

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ARADE02080

Data Sensitivity: YES

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Crotalus pricei*
COMMON NAME: Twin-spotted Rattlesnake
SYNONYMS: *C. triseriata pricei*
FAMILY: Serpentes:Viperidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Van Denburgh, 1895. Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci. Ser. 2
5:856.

TYPE LOCALITY: Huachuca Mountains, Cochise County, Arizona.

TYPE SPECIMEN:

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: 30 Species in genus, two subspecies in *C. pricei*: only *C. p. pricei* in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: A small bodied pitviper 12-26" (30-65cm) in total length excluding the rattle, the larger snakes are found in populations without hunting pressure. Ground color varies from blue-gray, pale gray, or gray-brown with two rows of dark blotches along the back. There is a series of 50-55 pairs of brown spots usually narrowly bordered with dark brown or black and again, partially by a narrow edge of white. These dorsal blotches merge into one row near the tail. This snake has 3 rows of laterally alternating brown spots (Stebbins 1966:193).

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: *Crotalus pricei* shares some of the same habitat with *C. Lepidus klauberi* (Banded Rock Rattlesnake). Where *C. pricei* has a dark stripe on each side of the face starting behind the eye, *C. l. klauberi* does not. The rattle nearest to the tail is orange on *C. pricei* but not in *C. l. klauberi*.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color drawing (Stebbins 1966: plate 39)
Black and white photo (Fowlie 1965:147)
Color photo (Behler and King 1979: plate 637)
Color photo (Lowe et al 1986:76)
Color drawing (Stebbins 1985: plate 45)

TOTAL RANGE: Arizona represents the most northerly portion of the species range. Southeast Arizona southerly in the Sierra Madre Occidental south to Durango and Northern Nayarit and disjunct to Sierra Madre Oriental in Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: This snake is found in the “sky island” mountain ranges in the southeastern portion of the state. Pinaleno, Santa Rita, Huachuca and Chiricahua Mountains of southeast Arizona.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Usually mild-tempered snake that is well camouflaged. Hidden individuals can sometimes be made to rattle by tossing rocks into the talus. The sound is weak, resembling a locust or beetle buzzing among leaves. When frightened, they are quick to escape and continue to rattle as they rapidly seek cover deeper in rocks where they are most often encountered. It is primarily a diurnal ground-dweller and can be active at any point during the year. During the winter months activity is limited to basking near its hibernaculum on unseasonably warm days. Its activity is restricted by cool night temperatures and thundershowers, but it may be abroad during warm rains. Search well-lit rocky slopes on sunny mornings when the snakes are basking or hunting. This snake has one of the lowest venom yields of all rattlesnakes. The few studies that have been conducted indicate show that this species has a relatively short fang size and low venom yield and that their venom is considered to be moderate to very low toxicity.

REPRODUCTION: Snakes are gravid primarily in July and August and mating occurs in summer. 3-8 (average 5) young are born live per brood between July and August. Lengths of offspring average from 6.25- 8.25 (16-21 cm)

FOOD HABITS: Lizards (*Sceloporus jarrovi* mainly) small rodents, and birds. Cannibalism has been observed in this species.

HABITAT: In Arizona this species is primarily a mountain rock dweller that can be found in rock outcrops, rocky prominences of high peaks, and boulder rock-slides on south-facing slopes but has been commonly observed in flat open forested areas.

ELEVATION: 6,000 ft (1828.8 m) to over 11,000 ft. (3352.8 m).

PLANT COMMUNITY: Found in Petran Subalpine Conifer Forest and Petran Montane Conifer Forest. High mountain hardwoods may be a part the forest canopy, and might include species such as maples, box elders, cherry's, alders, aspen, Gambel oak, New Mexican locust and other. They are typically found among Mexican pine-oak woodland, ponderosa pine, white fir, Douglas fir and spruce forest habitats

POPULATION TRENDS: No trends documented in Arizona although it does not appear to be as common today as it was considered to be decades ago in the best known collecting localities.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:

None.

STATE STATUS:

1A (AGFD SWAP 2012)

OTHER STATUS:

Forest Service Sensitive Species
(USDA FS Region 3 2007,
2013)

PR, Determined Subject to Special
Protection in Mexico (NORMA
Oficial Mexicana NOM-059-
SEMARNAT-2010)

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: This species may be susceptible to an active pet trade and habitat disturbance, including possible impacts from some mining developments.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Closed season.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

- C.R. Schwalbe, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- T.R. Van Devender, Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum, Tucson.
- J.R. McCranie, 10770 SW 164 ST, Miami, Florida.
- G. Helseth, Phoenix, AZ.
- S. Hale, Phoenix, AZ.
- B. Martin, Tucson, AZ.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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