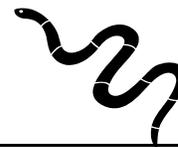




The Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Division

SNAKES OF GEORGIA FACT SHEET



Snakes are an important component of Georgia’s ecosystem because of their major role as both a predator and prey. Snakes are economically beneficial because they eat rats, mice and other animals deemed to be pests. Some snakes have been used as bioindicators to assess pollutants in terrestrial or aquatic ecosystems. Unfortunately, many species of snakes are declining as a result of human activities. Thankfully, of the 41 snake species that occur in Georgia, only one – the eastern indigo snake - is considered legally threatened. All snakes, except venomous ones, are protected in the state of Georgia.

Non-Venomous Snakes of Georgia:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Eastern Green Water Snake | Brown Water Snake |
| Red or Yellow-Bellied Water Snake | Banded Water Snake |
| Northern Water Snake | Queen Snake |
| Striped Crayfish Snake | Glossy Crayfish Snake |
| Black Swamp Snake | Brown Snake |
| Red-Bellied Snake | Eastern Ribbon Snake |
| Common Garter Snake | Smooth Earth Snake |
| Rough Earth Snake | Eastern Hognose Snake |
| Southern Hognose Snake | Ringneck Snake |
| Eastern Worm Snake | Pine Woods Snake |
| Mud Snake | Rainbow Snake |
| Racer | Coachwhip |
| Rough Green Snake | Corn Snake |
| Rat Snake | Pine Snake |
| Eastern/Black Kingsnake | Mole Kingsnake |
| Scarlet Kingsnake/Milk Snake | Scarlet Snake |
| Southeastern Crowned Snake | Eastern Indigo Snake |
| Central Florida Crowned Snake | |

Venomous Snakes of Georgia:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Copperhead | Pigmy Rattlesnake |
| Canebrake or Timber Rattlesnake | Cottonmouth |
| Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake | Eastern Coral Snake |

BIOLOGY

Snakes are reptiles that are characterized by elongated bodies and a lack of limbs. They are closely related to lizards, but do not have external ears or eyelids. The skin of a snake is dry and scaly, not slimy. Snakes have a forked tongue that is used to “sample” microscopic particles from the air. These particles are transferred to the Jacobson’s organ that allows the snake to taste the air in order to determine its surroundings. Snakes are “cold-blooded,” meaning they rely only on their surroundings for body heat. As a result, snakes cannot tolerate extreme temperatures. Therefore, when it is cold or extremely hot outside, snakes are relatively inactive.



HABITAT

Snakes can be found in most backyards, parks and woodlands throughout Georgia. Many species spend most of their time underground or under cover. Active gardeners occasionally see small ringneck, worm, red-bellied, brown, earth and crowned snakes. None of these species are much bigger than a large earthworm and do not bite. Several large snake species also frequent backyards, especially corn and rat snakes, as well as racers. These larger snakes will eat mice, rats and occasionally birds and their eggs. Snakes often take refuge in piles of brush or firewood. Water snakes, especially banded water snakes, are occasionally found in areas bordering streams, swamps or farm ponds.

LIVING WITH SNAKES

Occasionally, snakes searching for rodents or eggs will take refuge in barns, crawl spaces underneath homes or sometimes inside a home. The best way to prevent a snake from entering a home or other building is to make the home inaccessible to both snakes and snake food (rodents). Closing up all possible entrance locations is a must. Next, a rodent control program should be put in place to eliminate a snake’s food source.

If a snake already is in your home or other undesirable area, glueboards purchased at almost any hardware, landscaping, home improvement or department stores are quite effective in trapping the snake for removal. As a bonus, unwanted rodents also may be caught. Simply staple or nail a 6”x12” glueboard to a 16”x24” piece of plywood. Cut holes in the wood and attach a rope so the board easily can be removed without getting too close to the snake. Snakes usually travel next to walls so board placement against a wall is preferred. When trapping any animal, always minimize the chances of catching non-targets like birds, rabbits, squirrels or pets. Keep all pets away from the trap and if you are trapping outside your home, cover the glueboards with a board or box to prevent birds from landing directly on it. Check the glueboards at least once a day to minimize the amount of time a snake is trapped.

Once the snake has been transported to a safe location they easily can be released from the glueboards by pouring cooking oil over them. The oil breaks down the glue and the snake can gently be removed with a stick or pole. Other than some glue residue that will be lost the next time the snake sheds, the snake will be unharmed.

Additional Snake Related DNR Publications:

- Snakes of Georgia and South Carolina
- Is it a Water Moccasin?

For more information, contact a WRD Game Management Office or call (770) 918-6416.