ± 0.023) of Oakes and Ellison [33]. Our result appears to be the first theoretical prediction of this quantity. The $^3A''$ state ($E_e = -114.52730 E_h$) lies only 481 cm^{-1} above the ground state with the triple zeta sets, but its geometry is somewhat different: $r_e(C_1-C_2) = 1.309$ Å, $r_e(C_2-C_3) = 1.312$ Å, $r_e(C_3-H) = 1.076$ Å, $\angle(C-C-C) = 174.66^\circ$ and $\angle(C-C-H) = 141.20^\circ$. Dua et al. [9] reported structures optimized at the HF level for both states that are similar to the RCCSD(T) ones, but they found the $^3A''$ state to be slightly nonplanar. They also reported the triplet state to be lower in energy, by 7050 cm^{-1} at the HF/6-311 + + G** level and by 1236 cm^{-1} at the CID/6-311 + + G**//HF/6-311 + + G** level.

6. Conclusions

The RCCSD(T) method and correlation consistent basis sets were used to determine the structures and other properties of C_nH radicals for $n = 2-7$. In general, predicted valence-correlation values of the rotational constants B_e were within 100 MHz of experimental or astronomical B_0 values; adding a correction for core and core–valence contraction improves the agreement substantially. The predicted $^2\Sigma^+ - ^2\Pi$ state separation of C_2H at the RCCSD(T) level of theory is in good agreement with values determined using multireference methods and with

other theoretical results. In the estimated complete basis set limit, the ground states of C_2H and C_4H were found to be of $^2\Sigma^+$ symmetry and lie 3415 and 72 cm^{-1} below their respective $^2\Pi$ states. The $^2\Pi$ ground state of C_6H lies 895 cm^{-1} below the $^2\Sigma^+$ state (RCCSD(T)/cc-pVTZ).

The electron affinities of C_2H and C_3H were determined to be 2.964 and 1.825 eV, respectively, which agree well with the experimental values of 2.969 ± 0.006 and 1.858 ± 0.023 eV. Although C_2H^- is linear, C_3H^- is not: its ground state is a planar $^1A'$ state. A $^3A''$ state lies only 481 cm^{-1} higher in energy.

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