

FLORIDA BROWN SNAKE, LOWER KEYS

POPULATION

Storeria victa pop. 1

Order: Squamata
Family: Colubridae
FNAI Ranks: G5T1Q/S1
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: Threatened



Description: A very small, spotted brown snake, usually less than 12 in. (305 mm) long. Back varies from light to dark brown, sometimes gray, with a faint, light band behind the head. Belly pale, usually with a dark spot at lateral edge of each ventral scale. Scales on back and sides strongly keeled; anal scale divided.

Similar Species: Key Ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus acricus*; see species account) has a gray to black back and partly yellow-orange belly with black spots. Crowned snake (*Tantilla oolitica*; see species account), not known from Lower Keys, has head much darker than body and is pale ventrally. Both species have smooth scales.

Habitat: Pine rocklands and tropical hardwood hammocks, frequently taking refuge beneath rocks or other cover. Sometimes near surface water, though less aquatic than peninsular brown snakes.

Seasonal Occurrence: Few data, presumably less active in winter.

Florida Distribution: The state-protected Lower Keys population is known from No Name, Big Pine, Little Torch, Middle Torch, and Sugarloaf keys; may occur on others.

Range-wide Distribution: The species is widespread throughout the eastern U.S. The Florida race, *Storeria dekayi victa*, extends from southeastern Georgia throughout the Florida peninsula and Keys.

Conservation Status: Occurs on national wildlife refuge, but much of remaining habitat is degraded or threatened by development.

Protection and Management: Manage habitat of known populations to keep it in as natural a state as possible.

References: Conant and Collins 1991, Lazell 1989, Moler (ed.) 1992, Tenant 1997.



brown snake from peninsular Florida © Richard D. Bartlett



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