Plains Black-headed Snake - Tantilla nigriceps

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU NatureServe: G5 SNR

Population Status: Restricted distribution, population numbers are unknown.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limited habitat distribution, habitat utilization in Wyoming is unknown.

Comment: This species was only recently discovered in the state. Although this species is thought to be rare, no information is available on population status. Other species of this secretive genus can exist in large numbers without detection.

Introduction

Within Wyoming, the Plains Black-headed Snake has been found in Platte County. This species is likely active from April to September. Reproductive habits of this species are not well known. It is thought that mating probably takes place in the spring, followed by egg laying in June or July (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Females on average will lay 1-3 eggs per clutch. Hatchlings appear in late July and August. This species primarily preys upon insects, earthworms, and other small invertebrates. This secretive species spends most of its time underground or under cover. Foraging is often performed at night after rains. These snakes overwinter underground in the soil.

Habitat

The Plains Black-headed Snake is often observed in plains, grasslands, scrub brush, and woodlands (Ernst and Ernst 2003). This species prefers those habitats with loose soil, rock outcroppings, or other structures suitable for cover.

Problems

- Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.
- This species may have limited habitat in Wyoming and degree of this habitat loss is unknown.

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

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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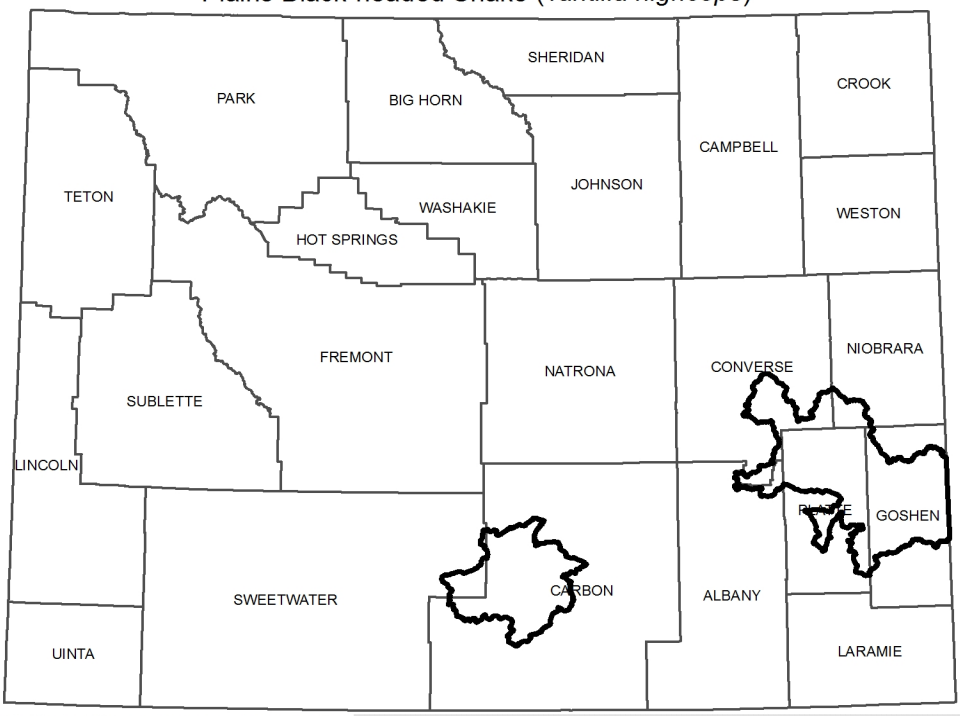

SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and ar

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Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note
heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence. There were too few occurence poi
to construct a distribution model. Collection of additional occurence locations are necessary for assessment