The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Reptiles and Amphibians

A Chanticleer Press Edition

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New York Zoological Society, and
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Mexican (*L. g. nigritus*), uniformly black or black with small light spot on each side scale and some back scales, 23–25 scale rows; w. Sonora and extreme nw. Sinaloa, Mexico, into se. Arizona.
Desert (*L. g. splendida*), back dark brown or black with narrow light crossbands, scales on sides have central light spot, 23–25 scale rows; c. Texas west to se. Arizona south to c. Mexico.

Active during the day, especially early in the morning or near dusk, but becomes nocturnal in the warm summer months. It is primarily terrestrial, occasionally climbing into shrubs. A strong constrictor, it eats snakes—including rattlesnakes, Copperheads, and coral snakes—as well as lizards, mice, birds, and eggs. Record longevity exceeds 24 years.

601, 602, 603 Gray-banded Kingsnake
(*Lampropeltis mexicana*)

Description: 24–47½″ (61–120.7 cm). *Highly variable pattern of* white-bordered gray crossbands alternating with black-bordered reddish-orange crossbands or blotches. Head distinct from neck; eyes large. Scales smooth, in 25 rows. Anal plate single.

Breeding: Mates in spring. 4–9 eggs, 1¼–1¾″ (32–45 mm) long, are laid late May to late July, hatch in 9–11 weeks. Young are 9–11″ (23–28 cm) long.

Habitat: Arid mesquite-creosote bush desert flats, barren rocky hillsides, canyons, limestone ledges, ranging into semimoist mountainous situations; 1,200–7,500′ (350–2,300 m).

Range: Trans-Pecos region east to Balcones Escarpment of Edwards Plateau of Texas, south into Mexico.

Subspecies: Three, poorly defined; 1 enters our range, *L. m. alterna*.

Once considered rare, this handsome snake became a favorite of collectors. A secretive, nocturnal species it proved to be considerably more common than believed. Lizards are its staple diet, but it also eats frogs, small snakes, and rodents.

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598 Sonora Mountain Kingsnake
(*Lampropeltis pyromelana*)
Subspecies: Arizona, Utah, Huachuca

Description: 20–41″ (50.8–104.1 cm). Tricolored kingsnake with red, black, and white, cream, or yellow bands. *Light rings do not widen near belly scales.* Black bands border red and light bands and become narrow or disappear on sides. Top of head black; *snout light colored.* Scales smooth, in 23–25 rows. Anal plate single.

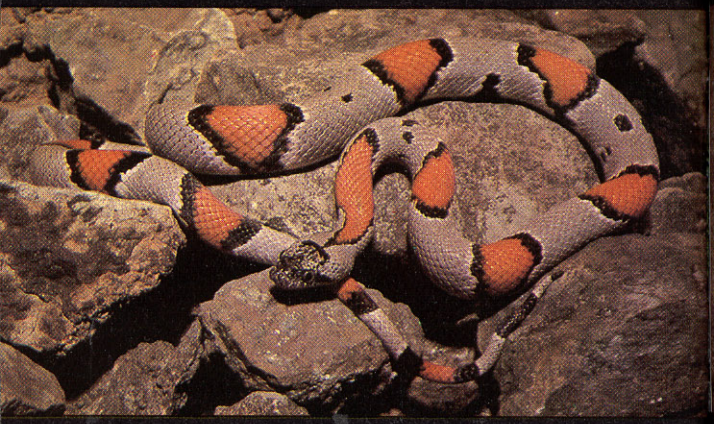
Breeding: Mates in spring. Clutches of 3–6 elongated eggs, 1½–2⅜″ (44–60 cm) long, are deposited June to July and hatch in about 2½–3 months. Young 9–10″ (8.8–10 cm) long.

Habitat: Chaparral woodland and pine forests in mountainous regions; brushy rocky canyons, talus slopes, and near streams and springs; 2,800–9,100′ (850–2,800 m).

Range: Nc. Arizona south into Mexico; isolated populations in Utah, Nevada, and Arizona.

Subspecies: Four; 3 in our range.

Arizona (*L. p. pyromelana*), usually more than 43 light rings on body, 10 lower lip scales; c. and se. Arizona and sw. New Mexico into nw. Mexico.
Utah (*L. p. infralabialis*), half or more of white body rings cross belly, 9 lower lip scales; e. Nevada, c. Nevada to Grand Canyon area of nw. Arizona.
Huachuca (*L. p. woodini*), usually fewer than 43 light rings on body, 10 lower lip scales; Huachuca Mountains, s. Arizona into Mexico.



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