Florida pine snake

*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*

(Photograph by Kevin Enge, FWC)

**Taxonomic Classification**

- **Kingdom**: Animalia
- **Phylum**: Chordata
- **Class**: Reptilia
- **Order**: Squamata
- **Family**: Colubridae
- **Genus/Species**: *Pituophis melanoleucus*
- **Subspecies**: *Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*
- **Common Name**: Florida pine snake

**Listing Status**

- **Federal Status**: Not Listed
- **FL Status**: State Species of Special Concern
- **FNAI Ranks**: G4T3?/S3 (Globally: Apparently Secure, Sub sp. Rare [Tentative Ranking]; State: Rare)
- **IUCN Status**: Not ranked

**Physical Description**

The Florida pine snake is one of the largest eastern snakes in North America (Bartlett and Bartlett 2003). This species can reach a length of up to 84 inches (213 centimeters). It has a
brown back with dark blotches, white belly, ridged scales, small head, and pointed snout (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001).

**Life History**

The diet of the Florida pine snake primarily consists of moles, rabbits, mice, rats, squirrels, lizards, and other snakes and their eggs (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Nesting occurs from June to August, with the eggs hatching in September and October (Franz 1992). Nests are constructed in side burrows located off of the species main burrow. The female will construct the burrow alone, usually in an area that receives a lot of sunlight. The clutch size for the Florida pine snake is 4-12 eggs (Bartlett and Bartlett 2003). The incubation time for eggs ranges from 67-72 days (Franz 1992).

**Habitat & Distribution**

The Florida pine snake inhabits areas that feature well-drained sandy soils with a moderate to open canopy (Franz 1992, Ernst and Ernst 2003). This species can be found from southwest South Carolina, west to Mobile Bay in Alabama, south to Florida (excluding the Everglades) (Conant and Collins 1991, Ernst and Ernst 2003, Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001).

**Threats**

Habitat loss has been an issue for the Florida pine snake. By 1987, 88% of scrub habitat in Florida had been lost to development (Kautz et al. 1993). Other habitat for this species includes the longleaf pine community, of which 97% has been converted to agriculture, pine plantations, and urban areas (Noss et al. 1995). Habitat loss and fragmentation is a result of commercial and residential development, silviculture (controlling the growth and quality of forests through timber management), mining, and road construction. The alteration of its fire-dependent habitat can cause less favorable living conditions for the Florida pine snake due to the encroachment of hardwoods. The removal of stumps can threaten the pine snake because it decreases the amount of underground habitat structures (Means 2005). Pine snakes might be experiencing increased rates of predation of adults, hatchlings, or eggs from nine-banded armadillos, feral hogs, and red imported fire ants (R. Zappalorti, Herpetological Associates, pers. commun. 2011). Other threats include mortality caused by roads, humans, and domesticated pets (Jordan 1998).
**Conservation & Management**

The Florida pine snake is protected as a State Species of Special Concern by [Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule](#).

- Biological Status Review (BSR)
- Supplemental Information for the BSR

**Other Informative Links**

[Florida Museum of Natural History](#)
[Florida Natural Areas Inventory](#)
[University of Florida IFAS Extension](#)

**References**


