

## Northern Rubber Boa - *Charina bottae*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G5 S2

Population Status: Vulnerable. Restricted in numbers and distribution, extirpation is not eminent.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: the low elevation forested habitat for this species is limited, but loss is not increasing significantly.

Comment: Changed from NSS2 in 2005 due solely to changes in the matrix.

### Introduction

In Wyoming, Rubber Boas inhabit the northwest corner of the state, south into Star Valley and east to the Big Horn Mountains. A secretive and mostly nocturnal snake, it often spends its time beneath logs, flat rocks, tree bark, and in stumps and rodent burrows (Baxter and Stone 1985, Ernst and Ernst 2003). They are usually active from dusk and throughout the night, from April to November (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Rubber Boas may only emerge nocturnally once every 8 days (Dorcas and Peterson 1998). They hibernate during the winter in talus slopes, deep rock crevices, rodent burrows, and logs (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Rubber Boas can swim, burrow, and climb well (Stebbins 2003). They feed on small mammals (shrews, mice, voles, moles, and pocket gophers), lizards, birds, salamanders, and reptile eggs (Baxter and Stone 1985, Ernst and Ernst 2003, Stebbins 2003). Rubber Boas bear 1 to 10 live young, born from August to November, and may live up to 40 or 50 years in the field (Ernst and Ernst 2003, Stebbins 2003). They are highly prized by the pet industry due to their calm nature.

### Habitat

Rubber Boas are found in the foothills and lower montane zone of Wyoming and prefer areas with nearby water and an abundance of flat rocks, logs, stumps, and boulders (Baxter and Stone 1985, Ernst and Ernst 2003). They are not found in the more arid regions of the state (Baxter and Stone 1985).

### Problems

- h Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.
- h In some parts of the country, this species has been the target of collection for the pet trade.

### Conservation Actions

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

### Monitoring/Research

Conduct baseline surveys to gain a better understanding of Rubber Boa distribution in Wyoming.

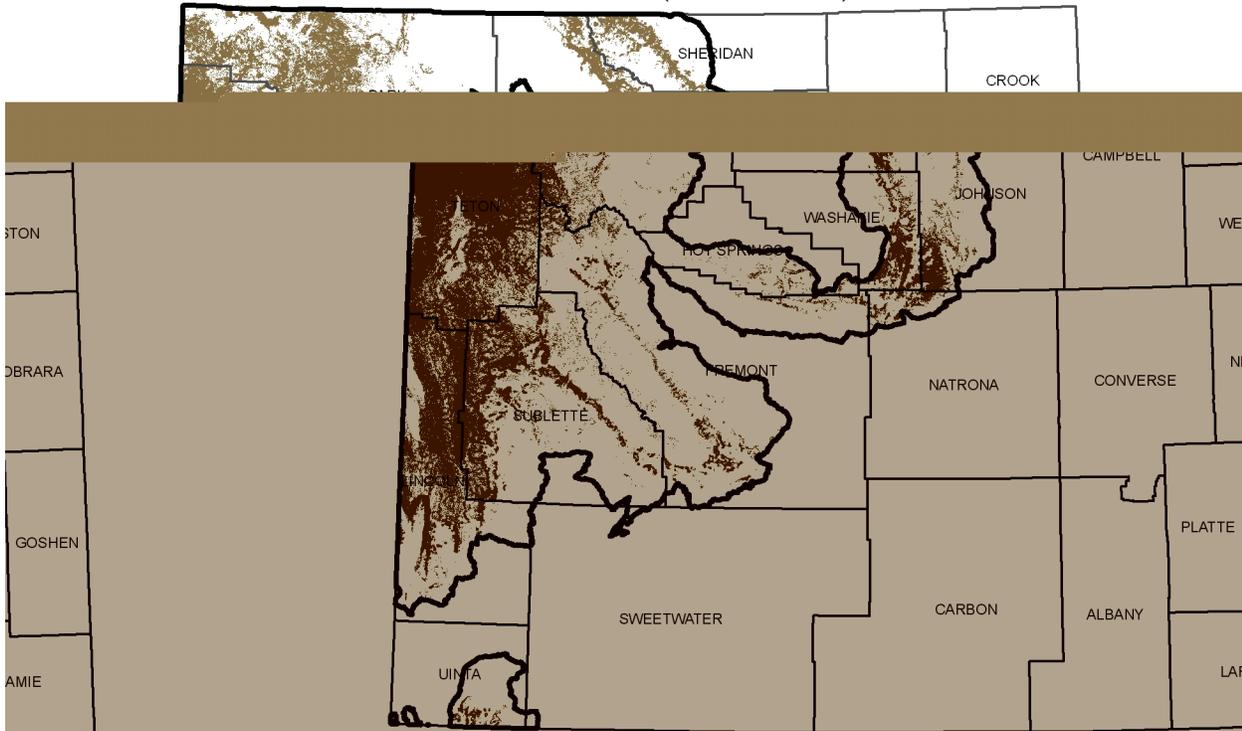
### Recent Developments

Reptiles have received increased attention in Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program. Baseline reptile and amphibian surveys were conducted in southwest Wyoming during the summer of 2009. Rubber Boa distribution and habitat associations are being examined.

### References

- Ernst, C.H., and E.M. Ernst. 2003. *Snakes of the United States and Canada*. Smithsonian Books, Washington and London. 668pp.
- Stebbins, R.C. 2003. *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 336 pp.
- Baxter, G.T. and M.D. Stone. 1985. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Wyoming*. Second Edition. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 137pp.
- Dorcas, M.E., and C.R. Peterson. 1998. Daily body temperature variation in free-ranging rubber boas. *Herpetologica* 54:88-103.

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.