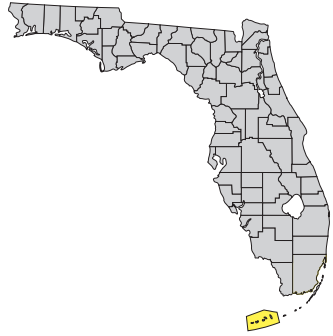


## PENINSULA RIBBON SNAKE (LOWER KEYS)

### *Thamnophis sauritus sackenii*, Lower Keys population



|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| <b>Order:</b>       | Squamata   |
| <b>Family:</b>      | Colubridae |
| <b>FNAIRanks:</b>   | G5T1Q/S1   |
| <b>U.S. Status:</b> | None       |
| <b>FL Status:</b>   | Threatened |

State-protected status applies only to ribbon snakes in the Lower Florida Keys.



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**Description:** A medium-small (to 40 in. = 102 cm), slender snake with a pair of light longitudinal stripes on the sides, and usually a pale mid-dorsal stripe on the back. The dorsal stripe may be yellow, orange, or brown, often bordered by black. Dorsal groundcolor olive to brown; belly pale yellow. Small white spot in front of eye; lip scales whitish. Scales on back and sides keeled; anal scale undivided. Tail, as measured from behind vent, is long and narrow, comprising nearly one-third of the snake's total length.

**Similar Species:** No other striped snakes occur in the Keys. On the mainland, the closely related eastern garter snake, *Thamnophis sirtalis*, is similar but has a heavier body and shorter tail, usually less than one-fourth of total length.

**PENINSULA RIBBON  
SNAKE (LOWER KEYS)**

*Thamnophis sauritus sackenii*,  
**Lower Keys population**

**Habitat:** Generally near water, including mangroves and spartina marsh as well as freshwater depressions and ditches.

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

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

**Range-wide Distribution:** *T. sauritus*, the eastern ribbon snake, inhabits non-mountainous areas throughout the eastern U.S. The peninsula ribbon snake, *T. s. sackenii*, ranges from southeastern South Carolina through Georgia and the Florida peninsula to the Keys.

**Conservation Status:** Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge protects some habitat, but much habitat is threatened by development and drainage.

**Protection and Management:** Protect all Lower Keys wetland habitats, from drainage, pollution, and disturbance by surrounding them with broad, terrestrial buffers. Protect underground freshwater lens from over-consumption, which would lead to salt water intrusion.

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



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