Rim Rock crowned snake

*Tantilla oolitica*

**Taxonomic Classification**

- **Kingdom:** Animalia
- **Phylum:** Chordata
- **Class:** Reptilia
- **Order:** Squamata
- **Family:** Colubridae
- **Genus/Species:** *Tantilla oolitica*
- **Common Name:** Rim Rock crowned snake

**Listing Status**

- **Federal Status:** Not Listed
- **FL Status:** State-designated Threatened
- **FNAI Ranks:** G1G2Q/S1S2 (Globally: Insufficient Data for a specific rank, but ranges from Imperiled to Critically Imperiled [subspecies classification questioned]/ State: Insufficient Data for specific rank, but ranges from Critically Imperiled to Imperiled)
- **IUCN Status:** Not ranked

**Physical Description**

The Rim Rock crowned snake is named after the Miami Rim Rock geological formation. This snake species is non-venomous and can reach a length of up to ten inches (25 centimeters). It has a grayish-black dorsum (back), a black to light-brown head, yellow to red belly with black spots, and smooth scales (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001). The Rim Rock crowned snake is a very rare species with only 26 individuals known to exist (Florida Museum of Natural History, n.d.).

**Life History**

It is not exactly known what the Rim Rock crowned snake feeds on; however, it might feed on insects and other small invertebrates (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

The reproduction and lifespan of the Rim Rock crowned snake is not known. The species probably matures at two years of age, with a lifespan of five years in the wild, and lay around six eggs per year (Todd et al. 2008, Ernst and Ernst 2003). The Rim Rock crowned snake is
fossorial (adapted to digging and life underground), which is why information has been difficult to gather.

**Habitat & Distribution**

Rim Rock crowned snakes inhabit pine rockland and tropical hardwood hammocks near fresh water (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001). They can be found in holes and depressions in the oolitic limestone (formed by calcium carbonate) but they can also be found periodically in rotten logs, under rocks and trash (Enge et al. 2003, Campbell and Moler 1992). Rim rock crowned snakes are known from various localities in Miami, including Brownsville, Coconut Grove, Coral Gables, Cutler, Cutler Ridge, Kendall, Leisure City, North Miami, and Perrine (Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001). The species also occurs in the Upper, Middle, and Lower Florida Keys.

**Threats**

The main threat to the Rim Rock crowned snake is the fragmentation (separation of the habitat into individual patches) of their habitat. This is a big threat for the population in and around Miami, as their habitat is mixed in with agricultural and residential lands (O’Brien 1998). The population in the Florida Keys faces a threat from severe storms such as hurricanes and tropical storms because they can cause flooding in the species’ habitat. The threat of global climate change also may threaten the species as the rise of sea level would also flood its habitat.

**Conservation & Management**

The Rim Rock crowned snake is protected as a State-designated Threatened species by Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule.

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

**Other Info Links**

Florida Museum of Natural History  
Florida Natural Areas Inventory  
International Union for Conservation of Nature  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Species Profile
References


