

## Common Name: Mexican Pine Snake

Scientific Name: *Pituophis deppei jani*



IUCN Red list Status: Least concern

AZA Conservation Program: none

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Colubridae

Genus: Pituophis

**Habitat:** They inhabit pine forests and high-elevation desert regions from 4500-7000 feet. Because they live at high elevations, Northern Mexican Pine snakes have adapted to survive at cooler temperatures than their *Pituophis* relatives.

**Threats in the Wild:** Popular in the pet trade.

**Physical Characteristics:** This large, powerfully built snake has keeled scales, relatively rough skin and a head that is small in relation to its body. It has only two prefrontal scales (most *Pituophis* have four). It is by far the most colorful and varied of the pine snake species. Although juveniles may be pallid, adults develop a ground color ranging from beige to golden to bright orange which is most intense at mid body. Some have a red or intense orange head. The body is covered with dark brown to black dorsal blotches. Adults are 5 to 5 ½ feet on average but may reach 7-8 feet in length. In all snakes of the genus *Pituophis* the epiglottis is peculiarly modified so that it is thin, erect, and flexible. When a stream of air is forced from the trachea, the epiglottis vibrates, thereby producing the peculiarly loud, hoarse hissing for which bull snakes, gopher snakes, and pine snakes are well known.

**Reproduction:** Sexually mature at 3 or 4 years of age, oviparous, produces 20-30 eggs, hatchlings are 9-14 inches and capable of eating small rodents.

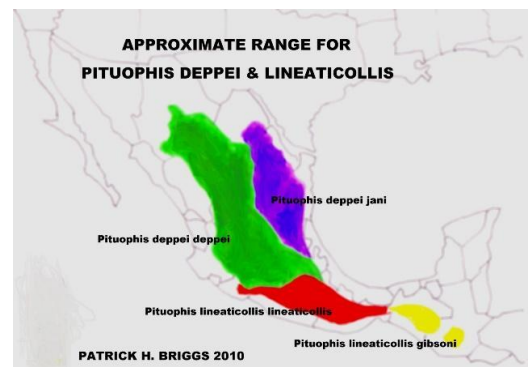
**Longevity:** 20+ years

**Diet:** Primarily rodents with occasional young birds or small mammals such as baby rabbits.



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Fact Sheet – Reptilia – Mexican Pine Snake  
Last Updated: April 2020



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**Miscellaneous:** Mostly diurnal, but may become crepuscular if days are warm. Prepares for cold nights by sunning on rocks. The Northern Mexican pine snake is one of two large *Pituophis* found in Mexico; the other is *Pituophis deppei deppei*, which lives at lower elevations. This snake is infrequently seen in the field, even in areas where populations are known to exist, so it is not well studied.

**Signs of Stress:** Biting, vibrating tail, hissing.

**Handling:** Support the body as much as possible; do not let their body hang. Keep redirecting them as they are moving. Do not let the middle section of the snake droop. This snake is very active when first taken from his enclosure and can strike without warning.

**TOUCH ANIMAL WITH CAUTION.** Because this animal can be very active and has been known to bite, be cautious if letting the public touch him. See how the snake is acting and consider the audience; older students or adults may be fine; younger groups not such a good idea. Large crowds may also be stressful for the snake.



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