

Plains Gartersnake - *Thamnophis radix*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S5

Population Status: Restricted distribution, population numbers and threats are unknown.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limited habitat. This species inhabits riparian areas in plains communities.

Comment: Changed from NSS4 in 2005 due solely to changes in the matrix.

Introduction

Within Wyoming, the Plains Gartersnake may be found east of the Continental Divide below about 6,500 feet in elevation (Baxter and Stone 1985). Plains Gartersnakes are primarily active from April to September. Breeding typically occurs in the spring, but may occur in the fall. Sperm from autumn breeding will remain viable inside the female until spring fertilization. Plains Gartersnakes are ovoviviparous. Nine to twenty-one neonates are birthed in late June to September. Prey items for this species include aquatic vertebrates, amphibians, insects, small mammals, and invertebrates. Activity is usually limited to daylight hours. Plains Gartersnakes exhibit a wide variety of anti-predatory behaviors, but will commonly expel musk or feces onto antagonists. This species hibernates underground in abandoned rodent burrows, anthills, crawfish holes, old wells, and rock crevices (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Habitat

In Wyoming, the Plains Gartersnake is found along small streams, sloughs, and ponds in the grassland communities of the plains zone (Baxter and Stone 1985).

Problems

h Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.

Conservation Actions

h Develop management recommendations based on resulting data.

h Survey and monitor population distribution, status, and habitat associations.

Monitoring/Research

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

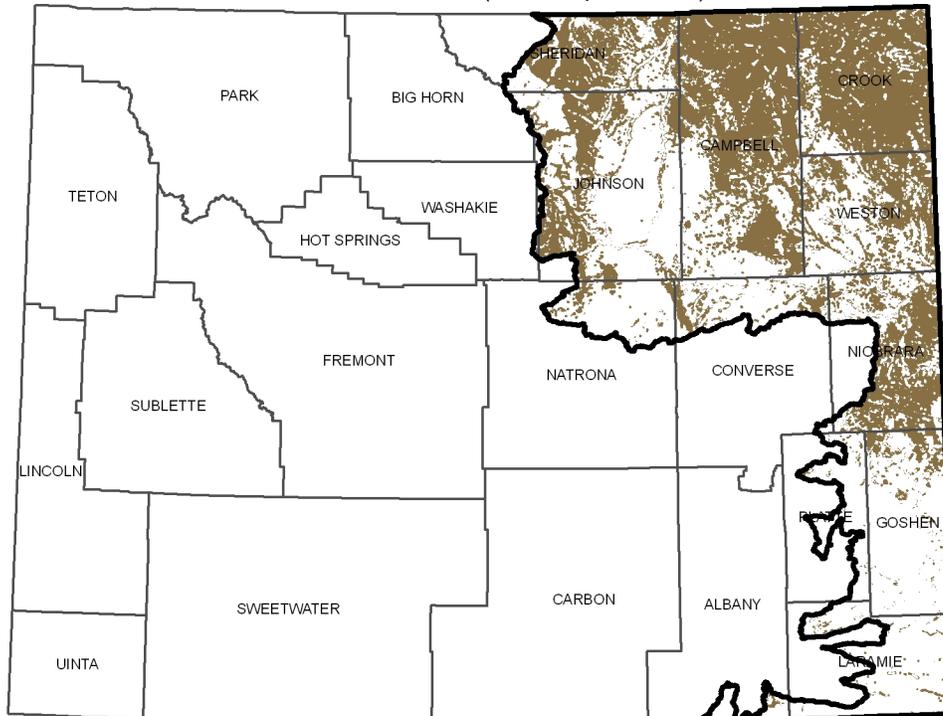
Recent Developments

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.

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

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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. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.