Black Hills Red-bellied Snake - Storeria occipitomaculata pahasapae

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU NatureServe: G5T4 S1

Population Status: Greatly restricted distribution, population numbers are unknown.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: severely limited habitat. Species found in moist areas along riparian corridors. Degree of habitat loss is unknown.

Comment: Little is known regarding the status of this species. Habitat and range are greatly restricted within the state, but threats to this species are unknown.

Introduction

The Black Hills Red-bellied Snake can be found in Crook and Weston Counties of the Black Hills (Baxter and Stone 1985). The active period for this snake is likely May through September. Breeding may occur in the spring, summer, or fall (Ernst and Ernst 2003). After late summer or fall mating, sperm may be stored in the oviducts over the winter. This species is ovoviviparous and bear their young live. One to thirteen neonates are typically born in late summer (Baxter and Stone 1985). Prey items for this species include slugs, earthworms, and other small invertebrates. Black Hills Red-bellied Snakes are often described as secretive and spend most of their time in moist environments under cover. These snakes overwinter below the frost line in soil, gravel, ant mounds, rock crevices, and mammal burrows (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Habitat

In Wyoming, the Black Hills Red-bellied Snake inhabits woodland communities of the Black Hills (Baxter and Stone 1985). They may occur in moist woodlands, open fields, bogs, or along the borders of marshes and swamps (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Some populations may also be observed in dry conditions.

Problems

- Little is known about this species in Wyoming. Lack of information regarding populations, distribution, and habitat associations directly impact the ability to manage for this species.
- Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.
- This species has restricted habitats in the state, therefore disturbance to these areas may affect the range of the species in Wyoming.

Conservation Actions

- Develop management recommendations based on resulting data.
- Survey and monitor population distribution, status, and habitat assocations.

Monitoring/Research

Conduct baseline surveys to gain better understanding of species distribution within the state.

Recent Developments

Reptiles have received increased attention within Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program.

References

Baxter, G.T. and M.D. Stone. 1985. Amphibians and Reptiles of Wyoming. Second Edition. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 137pp.

Ernst, C.H., and E.M. Ernst. 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Books, Washington and London. 668pp.

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