

## Red-Sided Gartersnake - *Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S5

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

Limiting Factor: Species found near permanent water along riparian corridors. Degree of habitat loss is unknown.

Comment: Subspecies split from Common Gartersnake. Formerly considered *Thamnophis sirtalis*. The 2005 CWCS classification is for the former Common Gartersnake.

### Introduction

In Wyoming, the Red-sided Gartersnake is found east of the Continental Divide in lower elevations (Baxter and Stone 1985). It is considered common in the Sheridan, Wheatland, and Torrington areas. It may also be found in the Black Hills. The Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) is considered more cold tolerant than any other snake (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Its activity period may extend from March to November. Mating for this species typically occurs in the spring following general emergence from hibernacula. However, autumn breeding may occur with sperm stored inside the oviducts until spring. Red-sided Gartersnakes are ovoviviparous, with an average of 27 neonates born in late summer. Prey items for this species include aquatic vertebrates, amphibians, small mammals, and invertebrates. Carrion may also make up a portion of the diet. This species often dens communally in rock crevices, gravel banks, rock and earth dams, old wells, ant mounds, crawfish burrows, beaver and muskrat lodges, and rotting logs or stumps (Ernst and Ernst 2003). This species is normally not found in association with the Plains Gartersnake.

### Habitat

The Red-sided Gartersnake is usually found near permanent water at lower elevations in the plains zone of Wyoming (Baxter and Stone 1985). It can be found in a variety of habitats including forest edges, drainage ditches, sloughs, canals, streams, rivers, ponds, marshes, meadows, pastures, old fields, fence rows, cemeteries, and other suburban habitats (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

### 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.

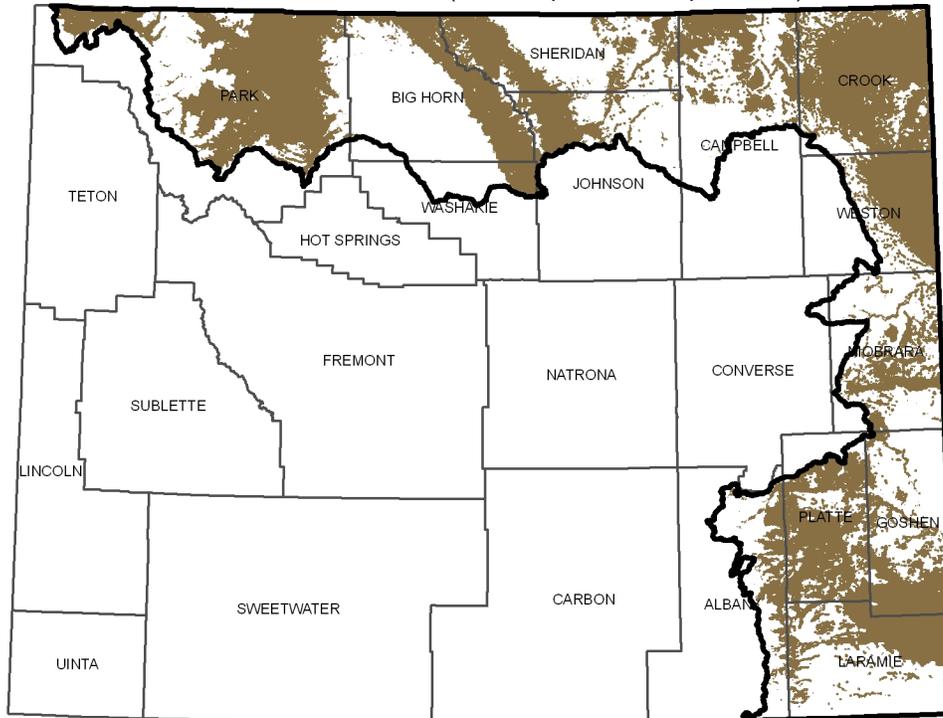
### Recent Developments

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.

Red-sided Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*)

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.