SNAKES OF NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina is home to 38 snake species, most of which are nonvenomous. This handout lists nonvenomous snake species, by average adult size, from smallest to largest. Venomous species are listed by family.

**Worm Snake** (*Carpophis amoenus*). Common-found statewide under rotting logs; in soil in damp woodlands, backyards, cool, moist hardwood forests. Feeds primarily on worms. Avg. length-9’

**Ringneck Snake** (*Diadophis punctatus*). Common-found statewide under rotting logs; leaf litter; flowerbeds. Light yellow or orange ring around neck; yellow belly with dashed line. Eats worms, salamanders. Avg. length-12”

**Rough Earth Snake** (*Heloderma suspectum*). Common-found in Piedmont & Coastal Plain underground in rotting logs; flowerbeds, around homes; similar to Smooth Earth Snake but with keeled scales. Eats mostly worms. Avg. length-9”

**Smooth Earth Snake** (*Virginia valeriae*). Found statewide except northwestern NC, underground in forested areas. Similar to Rough Earth Snake but with smooth scales, often tiny, black dots on back. Avg. length-9”

**Eastern Garter Snake** (*Thamnophis sirtalis*). Common statewide usually in or near wet areas; lives in nearly every habitat; identified by checkered spotting on back/sides; Eats fish, worms, insects. Avg. length-1.75” (Photo: Jodie Owen)

**Eastern Racer Snake** (*Coluber constrictor*). Common-found statewide in nearly all habitats; often confused with Rat Snake but has uniform black color (often with white chin), slender body, smooth scales; Avg. length-4’ (Photo: Jodie Owen)

**Pine Woods Snake** (*Rhadinaria flavilata*). Found in southeastern NC, in pine flatwoods, oak forests, under rotting logs, loose bark. Avg. length-12”

**Southern Hognose Snake** (*Heterodon simus*). Protected-Threatened. Rare, found in sandy fields, woods in Coastal Plain, Sandhills. Eats toads, other amphibians. Avg. length-4.5’

**Northern Hognose Snake** (*Heterodon platirhinos*). Found in Piedmont, Coastal Plain, southern Mtns., on wooded slopes, grassy fields, under large stones. Eats mostly snakes, lizards, mice. Avg. length-2.25’

**Rough Green Snake** (*Opheodrys aestivus*). Common-found statewide in moist woodlands, under logs; flowerbeds, gardens, rocks; Belly is orange or red. Eats worms, snails, soft-bodied insects. Avg. length-9”

**Red-bellied Snake** (*Storeria occipitomaculata*). Common-found statewide in moist woodlands, under logs; flowerbeds. Green with white or yellow belly; Avg. adult length-2’

**Scarlet Kingsnake** (*Lampropeltis elapsoides*). Uncommon-found statewide in rotting logs; under bark, in pine forests. Looks similar to Eastern Coral Snake but has red nose, yellow/red bands separated by black. Avg. length-15”

**Eastern Milk Snake** (*Virginia valeriae*). Found statewide in or near wet areas; lives in nearly every habitat.平均 length-2’ (Photo: Jodie Owen)

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**Eastern Hognose Snake** (*Heterodon platirhinos*). Found statewide; upturned snout; defensive posture includes spreading neck; usually dark with darker splotches; sometimes all black. Avg. length-2.25’ (Left photo: John G. Best)

**Southern Hognose Snake** (*Heterodon simus*). Protected-Threatened. Rare, found in sandy fields, woods in Coastal Plain, Sandhills. Eats toads, other amphibians. Avg. length-15”

**Northern Pine Snake** (*Pituophis melanoleucus*). Protected-Threatened. Rare, found in Sandhills and south Coastal Plain. Eats rodents. Live mostly underground. Avg. length-4’5”

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Blue text indicates nonvenomous snake; Red text indicates venomous snake; Green text indicates “Protected Species” (Endangered; Threatened or State Special Concern). Learn more: ncwildlife.org/snakes;ncmparc.org

Photos: Jeff Hall (unless otherwise indicated; Carolina Water Snake-Nathan Shepard)

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**Eastern Coachwhip** (*Masticophis flagellum*). Found in Sandhills, southeast Coastal Plain; declining populations due to habitat destruction. Eats lizards, mice, snakes. Like racers, very fast. Longest snake in NC. Avg. length-4’

**Corn Snake** (*Elaphe guttata*). Common-found statewide except northern counties, around edges of old fields, clearings; under tin, dead trees/rocks. Eats rodents, lizards, treefrogs. Often mistaken for Copperhead. Avg. length-3’

**Timber Rattlesnake** (*Sistrurus miliarius*). Very rare. Found in southeastern Coastal Plain; populations have plummeted mainly due to habitat destruction. Largest rattlesnake in world. Eats rodents and rabbits. Avg. length-4’

**Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus adamanteus*). Protected/Endangered. Very rare, found in southeastern Coastal Plain; populations have plummeted mainly due to habitat destruction. Largest rattlesnake in world. Eats rodents and rabbits. Avg. length-4’

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**Carolina Pigmy Rattlesnake** (*Sistrurus miliarius*). Very rare, found in sandy areas, in southern Coastal Plain. Member of Cobra family. Looks like Scarlet Kingsnake; Scarlet Snake, but with black head; red, yellow bands touch. Eats snakes, lizards. Avg. length-15’

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