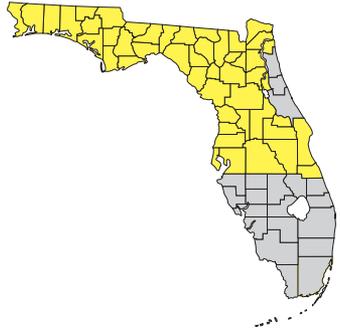


SOUTHERN HOGNOSE SNAKE

Heterodon simus



Order:	Squamata
Family:	Colubridae
FNAI Ranks:	G2/S2
U.S. Status:	None
FL Status:	None

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Description: A relatively small (to 20 in. = 508 mm) but very stocky snake with a sharply upturned, pointed snout. Pattern of large dark blotches on a lighter, gray to tan groundcolor; plain or mottled below, with underside of

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tail similar to belly. Scales keeled, anal scale divided. Like other hognose species, defensive behaviors include flattening of head and neck, loud hissing, and playing dead.

Similar Species: Eastern hognose (*Heterodon platirhinos*) is distinguished by less sharply upturned snout, and underside of tail that is lighter than belly; some specimens are plain rather than blotched. No other Florida snake has an upturned snout. Pigmy rattlesnake (*Sistrurus miliarius*) is similarly patterned but has narrow neck, triangular head, vertical pupils, pit between each eye and nostril, tiny rattle, and often a rusty stripe on back.

Habitat: Principally xeric sandy uplands, especially sandhill, scrub, xeric hammock, and derived oldfields; rare in more mesic hammocks and dry river floodplains. Often associated with ephemeral wetlands that may serve as breeding areas for the toads upon which this snake feeds.

Seasonal Occurrence: Active in warmer months of year, from April - May to October - November. Lays eggs July - October.

Florida Distribution: Highly scattered localities in panhandle and peninsula south to northern edge of Lake Okeechobee. May be absent from some indicated counties.

Range-wide Distribution: Lower Southeastern Coastal Plain, from southeastern North Carolina to south-central Florida, west to southern Mississippi.

Conservation Status: Declining. Present on some large state and national forests as well as Eglin Air Force Base. Principally threatened by loss and fragmentation of xeric upland habitat.

Protection and Management: Maintain large, relatively unfragmented, roadless tracts of xeric upland habitats with prescribed fire and a minimum of roads.

Selected References: Ashton and Ashton 1988b, Conant and Collins 1991, Ernst and Barbour 1989, Mount 1975, Tenant 1997, Tuberville et al. 2000.