

Field Marks

Sub-order	Genus	Species	Dorsal Coloration & Pattern	Ventral Coloration & Pattern	Head Coloration & Pattern	Hatchling Coloration & Pattern	Shape/Other	
Serpentes	Coluber	North American Racer	<u>Solid black</u> with satin sheen	<u>Unmarked</u> white or gray	<u>Tan nose</u> , white under chin, <u>strong ridges</u> above eyes	Blotched with dark spots; solid tail; pattern fades when 70-80 cm long	Cross-sectional profile is <u>round</u>	
	Crotalus	Timber Rattlesnake	Dark W-shaped bands (often with light border) on tan, yellow, or dark brown background	White to cream with some dark markings	Yellow or black head with small scales	Gray body color, same pattern as adults, “button” on tail	Thick-bodied; undivided caudals; segmented <u>rattle</u>	
	Diadophis	Ring-necked Snake	Blue-gray back	<u>Yellow-orange</u>	<u>Yellow-orange ring around neck bordered by black</u>	Same as adult		
	Heterodon	Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (unconfirmed)	Highly variable (orange to brown to black; may show dark brown-black irregular blotches)	White under chin, cream to tan belly, slightly pink under tail	<u>Enlarged (upturned) rostral scale</u>	Pinkish coloration with dark brown-black blotches, in alternating rows	Thick-bodied	
	Lampropeltis	Eastern Milksnake	Reddish-brown blotches outlined in black	White & black checkerboard pattern	<u>White “Y” on back of the head</u>	Same pattern as adults but more brightly colored		
	Nerodia	Common Watersnake	Reddish-brown blotches & bands on cream background; snakes darken with age to near black	<u>Red crescents on white-yellow background</u>	<u>Dark vertical stripes on lips</u>	Dark brown/black blotches & bands on a tan, brown, or gray background	Thick-bodied	
	Opheodrys	Smooth Greensnake	Bright <u>green</u> ; turns blue shortly after death	White or off-white belly	Green head over white to yellow upper lip	Darker coloration (gray to brown)		
	Pantherophis	Eastern Ratsnake	Black (flecks of white between scales), usually shows pattern or remnants of juvenile pattern	<u>White under the chin and throat</u> ; black and white <u>checkerboard</u> pattern under mid-body; solid <u>dark color under the tail</u>	Black over white chin	Gray background with <u>H-shaped blotches with black borders</u> on back. Dark line between eyes, and from <u>eye down to angle of jaw</u> .	Cross-sectional profile like a <u>loaf of bread</u> (straight sides and bottom, rounded top)	
	Storeria		DeKay's Brownsnake	Wide light brown stripe down brown or grayish-brown back; black spots along stripe, sometimes showing black checkerboard pattern on sides	<u>White or tan</u>	<u>Black spot</u> on top of the head and under the eye; <u>black sideburns</u> and <u>black parentheses</u> on each side of the neck	<u>White ring</u> around neck that extends forward and under the eyes; same black head markings as adult	
			Red-bellied Snake	Brown (sometimes black or gray) with two thin dark stripes along sides of back	<u>Red, often outlined in black</u>	<u>Three off-white diamonds</u> on neck	Darker above and lighter below than adults; more distinct neck collar	
	Thamnophis		Eastern Ribbonsnake	Three yellow stripes on dark background; lateral stripes on scale <u>rows 3 & 4</u>	Cream or yellow	<u>Reddish-brown</u> head over <u>white upper lip</u> ; vertical <u>white bar in front of eye</u> ; straight <u>black line behind eye</u>	Same as adult	More slender and longer tail proportional to body than Gartersnake
			Common Gartersnake	Three yellow stripes (lateral stripes mostly on scale <u>rows 2 & 3</u>) on green/black/brown background	Cream or yellow	<u>Olive green</u> head over <u>yellow upper lip</u>	Same as adult	Background colors and brightness of central stripe are variable
Lacertilia	Plestiodon	Common Five-lined Skink	Five off-white stripes on black (female) or dull brown (male) background	White or off-white chin; mid-body pale bluish-gray	Stripes; red throat & face when breeding (male)	Five stripes on black background; bright blue tail	Stripes fade with age, especially on males	

Field Marks & Life History

Sub-order	Genus	Species	Smooth or Keeled Scales	Scale Rows at Mid-body	Anal Plate	Large Adult Length *	Live Birth or Eggs	Number of Eggs or Neonates***	Reported Longevity	Activity	
Serpentes	Coluber	North American Racer	Smooth	17 (15-19)	Divided	70.5 in.	Eggs	1-36 eggs (average 13.6), may be communal	>10 years	Diurnal	
	Crotalus	Timber Rattlesnake	Heavily keeled	23 or 25 (21-26)	Single	53 in.	Live	1-20 (usually 6-10), tend young until first shed	>30 years	Diurnal (spr./ fall); crepuscular or nocturnal (summer)	
	Diadophis	Ring-necked Snake	Smooth	14-17	Divided	16.5 in.	Eggs	1-10 eggs (average 5)	>10 years (20?)	Mostly nocturnal	
	Heterodon	Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (unconfirmed)	Keeled	25 (21-27)	Divided	28 in.**	Eggs	4-61 eggs (average 23); may incubate eggs	Captivity: 7 years	Diurnal	
	Lampropeltis	Eastern Milksnake	Smooth	19 (17-23)	Single	40.5 in.	Eggs	1-24 eggs (average 8-10; VT average 7, n=4)	Captivity (after capture as an adult): 21 years	Mostly nocturnal	
	Nerodia	Common Watersnake	Heavily keeled	23 (21-25)	Divided	49 in.	Live	6-99 (average 27)	Captivity: 9 years & 7 months	Diurnal when cool	
	Opheodrys	Smooth Greensnake	Smooth	15	Divided	21 in.	Eggs	2-18 eggs (average 7), may be communal	Captivity: 6 years	Mostly diurnal	
	Pantherophis	Eastern Ratsnake	Weakly keeled	25 or 27 (23-29)	Divided or Semi-divided	71.5 in.	Eggs	4-44 eggs (average 15), may be communal	Captivity: 33.9 years	Mostly diurnal	
	Storeria		DeKay's Brownsnake	Keeled	15 or 17	Divided	16 in.	Live	3-41 (VT average 11)	Captivity: 7 years	Diurnal when cool
			Red-bellied Snake	Keeled	15 (13-17)	Divided	11.5 in.	Live	1-23 (usually 4-9; VT average 8.5)	Captivity: 4 years	Diurnal when cool
	Thamnophis		Eastern Ribbonsnake	Keeled	19	Single	34.5 in.	Live	3-26 (usually 10-12)	Captivity: 10 years	Mostly diurnal
Common Gartersnake			Keeled	19	Single	28.5 in.	Live	1-101 (average 27; VT average 11.8)	Captivity: 6-10 years (max 20)	Mostly diurnal	
Lacertilia	Plestiodon	Common Five-lined Skink	Smooth	26-33	NA	7 in.	Eggs	2-18 eggs; may be communal; tend nest until shortly after hatching	6 years	Diurnal	

*average length of top 10% of Vermont adults

***Range-wide numbers; details added for VT or northern states' dates when data were available.

**approximate average female size, from Klemens (CT) & Hulse et al. (PA); females larger than males

Mating & Young

Sub-order	Genus	Species	Timing of Mating*	Shape/Color**/ Adherence of Eggs	Mean Egg Size** (mm)	Timing of Egg Laying*	Incubation Time (eggs) or Gestation Time (live birth)*	Time of Hatching or Birth*, ***	Size of Hatchlings/ Young (cm, total length)	
Serpentes	Coluber	North American Racer	May-June, possibly fall	Elliptical, white, leathery, granular <u>nonadherent</u>	34 x 19	June-early August	40-97 days	August-October	15-35 (mean 24)	
	Crotalus	Timber Rattlesnake	Mid-July to October	Live birth	N/A	N/A	~120 days	August-October	19.5-38 (mean 32.5)	
	Diadophis	Ring-necked Snake	Spring & fall	Oval, white, rough, thin leathery shells	25 x 8	June-July	28-75 days (average 52)	Mid July-late September	8-19 (mean 12)	
	Heterodon	Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (unconfirmed)	Mid-April to May	Elliptical, cream to white	30 x 20	June-July	39-65 days (average 56)	August-September	13-29 (mean 24)	
	Lampropeltis	Eastern Milksnake	April-May (VT: June), possibly fall	Elliptical, white, parchmentlike, slightly granular, <u>adherent</u>	38 x 14	May-mid July	40-99 days (average 50-70)	August?-September	13-27 (mean 20)	
	Nerodia	Common Watersnake	VT: May-June (possibly fall)	Live birth	N/A	N/A	9-12 weeks	Late August?-September	16-30 (mean 22)	
	Opheodrys	Smooth Greensnake	April-May, possibly fall	Elongate, whitish, thin-shelled, <u>loosely adherent</u>	28 x 12	Late July-August	4-25 days (females retain eggs longer in north)	Late August-early September	8-17 (mean 13)	
	Pantherophis	Eastern Ratsnake	VT: May-June (possibly fall)	Elongated, white, leathery, <u>partially adherent</u>	46 x 25	June/July	42-84 days (average 62)	August?-September	18-50 (mean 39)	
	Storeria		DeKay's Brownsnake	April-May, possibly Aug.	Live birth	N/A	N/A	14-113 days (average 74)	July?- August	7-12 (mean 10)
			Red-bellied Snake	Spring, summer or fall	Live birth	N/A	N/A	59-77 days (average 70)	Late August-September	6-11 (mean 8)
Thamnophis		Eastern Ribbonsnake	Spring	Live birth	N/A	N/A	90-100 days	August-September	14-24	
		Common Gartersnake	March-May, possibly fall (VT: April, Sep)	Live birth	N/A	N/A	80-90+ days	Late July-Oct/Nov	12-28 (mean 18)	
Lacertilia	Plestiodon	Common Five-lined Skink	May	Spherical to oval, white	13 x 7	June-July	27-56 days	July-September	2.4-2.8 (SVL) 5-6.4 (TL)	

* Range-wide dates, adjusted for VT or northern states' dates when data were available. Some timings are weather-dependent, and gestation times are sometimes not well known due to sperm storage before egg fertilization.

** Size at deposition; some species' eggs grow larger or change coloration with time.

*** Question marks indicate a month when young of the year have not been seen in VT, but have been reported range-wide. No VT data are available for North American Racer, Eastern Hog-nosed Snake, Eastern Ribbonsnake, or Common Five-lined Skink.

References

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