

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

**Element Code:** ARADB19041

**Data Sensitivity:** Yes

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Lampropeltis pyromelana infralabialis*

**COMMON NAME:** Utah Mountain Kingsnake

**SYNONYMS:**

**FAMILY:** Colubridae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Tanner, The Great Basin Naturalist, Vol. 13, No. 1-2, pp. 47-66. 1953.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** Beaver County, Utah.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** HT: BYU 103140. 1950.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** About a dozen species in genus; four subspecies of *L. pyromelana*, 3 of which occur in Arizona (*pyromelana*, *infralabialis*, *woodini*).

**DESCRIPTION:** The hatchlings are between 8-11 in (20-28 m) and the adults between 18-45 in (46-114 m). Scallation is as follows: dorsal 21-23, ventral 213-230, sub-caudal 59-79, infralabial 9, supralabial 7-8, analplate single. The Utah Mountain Kingsnake is a tri-colored snake with orange or red, white or yellow and black rings. Their face is white, with a distinct black mask; the first white ring encircles the head, starting behind the mask. There are generally 42-57 white rings on the body and 9-10 on the tail. Utah specimens are quite variable. In general, they tend to be darker than Arizona specimens and have more black rings that widen across the red rings dorsally. Fifty percent or more of the white body rings extend unbroken across the belly.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** Fifty percent or more of the white body rings extend unbroken across the belly and the lower labial scales equal 9.

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color drawing of species (Stebbins 1966: plate 37)  
Color photo of species (Behler 1979: plate 598)  
Color photo of species (AGFD 2000: Cover)  
Color photo (Bartholomew in Koenig, accessed 2002).

**TOTAL RANGE:** *Lampropeltis pyromelana infralabialis* ranges from Arizona north of the Colorado River on the Arizona Strip through central Utah and eastern Nevada where they are

confined to Water and Sawmill canyons in the Egan Range, White Pine Co., NV. and Washington Co., UT. Distribution spotty.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Arizona north of the Colorado River on the Arizona Strip to the Utah-Arizona state border, including the Virgin Mountains, Mohave County.

## **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:** According to one study it was found that these snakes spend most of their time underground and they prefer relatively cool temperatures around 18-22 °C. When basking on the surface they often remain well hidden by undergrowth. This snake is a constrictor but often vibrates tail as a “bluff”. They sometimes roll into a ball with its head at the center and evert the lining of the cloaca as a “bluff”.

**REPRODUCTION:** They mate from mid-March to early July. The Utah Mountain Kingsnake is oviparous, laying 6-12 eggs in clutch. Their incubation period is 66-83 days. The striped and banded phases often occur within offspring of the same clutch of eggs.

**FOOD HABITS:** Primarily consume snakes, lizards, small mammals, birds, eggs and frogs. They are immune to rattlesnake venom.

**HABITAT:** Utah Mountain Kingsnakes frequent pinyon-juniper woodland and chaparral to the pine-fir belt. In Utah they have been found in sagebrush, Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir plant communities. Specimens in Arizona have been found in habitat characterized by Ponderosa pine, sagebrush and New Mexico locust. They are typically found near water and rocky areas.

**ELEVATION:** 2,800-9,100 ft (850-2800m).

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Frequent pinyon-juniper woodland and chaparral. Arizona specimens found in Ponderosa pine, sagebrush and New Mexico locust. In Utah, they frequent Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir plant communities.

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Unknown.

## **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:**

None

**STATE STATUS:**

None

**OTHER STATUS:**

Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS  
Region 3 1999)

Full species Determined Threatened

(Secretaría de Medio ambiente 2000)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** None**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:** Collection regulated.**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies. A taxonomic review to determine the validity of this subspecies.**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** BLM – Arizona Strip Field Office.

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **REFERENCES:**

- Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2002. Arizona Wildlife Views. May-June.
- Behler, J. L. 1979. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Reptiles and Amphibians. Alfred E. Knopf, New York, New York, pp. 598.
- Koenig, H. F. 2002. *Lampropeltis pyromelana infralabialis*, Available at: [www.kingsnake.com/king/pyromelana/infralabialis.html](http://www.kingsnake.com/king/pyromelana/infralabialis.html).
- Secretaría de Medio Ambiente. 2000. Diario Oficial de la Federación. p. 51
- Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. Second edition, revised. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, pp 194.
- Tanner, W. W. 1953. A Study of Taxonomy and Phylogeny of *Lampropeltis pyromelana* Cope. The Great Basin Naturalist, vol. 13, no 1-2, pp. 47-66.
- Utah's Hogle Zoo. 2002. Utah Mountain Kingsnake. Available at: [www.xmission.com/~hoglezoo/reptiles/utah-king.htm](http://www.xmission.com/~hoglezoo/reptiles/utah-king.htm)
- USDA, Forest Service Region 3. 1999. Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List.

### **MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

- T.R. Van Devender – Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, Arizona.
- S. Hale – Tucson, Arizona.
- B. Martin – Tucson, Arizona.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

In recent years there have been reports of intergrades between *Lampropeltis pyromelana infralabialis* and the Utah Milksnake *L. triangulum taylori* occurring naturally in northern Utah. Bartholomew examined some of these reported intergrades and found them to be neither intergrades nor new subspecies. Instead, he concluded that the deviation pattern exhibited was a result of “edge of range” effect and not from hybridization. Generic name means “shiny skin.”

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