



1. Eastern Hognose (*Heterodon platyrhinos*)

This is a medium sized (~3 ft) **non-venomous** snake /w variable color/pattern and 1) an upturned snout, (2) suite of defensive behaviors incl. head-flattening and playing dead. Please report all sightings of this snake to Natural Resources.

2. Northern Brown Snake (*Storeria dekayi*)

AKA Dekay's Brown Snake, this is a small (10-12 in) **non-venomous** snake, brown with a white underbelly and common near garbage dumps and debris sites. Like most small snakes, it feeds on insects and other invertebrates.

3. Ribbon Snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*)

This is a small (10-12 in), **non-venomous** snake found in wetlands, streams. It is a small dark snake with light side stripes, underbelly. It resembles the garter but has a narrower head/body, longer tail, an white markings before its eyes.



4. Ringneck Snake (*Diadophis punctatus*)

The ringneck snake is a small (up to 1.5 ft) **non-venomous** snake, usually dark green, brown, black, or gray backed except for yellow ring just below its head. It is not particularly rare, it is nocturnal so it is rarely seen.

5. Redbelly snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*)

The [northern] redbelly snake is a small (1-1½ ft) **non-venomous** snake. Brown backed like the northern brown snake, the redbelly can be parsed by its namesake red belly. They prefer moist habitats.

6. Smooth Green Snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*)

This is a small (up to 1.5 ft or so) **non-venomous** snake, bright green in color with as white-yellow underbelly. This insect-eating snake lives in fields, wetlands, or open woods and despite its bright color, is very rarely seen.

7. Eastern Worm Snake (*Carphophis amoenus*)

The worm snake is a small (8 to 10 in. — our smallest snake) **non-venomous** snake. Brown to pink, it could easily be mistaken for a large worm, hence its name. It lives under ground, rocks, ogs and debris and therefore is rarely seen.

Q&A: MOCCASINS, SNAKE ENCOUNTERERS

Q: Are there water moccasins here? A: No. There are no venomous water moccasins (AKA cottonmouths) in NY. Our non-venomous water snake is often mistaken for them.

Q: How does one keep from being bit? A: Good question. Keep distance from and never handle snakes. And look where walking in woods, tall grass esp. stepping over logs.

Q: Will a snake chase and attack a person? A: No. A snake will try to avoid people and only attack if threatened. Keep your distance and both you and the snake will be fine.

Q: What should one do if bit? A: Stay calm and seek medical attention immediately esp. if experiencing swelling, discoloration, or difficulty breathing. Don't catch the snake.

Q: Why is there a snake in my yard, shed, or garage? A: Your snake is probably hunting mice. Tall grass, messy bird-feeders or unsecured seed, food, and pet food attract mice.

Q: Can I do anything about the snake? A: Mowed lawns and securely stored seed, food, and pet food deter mice. Less mice means less snakes. Mothballs also deter both.

Five-Lined Skink (*Plestiodon fasciatus*)



The five-lined skink is a small (5-10 in.), **non-venomous** lizard (our only resident lizard) found in forests and fields in areas strewn with rocks or fallen logs for cover. It is dark in color with five bright lines running down its body. Juveniles have blue tails and males have red heads in mating season. Skinks usu. eat insects and other invertebrates and are noted for their care of eggs until hatching, unusual in most reptiles.

BASIC SNAKE SAFETY REVIEW

Do these things to keep people and animals safe:

- **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE** - Any snake may bite. Venomous snakes can be esp. dangerous. Keep away.
- **REPORT ANIMAL ISSUES** - call a wildlife responder if human or animal well-being is a concern.

REPORTING SNAKE ISSUES

Know when and what to report and who to contact

- **WHEN TO REPORT: Call right away** If you see a snake 1) handled, indoors, or in a busy area 2) that is venomous or hognose 3) hurt or sick 4) has been harvested illegally.
- **WHAT TO REPORT:** Be sure to say: 1) when and 2) where snake issue happened, 3) what the snake did 4) where snake is (if known), 5) your name, phone number.
- **CONTACT:** Natural Resources Branch: 845-938-2314, -7122, (M-F 0745-1630). West Point Game Wardens via the Military Police Sgt Desk at: 845-938-3333 (anytime).

SNAKES & LIZARDS OF THE WEST POINT MILITARY RESERVATION



Building 667A Ruger Road
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SNAKES & LIZARDS OF WEST POINT

The West Point Military Reservation is home to more different types of snakes than most other areas in New York State. An impressive fourteen different snake species can be found over the many diverse habitat types across West Point's ~16,000 acres. Of those fourteen species, **only two species — the timber rattlesnake and copperhead — are venomous**.

It is our goal, in putting out this brochure, to help its readers correctly identify any snakes they may encounter. This, we hope, will in turn lead to less fear and better decision-making when people encounter snakes. What follows here is a list and short description of each of the fourteen different snake species, including pictures and very brief summaries of physical description, life history, habitat, diet, whether species is **venomous** or **non-venomous** and other relevant facts. We've also included a brief piece about our sole resident lizard, the five-lined skink. While we hope the material included proves useful in identifying and explaining some things about these animals, it is by no means a comprehensive guide. For more information, visit the NYSDEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov.

Encounters: Any sightings or encounters with timber rattlesnakes, copperheads or unidentifiable snakes should be reported ASAP to Natural Resources Branch staff at (845) 938-7122 or (845) 938-2314

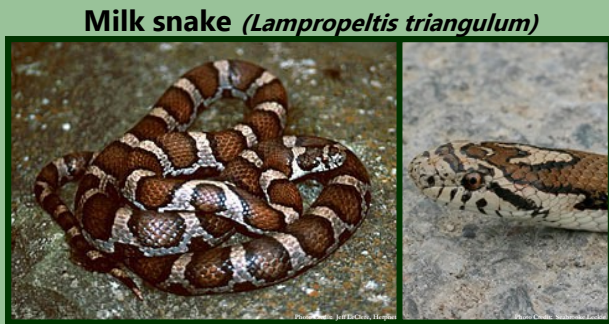
Harvesting: Per New York State regulations, the harvest, taking, or possessing of any native snakes, lizards, or salamanders is prohibited at any time. For both human and snake safety, do not handle snakes



The timber rattlesnake is a large (3-5 ft), **venomous** snake, usually found in forested mountain areas. It will vary in color (yellow to brown to black) /w irregular zigzag cross-band patterns. Its most distinctive feature is its rattle. This snake's venom is highly toxic and its severe bite, though rare, can be fatal. Rattlesnakes are a NY state-threatened species and as such, killing a snake or disturbing a den-site is a punishable offense. If observed, do not disturb this snake. Please report all sightings of this rare snake to the Natural Resources office. (Rattlesnake face pictured on cover, top left).



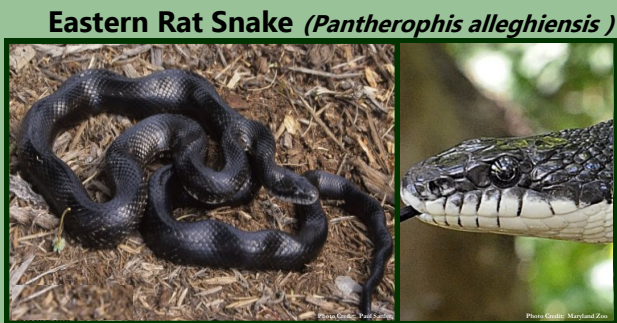
The [northern] copperhead is a medium-sized (2-3 ft) **venomous** snake, usu. found in dry areas. They are reddish-brown with darker red-brown blotches and true to their name, bright copper head. It is a shy species but will bite if threatened. Its venomous, bites are not considered life threatening but are very painful with localized swelling, tissue damage.



The [eastern] milk snake is a medium-sized (2-3 ft), **non-venomous** snake common around houses. It is light brown with dark red-brown blotches, similar in pattern to copperheads but in greater contrast. A milk snake will also have "Y" or "V" shaped blotch on the back of head. It mimics the tail-shaking of timber rattlesnakes, but, of course, lacks rattle.



The [eastern] garter snake, snake is a small (1-2 ft) **non-venomous** snake. It is small black--brown to olive with yellow-white side stripes and underbelly. Although similar to its close relative ribbon snake, it has a thicker head/body and shorter tail. It is one of the most frequently encountered snakes, most common in wooded areas and fields as well as in residential areas.



The eastern [black] rat snake is a large (usu 4-6 ft, but up to 8 ft—our largest snake) **non-venomous** snake, most often found on rocky ridges, wooded slopes. This mostly rodent-eating snake has strongly-patterned juvenile and solid black adults forms like the black racer, but differs in that rat snake has a bread shaped body, rougher scales and long white underside.



The eastern black racer is a large (3-5 ft), **non-venomous** snake., found frequently in warm, sunny areas. Like the black rat snake, it's strongly patterned as a juvenile, and solidly black as an adult. The racer differs in that it has smoother scales, a rounder body, and save for a white chin, darker underside. Fast and agile, it will bite viciously if handled.



The northern water snake is a medium-sized (up to 3.5 ft), **non-venomous** snake, found in and around lakes, ponds, and streams. Strongly banded as a juvenile, as an adult its coloration fades to dark brown. Although NY is far north of the latter's range, the non-venomous water snake is commonly misidentified as the venomous water moccasin (also know as the cottonmouth). Water moccasins are not found in New York.