

THE PETERSON FIELD GUIDE SERIES®

A FIELD GUIDE TO
REPTILES &
AMPHIBIANS
EASTERN AND CENTRAL
NORTH AMERICA



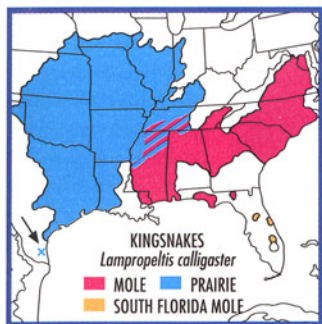
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white or yellowish and checked, spotted, or clouded with brown. Scales *smooth*; anal *single*. *Young*: Boldly marked with well-separated brown or red spots (see Pl. 31); two lengthwise dark streaks on neck; about $6\frac{1}{4}$ – $9\frac{3}{8}$ in. (17.2–23.8 cm) at hatching.

An accomplished burrower often turned up by the plow or during excavations. Occasionally appears on the surface, especially after heavy spring or summer rains. Ranges from Coastal Plain to at least the lower parts of Appalachians. Habitats include thickets, woodlots, cultivated fields, and even back yards in some suburban areas. **SIMILAR SPECIES:** (1) Corn Snake has *divided* anal, *keeled* scales, and underside of tail is usually striped (Fig. 66). (2) In Milk Snakes the dorsal blotches are large and close together, and belly is boldly marked with black. **RANGE:** Vicinity of Baltimore, Md., to e. La.; disjunct colonies in Fla. panhandle; intergrades with Prairie Kingsnake in s. Tenn., n. Ala., and n. Miss. **SUBSPECIES:** SOUTH FLORIDA MOLE KINGSSNAKE, *Lampropeltis c. occipitolineata*. Similar to Mole Kingsnake, but adults retain the juvenile color pattern, have 75 or more dark-edged spots down back and tail, and display a network of dark lines on back of head. Disjunct colonies in cen. part of Fla. peninsula, north of Lake Okeechobee.

GRAY-BANDED KINGSSNAKE *Lampropeltis alterna* **PL. 32**

IDENTIFICATION: 20–36 in. (51–90 cm); record $57\frac{1}{4}$ in. (147.1 cm). The *gray crossbands* on the body are the most constant feature of this highly variable snake. Other markings may consist solely of narrow black crossbands, or the black may be expanded, sometimes greatly, and it may include varying amounts of red or orange pigment. The narrow white lines bordering the black areas may be strikingly evident. Some specimens tend toward melanism, like the darkest of the three varieties shown on Pl. 32. Belly with



The Gray-banded Kingsnake varies more in coloration and pattern than any of our other serpents. (See Plate 32.)

black blotches that may fuse together. Eyes slightly protuberant; head noticeably wider than neck. Scales *smooth*; anal *single*. *Young*: Similar to adults, $7\frac{1}{2}$ – $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. (19–32.2 cm) at hatching.

This resident of the Chihuahuan Desert region lives in arid to semihumid habitats ranging from desert flats and canyons into mountains. Once considered rare, it is now known to be abundant but is seldom seen because of its secretive and nocturnal habits. Food is primarily lizards, but some small rodents are also probably eaten. This handsome serpent has a foul-smelling musk and a tendency to jerk spasmodically when handled. **SIMILAR SPECIES:** (1) In Texas Lyre Snake, pupil of eye is vertically elliptical in daylight, and anal plate is *divided*. (2) Milk Snakes have black-bordered red rings separated by areas of white or yellow (not gray). **RANGE:** Trans-Pecos region east to Edwards Co., Texas; south to ne. Durango and extr. w. Nuevo León.

SCARLET, LONGNOSE, AND SHORT-TAILED SNAKES:
GENERA *Cemophora*, *Rhinocheilus*, AND *Stilosoma*

These serpents are allied to the members of the genus *Lampropeltis*, and the resemblance of the Scarlet Snakes in coloration and pattern to the ringed Milk Snakes is strikingly evident. Even the Longnose Snakes are similar, despite their speckled markings. The ranges of two of the genera are mutually exclusive (except in southern Texas), with *Cemophora* in the Southeast and *Rhinocheilus* in the West. The races of the latter extend, collectively, to California and Baja California and south to San Luis Potosí and Nayarit. The curiously attenuated *Stilosoma* is endemic to Florida.

SOME SOUTH TEXAS SNAKES

- TRANS-PECOS RAT SNAKE**, *Bogertophis subocularis* P. 360
Head unicolorous; black stripes on neck; dark blotches posteriorly. (Most of w. Texas) *Blond variation*: Uniformly light-colored with dark pattern reduced or absent. (Lower Pecos R. Valley of sw. Texas)
- GRAY-BANDED KINGSNAKE**, *Lampropeltis alterna* P. 377
Gray crossbands; varying amounts of red or orange (these colors sometimes absent). (W. Texas) *Dark variation*: Gray crossbands very dark.
- TEXAS LYRE SNAKE**, *Trimorphodon biscutatus vilkinsonii* P. 386
Dark brown saddles on a light brown (or gray) ground color. Pupil elliptical in daylight. (Chihuahuan Desert)
- NORTHERN CAT-EYED SNAKE**,
Leptodeira septentrionalis septentrionalis P. 386
Body crossed by bold, black (or dark brown) saddles; ground color often yellow, but variable from cream to reddish tan. Pupil elliptical in daylight. (Extr. s. Texas)
- SPECKLED RACER**, *Drymobius margaritiferus margaritiferus* P. 348
Scales with light centers; dark stripe behind eye; a few middorsal rows of scales with faint keels. (Extr. s. Texas)



Fig. 17. Several Mexican snakes enter Texas in the Chihuahuan Desert of the Pecos R. and Big Bend regions, and in The Valley of the Rio Grande in the extreme south.

TRANS-PECOS
RAT SNAKE

2 variations

GRAY-BANDED
KINGSNAKE

3 pattern variations



TEXAS LYRE SNAKE

NORTHERN
CAT-EYED SNAKE

SPECKLED RACER