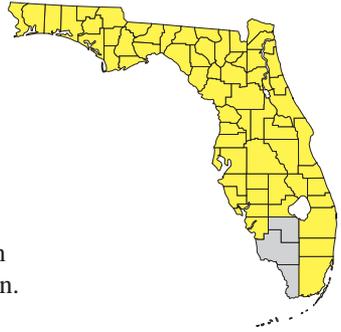


**FLORIDA PINE SNAKE**  
*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*



**Order:** Squamata  
**Family:** Colubridae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G4T3?/S3  
**U.S. Status:** None  
**FL Status:** Species of Special Concern  
State possession limit of one snake per person.



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**Description:** A large, stocky, tan or rusty colored snake with an indistinct pattern of large blotches on a lighter background; blotches more distinct posteriorly; venter white. May be dark brown in far western panhandle, where it intergrades with another subspecies. Body muscular, with keeled scales and undivided anal scale. Head relatively small, snout somewhat

## **FLORIDA PINE SNAKE** *Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*

pointed, four prefrontal scales, rostral scale extending upward between internasal scales. Adults 4 - 7 ft. (122 - 213 cm) or longer; young 15 - 24 in. (380 - 610 mm) at hatching. May hiss loudly and vibrate tail when encountered.

**Similar Species:** Most Florida snakes have only two prefrontal scales, and the rostral scale does not split the two internasals. Blotches of red rat snakes (*Elaphe guttata*) are smaller, more numerous (nearly 40), and more distinct. Eastern coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*) is more slender, usually darker anteriorly, lacks blotches, and has smooth scales and divided anal scale.

**Habitat:** Habitats with relatively open canopies and dry sandy soils, in which it burrows. Especially sandhill and former sandhill, including oldfields and pastures, but also sand pine scrub and scrubby flatwoods. Often coexists with pocket gophers and gopher tortoises.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Spends most of time below ground; occasional surface activity from spring through fall, especially May - October. Eggs laid June - August; hatch in September and October.

**Florida Distribution:** Most of panhandle and peninsula south to Lake Okeechobee, extending southward along eastern ridge to Dade County, but absent from Keys. Possibly extirpated from some of more heavily developed counties such as Pinellas.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Southern South Carolina, southern Georgia, and most of Florida.

**Conservation Status:** Occurs on many state and federal lands in Florida. Threats include collection for pets (now restricted); highway mortality; and habitat loss and fragmentation from development, intensive agriculture, and mining.

**Protection and Management:** Maintain large, unfragmented blocks of xeric natural communities; can tolerate some habitat degradation. Manage habitats with fire to prevent succession to closed canopy forests.

**Selected References:** Ashton and Ashton 1988b, Conant and Collins 1991, Ernst and Barbour 1989, Franz 1986, Moler (ed.) 1992, Mount 1975, Tenant 1997.