



Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

THE REPTILE REVIEW



Lisa Powers, Editor
2nd Edition

Tennessee Snakes

TWRA Web site:
www.tnwildlife.org

Headline News

State Identifies Reptilian Residents

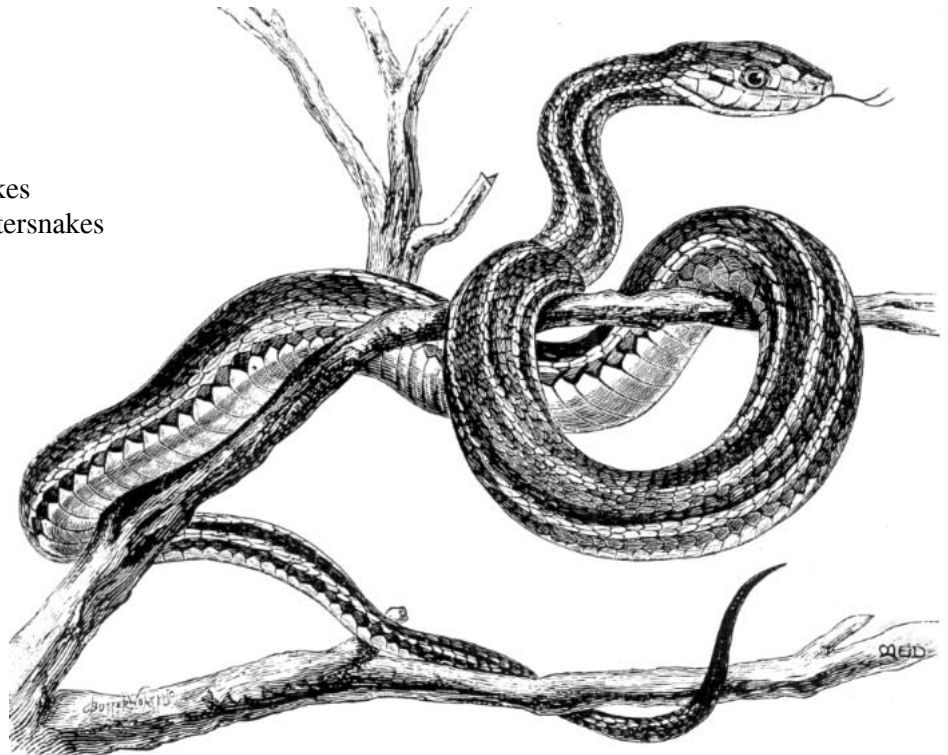
A source with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has identified some slinky residents in our community. These residents have been described as extremely beneficial and should be given plenty of respect and lots of appreciation for the jobs they do. Spotted residing and working in Tennessee are:

Nonvenomous:

- Black & Speckled Kingsnakes
- Scarlet Kingsnakes
- Mole & Prairie Kingsnakes
- Eastern & Red Milksnakes
- Gray Ratsnakes
- Red Cornsnakes
- Broad-banded Watersnakes
- Midland & Common Watersnakes
- Mississippi Green Watersnakes
- Northern Diamond-backed Watersnakes
- Copper-bellied & Yellow-bellied Watersnakes
- Queen Snakes
- Common Gartersnakes
- Western Mud Snakes
- Eastern & Western Ribbonsnakes
- Rough Earthsnakes
- Eastern Coachwhips
- Northern & Southern Black Racers
- Northern Pinesnakes
- Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes
- Northern Scarlet Snakes
- Northern Rough Greensnakes
- Eastern & Midwestern Wormsnakes
- Midland & Northern Brownsnakes
- Northern Red-bellied Snakes
- Southeastern Crowned Snakes
- Eastern & Western Smooth Earthsnakes
- Mississippi & Northern Ring-necked Snakes

Venomous:

- Northern & Southern Copperheads
- Timber Rattlesnakes
- Western Cottonmouths
- Western Pigmy Rattlesnakes



Common Gartersnake

Law Enforcement Report

Fraud Rampant Among Snakes

Biologists report that many nonvenomous snakes are posing as venomous snakes when confronted by humans. Tricks used include the rattling of tails in leaves, spreading the jaws to appear venomous, having coloration and patterns that closely mimic venomous species, using an S-shaped strike stance, and rearing up and hissing loudly. **DO NOT BE FOOLED!** Some of the snakes seen employing these tactics are:

- Black Racers
- Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes
- Gray Ratsnakes
- Eastern Milksnakes
- Kingsnakes (most species)
- Midland & Northern Watersnakes
- Northern Diamond-backed Watersnakes
- Northern Pinesnakes
- Red Cornsnakes



State Law Protects Scaly Residents

Please help the TWRA protect our native snakes. Do not remove snakes from the wild or release captive snakes into the wild. Captive snakes often do not survive in the wild and can introduce harmful diseases or parasites into native snake populations.

In Tennessee, it is illegal to harm, kill, remove from the wild, or possess native snakes taken from the wild without the proper permits.

The Reptile Review

Fine Dining

Wilderness Cafe Has Big Menu

Authorities with the TWRA report local snakes have been observed eating the menu fare listed below:

fish, crayfish, carrion, earthworms, slugs, soft-bodied insects, salamanders, frogs and toads, amphiumas, mice, rats, voles, rabbits, squirrels, spiders, birds and bird eggs, lizards and lizard eggs, centipedes, snakes (including those of venomous species) and snake eggs.

Note: This is only a partial list of the animals that snakes prey upon and help control. Many snakes themselves end up as the prey of other animals and are an important part of the food web.

Sports News

Local Athletes Win Awards

Here are a few facts about some of Tennessee's snakes:

Category 1: Venomous Snakes

Most Venomous – Timber Rattlesnake

Rarest Venomous – Pigmy Rattlesnake

Most Common Venomous – Copperhead

Largest Venomous – Timber Rattlesnake, average 36-60 inches

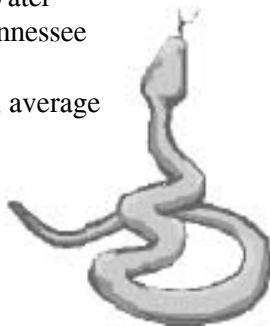
Smallest Venomous – Pigmy Rattlesnake, average 15-20 inches

Category 2: Nonvenomous Snakes

Smallest Range – Copperbelly Water Snake, only found in three Tennessee counties

Largest Snake – Black Ratsnake, average 42-72 inches

Smallest Snake – Smooth Earth Snake & Rough Earth Snake, both average 7-10 inches



Wilderness Cafe



L. Powers © 2000

Birth Announcements

Unlike humans, snakes have several options for incubating their young. Snakes that lay eggs are called *oviparous*. Most of Tennessee's snakes are oviparous. Some examples are the ratsnakes and kingsnakes. But a few of our snakes retain the soft membranous egg within the body until hatching occurs and the young are expelled through the cloaca. Snakes that practice this method are called *ovoviviparous*. Copperheads, cottonmouths, rattlesnakes and watersnakes are ovoviviparous species. The eastern gartersnake is Tennessee's only snake that is truly *viviparous*, with placental development in the egg and giving live birth to its young. In viviparity, there is an exchange of fluid material between the embryo and the mother.

Obituaries

Tennessee Snakes Could Face Extirpation*

Snakes face a variety of threats to their daily existence. The greatest threats are habitat loss and destruction. Other threats include collection for the pet trade and wrongful death by fearful humans. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has placed the following snakes on its Threatened and Endangered Species List:

Western Pigmy Rattlesnake – Threatened

Northern Pinesnake – Threatened

Northern Copper-bellied Watersnake – Special Concern

Mississippi Green Watersnake – In Need of Management

*Extirpation: to eliminate; wipe out



For more information, visit www.tnwildlife.org.



Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is available to all persons without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or military service. TWRA is also an equal opportunity/equal access employer. Questions should be directed to TWRA, Human Resources Office, P.O. Box 40747, Nashville, TN 37204, (615) 781-6594 (TDD 781-6691), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Human Resources, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA 22203. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Authorization No. 328625, 10,000 copies, July, 2008. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$.03 per copy.