

Conserving Carolinian Reptiles Project Snake Identification Factsheet

The Long Point area has a rich diversity of reptiles which includes 7 species of turtles and 12 species of snakes. Unfortunately, more than half of these are now listed as species at risk and there is concern locally, nationally and internationally about the future of many reptile species.

Snakes depicted here are native species known to occur in the Long Point Basin area of southern Ontario. This region includes all of Norfolk County, plus parts of Elgin, Oxford, Brant and Haldimand Counties.

Long Point Basin Land Trust is working with partners to help gain a better understanding of the distribution and population of our turtles and snakes. You can help contribute to this research by reporting your reptile sightings. This will help to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore reptile populations and their habitats. You can submit observations online at: longpointlandtrust.ca – or by email, mail or phone.

PHOTO © MARY GARTSHORE



PHOTOS © JOE CROWLEY

Eastern Foxsnake *Pantherophis gloydi*

- Size: to 170 cm (67")
 Appearance: yellowish-brown with darker blotches; long and fairly slender-bodied; head may be reddish tinged
 Habitat: often near water or agricultural areas; native only to Great Lakes region
 Notes: **non-venomous**; known to vibrate tail, making "rattle" sound; rodent predator
 Status: endangered

Gray Ratsnake *Pantherophis spiloides*

- Size: to 255 cm (100")
 Appearance: adults appear glossy black; young are dark grey with blackish blotches; whitish chin
 Habitat: wooded and open areas
 Notes: **non-venomous**; may vibrate tail; rodent predator
 Status: endangered (Carolinian population)



PHOTO © SCOTT GILLINGWATER



PHOTO © SCOTT GILLINGWATER

Eastern Hog-nosed Snake *Heterodon platirhinos*

- Size: to 115 cm (45")
 Appearance: mid-sized snake with upturned snout and dark patch behind each eye; colouration variable including yellow-brown with dark blotches, smooth grey-green, or dark overall
 Habitat: sandy, wooded or open areas, including oak savanna and dune habitats
 Notes: **harmless to humans**; may flatten neck, hiss or "play dead" if disturbed
 Status: threatened

Queensnake *Regina septemvittata*

- Size: to 90 cm (35")
 Appearance: yellow-brown with length-wise yellowish stripe on each side; 3 dark stripes on back
 Habitat: generally along edges of streams and small rivers
 Notes: **non-venomous**
 Status: endangered



PHOTO © SCOTT GILLINGWATER



PHOTOS © JOE CROWLEY

Milksnake *Lampropeltis triangulum*

- Size: to 132 cm (52")
 Appearance: light to medium grey or brownish with dark blotches; "Y" or "V" pattern on back of head
 Habitat: forest, open and agricultural areas
 Notes: **non-venomous**; known to vibrate tail, making "rattle" sound; rodent predator
 Status: special concern

Eastern Ribbonsnake *Thamnophis sauritus* ▶

Size: to 70 cm (28")
Appearance: black with 3 very fine yellow stripes; white or yellow spot in front of eye; slender with long tail
Habitat: meadows, forest edges, or near the edge of water bodies and wetlands
Notes: **non-venomous**
Status: special concern

PHOTOS © SCOTT GILLINGWATER



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY

◀ **DeKay's Brownsnake** *Storeria dekayi*

Size: to 50 cm (20")
Appearance: medium grey-brown with two rows of dark spots; belly light coloured
Habitat: diverse habitats, including woodland, rural, urban areas; often under leaves, logs
Notes: **non-venomous**

Red-bellied Snake *Storeria occipitomaculata* ▶

Size: to 40 cm (16")
Appearance: brownish back with bright red belly
Habitat: diverse habitats, including woodland, rural and urban areas; often under leaves, logs
Notes: **non-venomous**; locally uncommon



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY

◀ **Northern Ring-necked Snake** *Diadophis punctatus*

Size: to 45 cm (18")
Appearance: bluish, brown or grey back with yellow band on neck; yellowish belly
Habitat: woodland habitats, notably moist areas near forest edges
Notes: **non-venomous**

Eastern Gartersnake *Thamnophis sirtalis* ▶

Size: to 137 cm (54")
Appearance: variable colouration; typically dark brown or blackish with 3 yellow or orange stripes; all black "melanistic" form is common along the Lake Erie shore and Toronto Islands
Habitat: diverse habitats, including woodland, open areas, wetlands, rural and suburban
Notes: **non-venomous**



PHOTOS © JOE CROWLEY



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY

◀ **Northern Watersnake** *Nerodia sipedon*

Size: to 110 cm (43")
Appearance: typically brown or greyish with darker blotching; larger snakes may be more uniform
Habitat: in or near water, including lakes, rivers and wetlands
Notes: **non-venomous**

Smooth Greensnake *Ophedrys vernalis* ▶

Size: to 66 cm (26")
Appearance: shiny bright green colouration
Habitat: grassy, open areas and meadows
Notes: **non-venomous**; locally uncommon



PHOTO © JOE CROWLEY

Long Point Basin Land Trust expresses its sincere thanks to Joe Crowley, Mary Gartshore and Scott Gillingwater for permission to reproduce their photographs. The Long Point Basin Land Trust thanks the following funders for their support of this project: Fred Eaglesmith's Annual Charity Picnic, The Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, HIVA Environmental Fund, The John and Pat McCutcheon Charitable Foundation, The McLean Foundation, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Species at Risk Stewardship Fund and individual donors.

Long Point Basin Land Trust protects important natural habitats in the central Carolinian Region in southern Ontario. It promotes conservation through outreach, research, habitat restoration, and species at risk recovery projects. For more information about this charitable conservation organization, please visit our website or sign up for our newsletter (print or e-news).

Long Point Basin Land Trust
P.O. Box 468
Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0
Phone: 519-586-8309
Email: general@longpointlandtrust.ca
Web: longpointlandtrust.ca

Notes: lengths highly variable, maximums noted; conservation status per Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada 2010 (www.cosewic.gc.ca); prepared by Long Point Basin Land Trust, 2011.

 **Ontario**
Assistance for this project was provided by
the Ministry of Natural Resources.

