

Red-Sided Gartersnake - *Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5T5 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: None.

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 ovoviparous, 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). 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).

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

Baseline reptile and amphibian surveys were conducted in southeast Wyoming in 2011 and 2012 (Snoberger and Walker 2013, 2014) and in northern Wyoming in 2013 and 2014. Several Red-sided Gartersnakes were documented during these surveys and detailed habitat data was collected at these locations (Snoberger and Walker 2013, 2014). Reptiles have received increased attention within Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program.

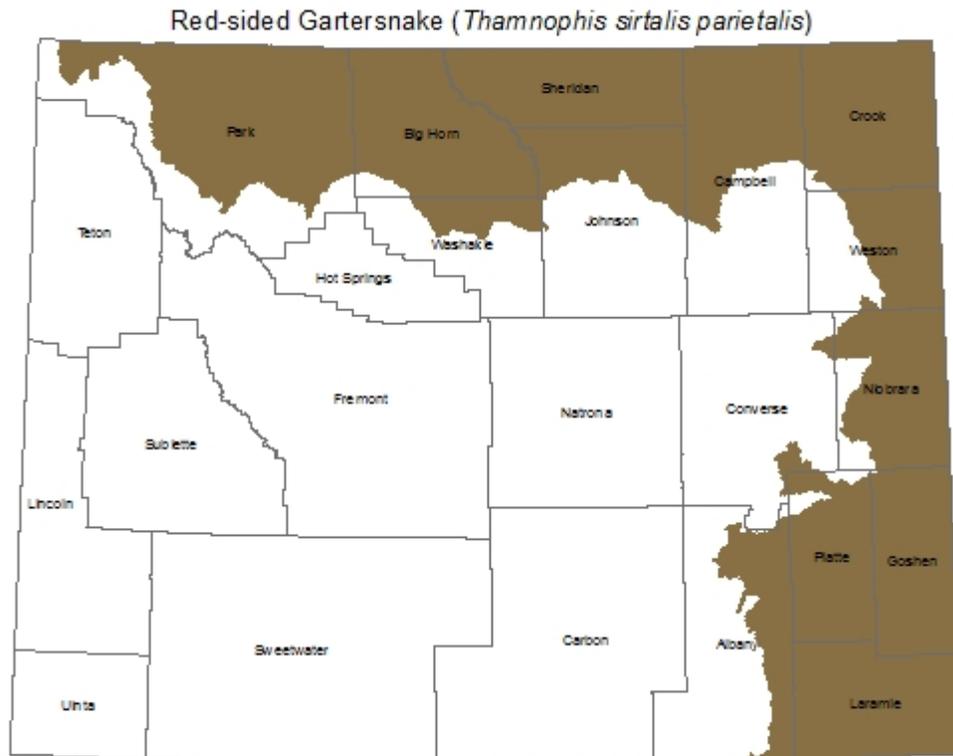
References

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.

Snoberger, C.E. and Z.J. Walker. 2013. Southeast Wyoming reptile and amphibian surveys 2011-2012. Wyoming Game and Fish Department Administrative Report. Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Snoberger, C.E. and Z.J. Walker. 2014. Reptile and amphibian habitat associations in southeast Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department Administrative Report. Cheyenne, Wyoming.



SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: February 2016. Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Note that brown indicates the current known range of the species.