

## SNAKE PREVENTION

- **Seal Entry Points**

- Inspect your home and seal any gaps or cracks in the foundation, walls, windows, and doors. This helps prevent snakes from entering your property.

- **Yard Maintenance**

-Keep your yard well maintained by regularly mowing the grass, removing debris, and trimming overgrown vegetation. Snakes are less likely to inhabit areas with minimal hiding spots.

- **Remove Potential Hiding Places**

-Clear away piles of wood, rocks, and other debris from your yard that snakes might use as hiding spots. Keep your yard tidy and free of clutter.

- **Limit Food Sources**

-Keep your property free of potential snake prey, such as rodents and birds. Secure trash cans tightly to discourage rodents from visiting your property.

- **Education**

-Learn about all the native snakes species in Iowa, their habits, and typical habitats. This knowledge can help you understand how to minimize encounters and respond appropriately if you do come across one.

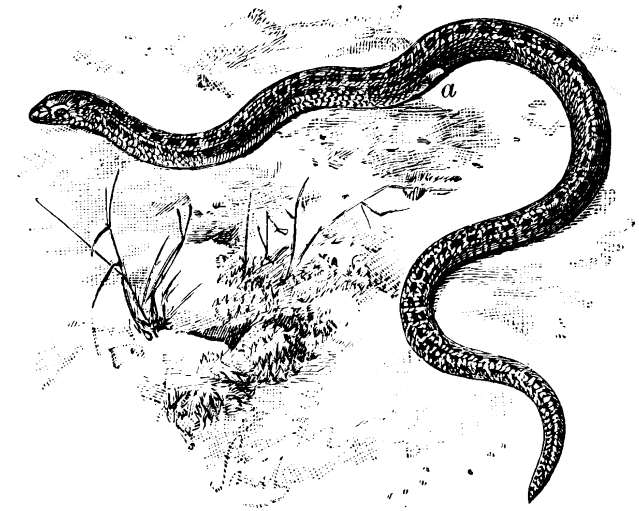


**Request Service:** (515) 222-3321

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**Pet Licenses:** (515) 222-3600

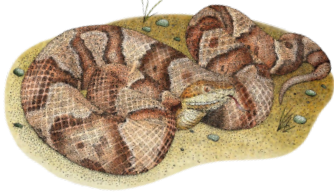
# SNAKES



## UNDERSTANDING IOWA'S SLITHERING REPTILES

## Iowa Has Snakes?

Iowa has almost 30 species of snakes, which help keep rodent and small mammal populations in check. A snake can swallow animals and eggs bigger than its head. From the small snakes less than a foot long to large, 6-foot-long black rat snakes, Iowa's snakes vary in size to serve the needs of the ecosystem. Smaller snakes eat worms, slugs and insects, while larger snakes eat small mammals like mice and ground squirrels.



Iowa has only four venomous snakes, and their bites are rarely fatal if treated. The massasauga and timber rattlesnakes are rare, but found in eastern and southern Iowa. The prairie rattlesnake and copperhead are even rarer in our state.

### Did You Know?

Only garter snakes can be legally caught, collected or killed in all counties. Timber rattlesnakes are protected in 14 of Iowa's 99 counties, excluding within 50 yards of an actively occupied residence. All other Iowa snakes are protected in all counties, and cannot legally be collected (without a scientific collector's permit) or killed.

### Seek by iNaturalist

Identify wildlife, insects, plants, and fungi to learn about all the organisms around you using Seek by iNaturalist. Earn badges for observing different types of species and participating in challenges.

Seek

Available for iOS & Android



## Eastern Milk Snake



- The eastern milk snake is a medium sized Iowa snake that is 24 – 52 inches in length.
- Although this snake's blotched pattern remains consistent, its general coloration is quite variable. Some specimens can be beautifully light colored, having a light gray or brown ground color and bright to rusty red body blotches.
- Spend much of their time hiding beneath logs, rocks, boards, bark, and other debris.
- Feed on a wide variety of animals including mice, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, reptile eggs, birds and birds' eggs.



## DeKay's Brown Snake

- These snakes are mostly found around water; bogs, marshes, streams, ponds, and lakes although they are usually found quite some distance from the waters edge. Open grasslands with woodland borders are favored.
- Called the Dekay's brown snake after New York naturalist James Edward DeKay.
- They breed in spring and give birth to 3 – 20 living young at a time.
- They are about four inches at birth and are nearly black with dark spots and a light collar around the neck.
- DeKay's brown snakes eat earthworms, slugs, snails, soft-bodied insects and larger specimens will eat frogs and tadpoles.

## Eastern Massasauga

- Eastern massasaugas were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2016 due to significant reductions in populations primarily due to habitat loss.



- Massasaugas live in wet areas including wet prairies, marshes, fens, sedge meadows, peatlands, and low areas along rivers and lakes. Massasaugas also use shrubland, open woodlands, and prairies during part of the year.
- Massasaugas often hibernate in crayfish burrows but may also be found under logs and tree roots or in small mammal burrows. Unlike other rattlesnakes, massasaugas hibernate alone.
- Heat sensitive pits near the snake's eyes alert the snake to the presence of prey. They can find their prey by sight, by feeling vibrations, by sensing heat given off by their prey, and by detecting chemicals given off by the animal (like odors).



## Eastern Racer Snake

- Adult eastern racers can typically vary from 20 to 60 inches in total length including tail.
- The patterns vary widely among subspecies. Most are solid-colored as their common names imply: black racers, brown racers, tan racers, blue racers, or green racers
- a female lays three to 30 eggs in a hidden nest site, such as a hollow log, an abandoned rodent burrow, or under a rock.