



Eastern Milksnake

Species at Risk

In Canada, the Eastern Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum*) is located in the Great Lakes region of Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, it is found as far north as Lake Nipissing and Sault Ste. Marie. This snake is a species of special concern in Canada

The Eastern Milksnake has reddish brown blotches with a black outline on a whitish grey background. The pattern and colour fades as the snake ages. Juvenile colour patterns vary and are not identical to adult snakes. Milksnakes have a distinct Y or V pattern directly behind their eyes and have a black and white checkboard pattern on their underbelly. Adult Milksnakes are on average 60-90 cm in length.

The Milksnake uses a variety of habitats including field, swamp, and open woodlot. They require special habitat for egg laying and hibernation. Egg laying occurs in compost or manure piles which provide suitable warm temperatures for incubation. They hibernate underground in burrows or holes and prefer forested edge areas such as wetlands, pastures, hayfields, barns and sheds. Milksnakes are non-venomous, however, they will vibrate their tails which make them sound like a rattlesnake if they are near dry leaves. Milksnakes are constrictors, they eat other snakes and small mammals such as mice and shrews. Threats to the Milksnake include human persecution, habitat loss and fragmentation. They are often accidentally killed on roads and by farm machinery.

It is illegal to search for, harass or capture a species at risk or destroy their habitat. Pictures courtesy of Rob Tervo
References: COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Milksnake *Lampropeltis triangulum* in Canada, 2002.

