

Common Name: California Kingsnake

Scientific Name: *Lampropeltis getulus californiae*



IUCN Red list Status: Not listed
AZA Conservation Program: None

Class: Reptilia
Order: Squamata
Family: Colubridae
Genus: Lampropeltis

Habitat: These snakes are known to be highly adaptive to their surroundings. They have been known to live in desert, woodlands, chaparral, farmland, river bottoms, grasslands, deciduous and coniferous forests. They generally have a range from California to Arizona to Mexico.

Threats in the Wild: Other snakes, birds of prey, mammals.

Physical Characteristics: These guys are known to be skinny and small with smooth, shiny, unkeeled scales. The head is barely wider than the neck. There can be many variations for their color but most commonly seen are alternating bands of black or brown and white or light yellow, including the underside, where the light bands become wider. A striped phase with a white or light yellow stripe on the back occurs in coastal southern California. An unbanded phase with a dark belly and lateral striping occurs in the northern San Joaquin Valley and southern Sacramento Valley. A dark banded phase with a dark underside occurs in coastal Los Angeles County, some with a high number of bands. A desert phase occurs with dark black bands and narrow bright white bands. Some variants have much dark speckling in the light bands, others with much light speckling in the dark bands.

Reproduction: The king snake is oviparous. It lays approximately 6-12 eggs. It mates from March to June and lays its eggs from May to August. Six to ten weeks later the eggs hatch revealing king snakes that are 8-13 inches long. Similar to most reptiles, the snake does not take care of its young after they hatch. In the wild, the snake lays its eggs once a year although it is possible for it to lay eggs twice a year.

Longevity: 10-15 years

Diet: In the wild rodents, birds, lizards, frogs, snakes. Diet at the zoo, mice.



Fact Sheet – Reptilia – California King snake
Last Updated: April 2020

California Kingsnake Distribution Map



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Miscellaneous: Their real claim to fame is the ability to kill and eat other snakes, including venomous species like cottonmouths and rattlesnakes. Because of their natural immunity to pit-viper venom, the bite from a venomous snake has little effect on them. King snakes are variable in color and selective breeding in captivity has produced many varieties.



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California Mountain Kingsnake Distribution Map

