

Kirtland's Snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*)

Pennsylvania Endangered Reptile

State Rank: SH (possibly extirpated) Global Rank: G2 (imperiled)

Identification

Kirtland's snake grows to just over two feet. The keeled upper-body scales are gray to reddish-brown, with two rows of small, diffuse dark blotches along the midline, and a row of larger dark blotches alongside these. The head is darker with a whitish chin, throat and some scales around the mouth. The belly is red with a row of black spots along each margin.

Biology-Natural History

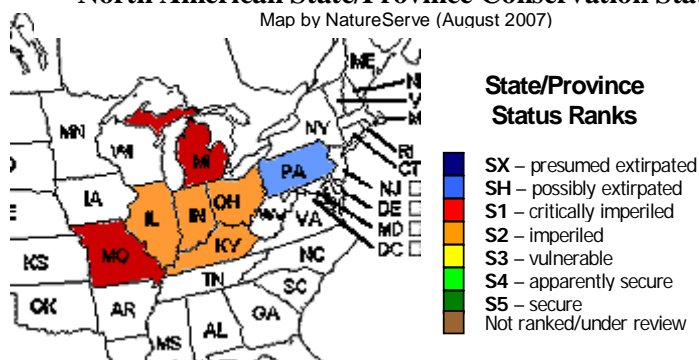
This species emerges from hibernation in late March or April. Mating pairs have been seen in May. The four to 67-inch young are born live, from late July to late September; litters range from four to 22. Females are ready to breed when they have reached about half their eventual length, while males may breed when slightly smaller than that. Earthworms and slugs are known food items. Logs, rocks and leaf piles serve as daytime retreats during the summer; crayfish burrows may be used in summer as well and also as hibernating sites from late October until late March.



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)

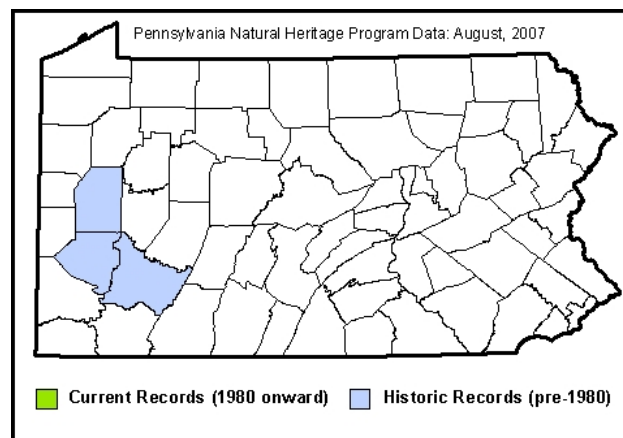


Habitat

Kirtland's snake prefers open damp habitats, such as marsh edges, wet fields and pastures, and along creeks, canals, sluggish ponds and ditches. Prominent occurrences of this species are recorded from such habitat types in and around large cities.

Reasons for Being Endangered

Kirtland's snake continues to be a very elusive species, with most Pennsylvania records from within, or around the greater Pittsburgh area. Other, more localized records from Jefferson and Westmoreland counties suggest a wider distribution in the western part of the state.



Management Practices

Additional, concentrated searches in likely habitats is needed. Also, wetland habitats must be protected against encroachment or destruction.

References:

- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: August 21, 2007).



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

Fact Sheet adapted from: Felbaum, Mitchell, et al. Endangered and Threatened Species of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Wild Resource Conservation Fund, 1995.

