

IDENTIFICATION: The Eastern Indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*) is a large glossy blue-black non-poisonous snake reaching lengths of up to 9 feet. It is a solid color with an occasional orange, pink white or reddish area under the chin, which may extend to the throat and cheeks. It is sometimes confused with the similar black racer or the black pine snake, but is much stockier than the slender racer, which has a white chin patch and the black pine snake, which has no chin patch and keeled rather than smooth scales.



Indigos are active during the day during much of the year and prey on small mammals, lizards, birds, frogs, toads, and other snakes. They are immune to the venom of all North American poisonous snakes and readily eat them. Indigos use a variety of habitats during the year, but are almost always associated with gopher tortoises and the sandy ridges they inhabit. Indigos often share the gopher's den during hot or cold weather. Indigos are relatively docile and slow moving, probably contributing to their decline.

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Forestry operations are not likely to directly affect indigo snakes, unless woods workers are tempted to kill such a large, slow-moving snake. Unless habitat modification is severe, such as woodland being converted to another use, most forestry operations will not harm indigo snakes. Loss of gopher tortoise habitat and, subsequently, gopher tortoises would likely negatively impact indigo snakes. Sightings of indigo snakes are of great interest to scientists studying the species.

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: There are no recent records of occurrence for the indigo snake in Alabama. However, biologists believe that a few remnant populations may still exist within its historical range in the state. Counties in which indigo snakes were historically known to occur include Baldwin, Bullock, Conecuh, Covington, Escambia, Geneva, Mobile and Washington.

Photo and Text Credit: Threatened and Endangered Species of Alabama: A Guide to Assist with Forestry Activities, Second Edition, USFS



This information is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission

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