

Desert Striped Whipsnake - *Coluber taeniatus taeniatus*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S1

Population Status: Population numbers are unknown. Only three documented sightings of the species in the state.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: habitat and range likely restricted in range within the state. Degree of habitat loss is unknown.

Comment: New species documented in the state since 2010 SWAP.

Introduction

In Wyoming, Desert Striped Whipsnakes only occur in the far southwest region of the state, near the southern part of Flaming Gorge. The Desert Striped Whipsnake's opportunistic diet consists of lizards, other small vertebrates, and insects such as grasshoppers and beetles (Hammerson 1999). They use their fast speed to capture prey as well as to escape predation (Hammerson 1999). Desert Striped Whipsnakes lay 3 to 10 eggs in June or July (Hammerson 1999). Males defend small mating territories around adult females; adult females reproduce annually (Hammerson 1999). Desert Striped Whipsnakes are generally active during warm daylight hours from April to October, depending on the weather. They overwinter in crevices of rock outcroppings and sometimes share these dens with other snake species (Hammerson 1999). Desert Striped Whipsnakes were first officially documented in the state in 2010.

Habitat

Desert Striped Whipsnakes can be found in semidesert shrublands, woodlands, rocky slopes, and the bottoms of canyons (Hammerson 1999). They are usually on the ground, but may climb vegetation; when inactive, they burrow underground or under cover such as rocks (Hammerson 1999).

Problems

- h Little is known about this species in Wyoming. Lack of information regarding populations, distribution, and habitat associations directly impact the ability to manage for this species.
- h This species may have limited habitat in Wyoming and degree of this habitat loss is unknown.

Conservation Actions

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

Monitoring/Research

Conduct baseline surveys to gain a better understanding of Desert Striped Whipsnake distribution in Wyoming.

Recent Developments

Surveys were conducted for Desert Striped Whipsnakes near Flaming Gorge in 2014. One additional individual was documented during these surveys. Reptiles have received increased attention in Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program.

References

- Hammerson, G.A. 1999. Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado: A Colorado Field Guide, Second Edition. University Press of Colorado and Colorado Division of Wildlife. 484 pp.
- Stebbins, R.C. 2003. A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 336 pp.
- Hubbard, K. A. 2011. Geographic Distribution: *Coluber* (=Masticophis) *taeniatus* (Striped Whipsnake). Herpetological Review 42:113.

Desert Striped Whipsnake (*Coluber taeniatus taeniatus*)



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.