

Corn Snake



<u>Class</u>	<u>Order</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Genus Species</u>
Reptilia	Squamata Opperl	Colubridae Opperl	Elaphe guttata

Geographic Range:

The corn snakes natural range is from New Jersey, south to Key West along Florida's Atlantic seaboard, and then west to the Mississippi River around New Orleans. To the north there are several disjunctive populations in Kentucky, central Louisiana, eastern Texas, extreme eastern Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

Habitat:

Corn snakes prefer terrestrial habitat, near pinelands, hardwood hemlocks, swamps, agricultural fields, and residential areas. The sandy pine woods in the southeastern states have produced the most prolific concentration of corn snakes in the USA. Habitats that are relatively dry and exposed seem to be preferred, particularly in places with burrowing mammals.

Niche:

The Corn Snake is a frequently seen visitor to many rural farm settings. This highly adaptable snake is a voracious consumer of rodents often found in the rural farm setting. An adept climber, the Corn snake will climb vertically up tree trunks to gain access to the bird nests found there.

Diet:

Corn snakes swallow their food whole, usually beginning with the head. Their list of prey items include most any small lizard, rodent, or bird and their eggs, that are the same

diameter, or close to the same diameter as the snake's body. Corn snakes are non-venomous (although they do have teeth). Instead they kill their prey by first biting to obtain a firm grip then quickly wrapping one or more coils of their body around their victim, and squeezing tightly to suffocate the prey animal. Wild corn snakes like most other wild snakes will often go for days or weeks between meals. Adult corn snake will predominantly feed on rodents; however, on occasion, they will take a bird or a bird's egg.

Physical Characteristics & Adaptations:

The average adult corn snake will grow to be about 3 to 5 ft. long (.9 to 1.52 m) in a period of about four years. However they are always growing. The longest corn snake on record was 6 ft. long (1.83 m). Jo Ann Watson, an Exploration Station Educator with the San Bernardino County Museum of Natural History said, "The pattern of every snake is like a zebra's stripes, it is a fingerprint unique to that snake." This truly points out what is the crowning glory of the corn snake. Vivid colors of red, orange, or brownish blotches edged with black and a grayish to orange background tinged with yellow, characterize the glossy coat of an adult corn snake. They're usually 25 to 38 of these dorsal blotches with a corresponding number of lateral blotches. The dorsal blotches are usually wider along the snake's length. There are 27 to 29 dorsal scale rows around the circumference of the snake at the middle of the body. These scales are weakly keeled. The ventral scales (the snake's belly) usually consists of alternating rows of black and white (though orange may also be present), resembling maize corn. Corn snakes from the Western North Carolina region usually have a duller coloration. On the underside of the tail are two black stripes, and on the head and neck a spear shaped pattern. Corn snakes from the southeastern region of the Florida peninsula may be grayish with distinct blotches. This is because they are anerythristic, which means their genes have turned off their ability to produce red pigment. This gives them a grayish body with black splotches. There are also corn snakes that cannot produce black pigment, these are called amelanistic. When a corn snake is both anerythristic and amelanistic the result is a snow corn snake. Several types of wild corn snakes with characteristic patterns have been given their own names. <http://fohn.net/corn-snake-pictures-facts/bibliography.html> - 10

Dentition:

In most [snakes](#), [teeth](#) are located on the [dentary](#) of the [lower jaw](#), the [maxilla](#), the [palatine bone](#) and the [lateral pterygoid plate](#). The latter form an "inner row" of teeth that can move separately from the rest of the jaws and are used to help "walk" the jaws over prey. While most snakes are not hazardous to humans, several lineages have evolved [venom](#) which is typically delivered by specialized teeth called [fangs](#) located on the [maxilla](#).

Social Behavior:

Corn snakes are very shy, and usually most active at night, however this varies with temperature. In cold regions corn snakes will hibernate during the winter. But in warmer

areas along the coast they will shelter in logs and rock crevices during cold days, and come out to soak up the heat of the sun on warm days. During the cold days, since snakes are less active they also need less food. During the day they often hide under loose tree bark, beneath logs, rocks, and in rodent burrows where they search for their prey. Open forests, overgrown fields, and abandoned or seldom used buildings are their favorite haunts. Corn snakes are also accomplished climbers, able to scale vertical pine trees by clinging to the rough bark surface. When threatened, corn snakes will often strike repeatedly while vibrating their tail. In dry vegetation the vibration of the tail is similar to the sound of a rattlesnake. This is sufficient to fool some predators (and humans) into thinking that they are a rattlesnake. In the first case, the predator is likely to leave the snake alone. However, in the second case the human is all too likely to kill the snake. It is worth noting that many people bitten by rattlesnakes were trying to kill the snake at the time, and not every snake that makes a rattling noise is a rattlesnake. The best advice being to leave the snake alone unless it poses a real danger to people in the area. Even then, dealing with a rattle snake should only be attempted by someone with experience. While corn snakes can be aggressive when they feel threatened, they can also be very docile in captivity, and even a wild corn snake can become tame quite quickly.

Reproductive Information:

Corn snakes usually breed in the spring from April to June. Brumation (a light version of hibernation is not required, but usually best breeding occurs after a brumation of 3 months at 55°F (12.8°C). Corn snakes are oviparous, which means the embryos develop in the egg outside of the mother's womb. During the first part of summer, females lay 3 to 40 eggs in rotting stumps, piles of decaying vegetation, or other locations where there is sufficient heat and humidity to incubate the eggs. Newborns hatch in 2 to 3 months, from July to September.

Life Span:

The average life span of these snakes is 10 years, although one was documented to be 21 years old.

SERC Animals:

Pierre and DJ

Pacific Gopher Snake

REPTELIA

SQUAMATA

Pituophis

Catenifer Catenifer

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:

The Pacific Gopher Snake extends from the British Columbia through Washington, Oregon and California. It can also be found in Idaho, Utah and Nevada.

HABITAT:

The Pacific Gopher Snake generally likes dryer climates, preferring grasslands, mountainous regions, some deserts and other coastal habitats. Bull snakes in general are pretty hardy snakes, growing attached to farm lands where there is a plentiful amount of rodent like prey for them to munch on.

NICHE:

Gopher snakes and other Bull snakes prey on rodents and rodent like mammals. They help keep populations of animals like mice, gophers, and rats in check.

DIET: The Pacific Gopher Snake feeds primarily on animals belonging to the pocket gopher family. That's where its name comes from. Bull snakes commonly feed on bird eggs as well although that is not a main diet.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & ADAPTATIONS:

Description: The Pacific Gopher Snake is light brownish yellow with brown blotches that imitate a common rattle snake. These blotches get smaller as they near the ventral side of the snake. Bull snakes usually have a slight bulge in the head region. This is where the name Bull Snake usually comes from.

Size: Adults can be two and a half to seven feet long but most Pacific Gopher Snakes are from four and a half to five feet long. Hatchlings are fairly long, reaching up to twenty inches in length.

Habits and Adaptations: Gopher Snakes are diurnal in nature, meaning they are active during the day. A Gopher snake will coil and puff itself up in the presence of a predator or threat. Often it will use the nub on the tip of its nose to hit threats and cause them to go away. Gopher snakes are not venomous and the Pacific Gopher Snake rarely uses its teeth during a warning bite. The Pacific Gopher Snake will often may a very loud hissing noise and shake its tail like a rattle snake in order to appear dangerous to threats.

DENTITION: Could not find

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:

Male Gopher Snakes are known to fight during mating season. This behavior is similar to that found in many species of snakes. The males intertwine their bodies and attempt to force each other to the ground. This combat rarely damages either snake, the loser going on its way.

REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION:

Rubber boas are ovoviviparous which means they carry the eggs internally and will deliver live snakes. They would have 1-9 babies in the latter part of the year.

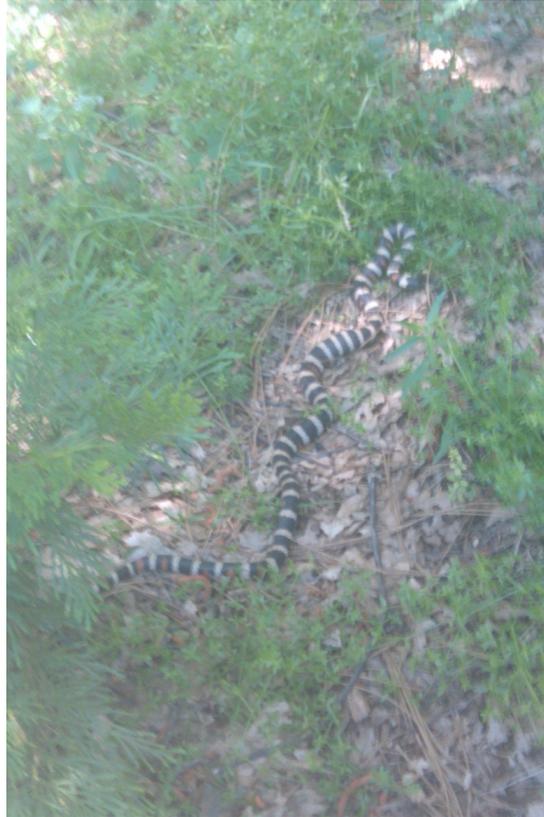
LIFE SPAN: In the wild it's estimated at ten years with twelve to fifteen in captivity.

MICELLANEOUS:

Pacific Gopher Snakes are often confused with rattle snakes and killed. As the gopher snake is a harmless snake this is often unnecessary.

SERC ANIMALS: Jessie is the SERC Pacific Gopher Snake

COMMON KING SNAKE



CLASS: Reptilia **ORDER:** Squamata **FAMILY:** Colubridae *Genus species: Lampropeltis getula*

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: Southeastern Canada through North America and the Northern region of South America.

HABITAT: Deserts, mountains, grasslands, coastal estuaries, swamps, and forests. Tends to be more abundant where there is water.

NICHE: Tend to be most active during dusk and dawn and become nocturnal during hot summer months.

DIET: Rodents, lizards, turtles, turtle legs, birds, bird eggs, frogs, and snakes (even venomous ones and their own species.)

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & ADAPTATIONS:

Description: Length around to 3'3" Cylindrical body, smooth, shiny scales, and a narrow head that is the similar size of its body. Coloration typically contains black or dark brown parts with white or cream

color bands that are seen in a variety of pattern. The head often has white spots on the front of its head.

Weight: Up to 3.3 pounds.

Habits and Adaptations: Will eat almost any animal using constriction to subdue their prey, very adaptable living on ranches and in suburban areas. The banding pattern makes it harder for its predators to make out the outline of its body. If in colder climates, King snakes will hibernate from the fall to the spring. Defense mechanisms include playing dead, mimicking a rattlesnake, smearing feces on enemy, an angry hiss, striking and biting (non-venomous), and discharging an offensive odor to scare off predators.

DENTITION: Two rows of hook like teeth on both sides of the upper jaw and one row of hook like teeth on both sides of the lower jaw.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: They eat other snakes.

REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION: To attract a female king snake, a male king snake will nibble on the neck of the female. Sometimes males will battle each other to mate with the female. A few weeks later the female will lay 4 to 20 eggs in an empty rodent hole, in a dead log, or sometimes under some soil. The mother snake will then leave her eggs and not return. When they are ready to come out of their shells they have to fend for themselves. When they hatch they are 8-13 inches long and will be ready to have their own offspring when they are 3-4 years old.

LIFE SPAN: 20 plus years.

MICELLANEOUS: King snakes are often mistaken for venomous coral snakes.

SERC ANIMALS: Junior and Checkers (Both Males)

CALIFORNIA KINGSNAKE

CLASS	ORDER	FAMILY	<i>Genus Species</i>
Reptilia	Squamata	Colubridae	<i>Lampropeltis getulus californiae</i>

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:

West Coast of North America; from the tip of Baja Mexico to Southern Oregon, and West Coast of California to desert areas of Nevada and Arizona

HABITAT:

Desert, woodlands, chaparral, farmland, river bottoms, grasslands, deciduous and coniferous forests

NICHE: Helps control rodents population

DIET:

Rodents, birds, lizards, frogs, snakes/venomous snakes (including rattle snakes and other Kingsnakes)

Diet in the zoo: Carnivore diet; mice and other rodents

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ADAPTATIONS:

Description:

The California Kingsnake's color and patterns vary from one snake of the same species to the other. Their morphology (appearance) come in many different colors. One of the color patterns: black or dark-brown ground color with a yellow mid dorsal line (straight line down the middle of the body). Another morphology is a snake with dark-brown or black ground color that has 30-50 clear whitish or yellowish rings perpendicular (line that crosses) to the length of the body. This snake has 23 rows of scales and has yellow dots on its temples. They normally shed 4 to 6 times per year. Humid environments help kingsnake are beneficial during shedding.

Weight:

3.3 pounds

Habits and Adaptations:

It has a spine consisting of 100-400 vertebrae and each vertebra is attached to a pair of separate, thin ribs, making it easy for the Kingsnake to move in an "s shape" and coil. The Kingsnake, like most snakes, is able to unhinge its jaw (unlock) so that it can swallow its meal. The lower jaw has two separate halves that are connected by elastic tissue. It can eat other snakes including venomous snakes and other Kingsnakes. They frequently eat other snakes because the shape of snakes are easy for Kingsnakes to swallow. Kingsnakes kill prey using constrictors by wrapping around their prey squeezing and suffocating them to death. The meal is swallowed head first as saliva lubricates the victim's body. They are not immune to venom, they just have a high tolerance towards it. If a Kingsnake gets bit in the heart or head, they could die. Like most snakes, Kingsnakes have bad eyesight due to the positioning of the eyes on the sides of the head. Since their eyes are on the side of their head, it makes it difficult for the

snake to focus. However, the California Kingsnake has good "close up" vision. The Kingsnake has a great sense of hearing. They can hear low frequency sounds and feel vibrations. This sense allows them to hear/feel an approaching animal well before the animal actually reaches the area where the snake is located.

DENTITION: Nonvenomous
teeth, meaning it does not have venom like some other snakes. Also doesn't have fangs
(Aglyphous)

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: When
disturbed, California Kingsnakes hiss, coil their bodies, rattle their tails and hide their heads.
They are not harmful to humans. They are nocturnal (sleep during the day, awake at night) when
it is too hot outside. They are usually solitary (loner) creatures. They search for rodents, lizards,
frogs, etc. by themselves. The only time Kingsnakes are not solitary is when they hibernate
during cold weather. During hibernation you can find many Kingsnakes in the same area.
During the spring they separate and continue their loner lifestyle. This snake can be aggressive if
provoked. A prey has a better chance of survival if it stays still.

REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION:

The Kingsnake is oviparous (produce eggs that hatch outside of the body). It lays
approximately fifteen eggs. It mates from March to June and lays its eggs from May to
August. Six to ten weeks later the eggs hatch revealing Kingsnakes that are 8-12 inches long.
Similar to most reptiles, the snake does not take care of its young after they hatch. In the wild,
the snake lays its eggs once a year although it is possible for it to lay eggs twice a year.

LIFE SPAN:

- 15-20 years in the wild, 25-30 years in captivity

MICELLANEOUS:

They are a good choice if looking to have a snake as a pet since they don't have venom
and are harmless toward humans.

SERC ANIMALS:

Junior and Checkers

RESOURCES:

California king snake facts. (2012). Retrieved from:

<http://moreninha76.hubpages.com/hub/California-King-Snake>

California king snake. Retrieved from:

http://hoglezoo.org/meet_our_animals/animal_finder/California_Kingsnake



Rubber Boa

Class	Order	Family	Genus	Species
Reptilia	Squamata	Boidae	Charina	Charina Bottae

Geographic Range: In California, they range from Monterey and north along the coast, as well as through the Sierras. Ranges east through northern Nevada and Utah into western Wyoming and Montana, and north into Canada.

Habitat: Rubber Boas have been known to inhabit a wide variety of habitat types from grassland, meadows, as well as chaparral to deciduous and conifer forests. Rubber Boas are not as tolerant of higher temperatures as other snake species, and cannot inhabit areas that are too hot and dry. They can live in areas that are surprisingly cold, particularly for a snake. They also spend a large amount of time under shelter (rocks, logs, leaf litter, burrows, etc...)

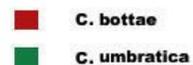
Niche: They do spend a lot of time underground, and primarily use existing rodent tunnels or rock fractures. They are also nocturnal/crepuscular, therefore are usually not active during the day.

Diet: Rubber boas are small snakes that primarily prey on young nestling mammals (voles, shrews, deer mice, lizards, snake eggs, worms, etc). When nestling rodents are encountered, they will eat the entire litter if possible, deflecting any attacks from the mother mouse with their blunt tail. Adult Rubber boas often have extensive scarring on their tails.

Predators: Rubber Boas are vulnerable to many carnivorous predators due to their slow nature and lack of active defenses. Other snakes, Raptors, Coyotes, Hawks, owls, Raccoons, Skunks, Moles and Cats, are only a few of the known predators. The Rubber Boas primary defense against predation is its secretive nature. It was previously thought that the reason a Rubber Boa's tail was often scarred is due to their tendency to ball up, and use the tail as a false head when attacked by a predator. Common reasoning though tells us that such a defense is not useful against the predators listed above. Tail tip scarring occurs more commonly from deflecting the attacks of a mother mouse trying to



Distribution of Charina in California



defend her nest as the Rubber Boa consumes the nestling mice for example. Aggression trials have demonstrated that a Rubber Boa, once feeding, may simply try to keep its predator at bay with "false strikes" of the tail as it is flipped back and forth.

Physical Characteristics: Rubber boas are one of the smallest members of the boa family. Adults are generally a uniform color dorsally, ranging from tanned leather brown, olive brown, medium brown, to a dark chocolate brown. Their ventral surface (belly) is most often a light yellow with brown mottling in some adults. Babies are born pink and slightly transparent, and gradually darken with age. In the Pacific Northwest, adult males generally reach an average length of about 21 inches, with the females slightly longer - on average 26 inches. the smallest subspecies, where males typically max out at 18 inches, and females at 22 inches.

Temperament: Rubber boas are incredibly docile snakes and are ideal snakes to be handled by children and those trying to overcome a fear of snakes. They never use striking as a defense mechanism, although if handled too roughly, they will musk the holder (a very smelly substance from their vent), but will not strike in defense. Upon being picked up, a Rubber boa will gently wrap around the holder's wrist for upwards of an hour or more before seeking to crawl around. Even when warm and active, Rubber Boas rarely move swiftly. Rubber Boas hibernate during the winter months over their entire range, sometimes from mid October to mid March. In summer when the weather is warm, Rubber boas are rarely found on the surface, and remain underground to keep cool and moist.

Dentition: They have very small sharp teeth. A bit to a human would not cause any harm, for they are too small.

Life Span: Rubber boas commonly live 20 – 30 years and some researchers have discovered individuals as old as 50 years.

Relatives: The closest relative to the Rubber Boa is the Rosy Boa, also native to Western North America.

Reproduction: Bears 1 to 9 live young from August to November.

SERC Animals:

Madonna