

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

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ARADB35120

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Tantilla wilcoxi*

COMMON NAME: Chihuahuan Black-headed Snake, Huachuca Black-headed Snake

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: Serpentes: Colubridae

AUTHOR, PUBLICATION: Stejneger, Smithsonian Inst. Proceed. of the USNM Vol. XXV (1903).

TYPE LOCALITY: Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

TYPE SPECIMEN: USNM 19674, collected by T.E. Wilcox.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: About 45 species in genus from southern U.S. to South America. Two subspecies in *T. wilcoxi* but only *T. w. wilcoxi* occurs in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: Stebbins (1966 and 1985). Head broad, much wider than the neck, with large eyes (pupils small and round). Total length 7-14 inches. Dorsally brown; black cap on head, bordered by broad white collar that crosses the tips of the parietals. The light collar is bordered with black band, 1-1.5 scales wide. Brown above, with dark spots on the sides. Ventrally dull and pale anteriorly, becoming bright red or orange toward tail. Back scales are smooth and in 15 rows. Anal plate is divided. Ventral scales number 148-157. 62 caudal scales in two rows beneath the tail.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: The broad white collar that crosses the tips of the parietals, will distinguish this species from all other *Tantilla* species. This snakes coloration and lack of dark markings on the belly distinguish it from the similar looking [Ring-necked Snake](#).

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Black and white drawing (Stebbins 1966: plate 35)

Black and white drawing (Stebbins 1985: plate 41)

Black and white drawing (Behler and King 1979: 662)

Color Photo: <http://www.reptilesfaz.org/Snakes-Subpages/h-t-wilcoxi.html>

TOTAL RANGE: Extreme southeast Arizona south to San Luis Potosi, Mexico.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Extreme southeast corner of the state. Huachuca (Ramsey Canyon), Santa Rita, and Patagonia Mountains.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Nocturnal. Inactive in cold as well as hot temperatures.

REPRODUCTION: Lays 1-3 eggs in spring and summer.

FOOD HABITS: Small arthropods; burrowing grubs, centipedes, but especially spiders.

HABITAT: Lives mainly on cactus-covered rocky hills, in grasslands and in pine-oak forests. Found under rocks, logs, and dead plants (agaves, yucca, and sotol), in shaded rocky canyons and on relatively open, sunny, and rocky slopes.

ELEVATION: Around 3,000-8,000 feet (910-2,440 m). Behler and King (1979) reports elevations of 3,000-5,000 feet (900-1,500 m).

PLANT COMMUNITY: Desert-grasslands and evergreen woodlands.

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None
STATE STATUS: 1B (AGFD SWAP 2012)
OTHER STATUS: ANHP Peripheral Mexican Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 2013)

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: None

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: None

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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- Shaw, C.E. and S. Campbell. 1974. Snakes of the American West. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. p. 167
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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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