

## 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: None.

### 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). This species hibernates underground in abandoned rodent burrows, anthills, crawfish holes, old wells, and rock crevices (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 Plains 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

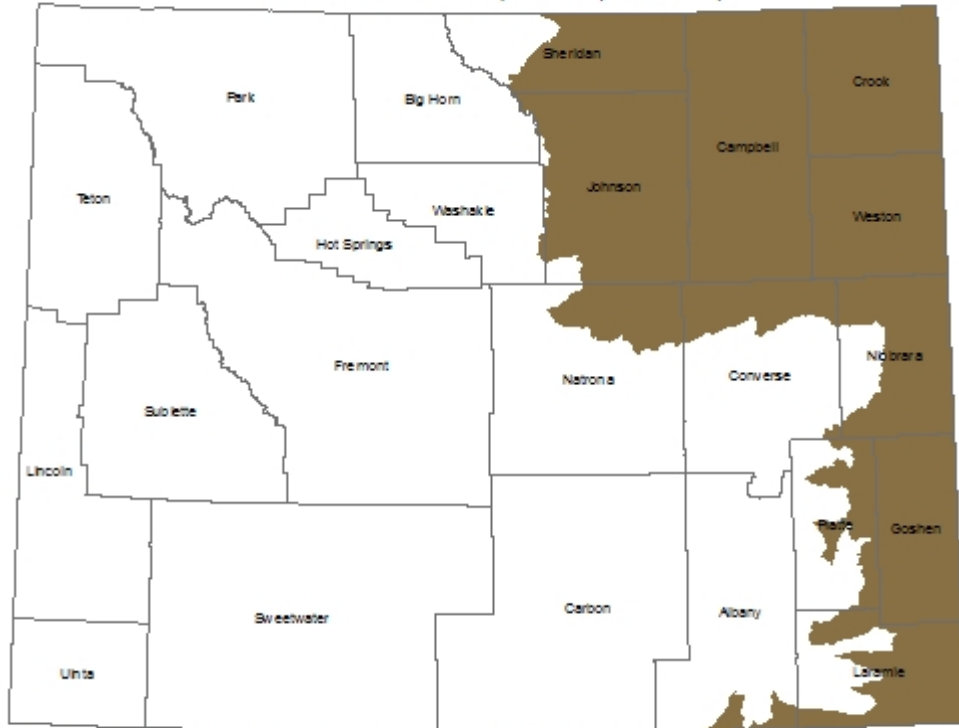
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Snoberger, C.E. and Z.J. Walker. 2013. Southeast Wyoming reptile and amphibian surveys 2011-2012. Wyoming Game and Fish Department Administrative Report. Cheyenne, Wyoming.

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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.