

Reptiles of Tennessee



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General Comments

- Reptiles are ectothermic, scaled vertebrates that generally lay shelled eggs
- Two major clades (diapsids and anapsids)
- Diapsids (crocodiles, lizards, snakes, tuatara, and birds)
- Therapsids (current-day mammals)
- Anapsids (Turtles and tortoises)

General Comments

- General taxonomy of reptiles
- Do it with me now!

Kingdom – **Animalia**
 Phylum – **Chordata**
 Class – **Reptilia**
 Order – **Squamata (Lacertilia, Serpentes, Amphisbaenia)**
 Crocodylia
 Testudines
 Sphenodontia
 Family – **Colubridae**
 Genus – **Lampropeltis**
 Species – **triangulum**



General Comments

- Reptile families in TN
- Squamata (Lacertilia [Lizards])
 - Dactyloidae
 - Phrynosomatidae
 - Anguidae
 - Scincidae
 - Teiidae
- Squamata (Serpentes [snakes])
 - Colubridae
 - Viperidae
- Testudines
 - Emydidae
 - Chelydridae
 - Trionychidae
- Kinosternidae





Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

Family - Dactyloidae

1. Lime green coloration
2. Pointed snout
3. Blocky scalation
4. Large dewlap in males
5. Large toepads
6. Common in dry, sun-exposed habs.
7. Oviparous





Eastern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*)

Family - Phrynosomatidae

1. Sharp (keeled) scales
2. Gray-brown dorsal coloration
3. Striking blue/white venter
4. Clawed toetips
5. Common in dry, sun-exposed habs.
6. Oviparous





North American Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)

Family - Colubridae

- 1. Double anal plate
- 2. Smooth scales
- 3. Jet black dorsum, white chin/belly
- 4. Circular in cross-section
- 5. Oviparous
- 6. Non-Venomous





Eastern Gray Ratsnake (*Pantherophis spiloides/allenhamiensis*)

Family - Colubridae

- 1. Double anal plate
- 2. Weakly keeled scales
- 3. Blackish/white/gray mottling on dorsum
- 4. Whitish throat and ventrum
- 5. Loaf-like in cross section
- 6. Oviparous
- 7. Non-venomous





Eastern Black Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis nigra*)

Family - Colubridae

- 1. Single anal plate
- 2. Smooth scales
- 3. Black dorsum, lateral yellowish flecking
- 4. Loaf-like in cross-section
- 5. Oviparous
- 6. Non-Venomous





Dekay's Brownsnake (*Storeria dekayi*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Keeled scales
3. Brown dorsum
4. Dark saddles on dorsal surface
5. Oviparous
6. Non-Venomous





Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Single anal plate
2. Strongly keeled scales
3. Striped and checkered dorsum
4. Dorsal and lateral surfaces yellowish/brown
5. Viviparous
6. Non-venomous





Common Watersnake (*Nerodia sipedon*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Strongly keeled scales
3. Reverse hour glass-like dorsal bands
4. Highly aquatic
5. Can be "defensive"
6. Viviparous
7. Non-venomous





Common Wormsnake (*Carphophis amoenus*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Smooth scales
3. Purplish dorsum, pink ventrum
4. Pointed snout, small eyes
5. Oviparous
6. Non-venomous





Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Keeled scales
3. Variable coloration of dorsum...
4. Loaf-like in cross-section
5. Oviparous
6. Mildly venomous...
7. Death-feigning behavior is key





Queensnake (*Regina septemvittata*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Strongly keeled scales
3. Brownish/dark dorsum
4. Cream-colored ventrum
5. Lines on dorsal and lateral surfaces
6. Highly aquatic
7. Viviparous
8. Non-venomous





Eastern Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Single anal plate
2. Smooth scales
3. Red saddles on white surface
4. Saddles extend down to belly
5. Oviparous
6. Non-venomous



Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Single anal plate
2. Keeled scale
3. Rufous/brown dorsum
4. Dark head
5. Three spots behind head
6. Generally red belly
7. Oviparous
8. Non-venomous



Ring-necked Snake (*Diadophis punctatus*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Smooth scales
3. Bluish-black dorsum
4. Yellow neck band
5. Yellow belly with various spotting
6. Oviparous
7. Non-venomous



Rough Greensnake (*Opheodrys aestivus*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Strongly keeled scales
3. Lime green dorsum
4. Whitish ventrum
5. Long and slender body shape
6. Highly aboreal
7. Oviparous
8. Non-venomous





Scarletsnake (*Cemophora coccinea*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Smooth scales
3. Distinct red saddles
4. Pointed snout
5. Oviparous
6. Non-venomous...





Smooth Earthsnake (*Virginia valeriae*)

Family - Colubridae

1. Double anal plate
2. Smooth scales
3. Distinct red saddles
4. Pointed snout
5. Oviparous
6. Non-venomous...





Eastern Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*)
 Family - Viperidae
 1. Single anal plate
 2. Strongly keeled scales
 3. Hourglass-shaped dorsalbands
 4. Facial pits
 5. Ovoviviparous
 6. **Venomous**



Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)
 Family - Viperidae
 1. Single anal plate
 2. Strongly keeled scales
 3. Facial pit
 4. Rattle, robust body, zig-zag bands
 5. Ovoviviparous
 6. **Venomous**



Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*)
 Family - Chelydridae
 1. Large, hooked beak-like mandible
 2. Large dorsal spines
 3. Relatively long tail
 4. Can reach up to 60 lbs!
 5. Worm-like tongue



Eastern Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)
 Family - Chelydridae
 1. Non-hinged shell
 2. Complete carapace, non-complete plastron
 3. Robust, generally large body size
 4. Sharp, keratinized beak
 5. Primarily aquatic
 6. Can be "defensive", quite defensive
 7. Oviparous



Bog Turtle (*Glzemys muhlenbergii*)
 Family - Emydidae
 1. Small turtle (3.5 in. max length)
 2. Red or yellowish patch behind eye
 3. Mountain bog habitat in SE (NE TN only)
 4. Carapace scutes with brown rings
 5. Difficult to detect when present



Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*)
 Family - Emydidae
 1. Medium-sized aquatic turtle (10 in. maximum)
 2. Yellow stripes on head and neck (map contours)
 3. Large dorsal keel
 4. Present in larger water sources
 5. Females sexually dimorphic



Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*)
 Family - Emydidae
 1. Hinged shell (carapace + plastron)
 2. Large domed shell
 3. Highly variable coloration
 4. Primarily terrestrial
 5. Usually charismatic
 6. Oviparous



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Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)
 Family - Emydidae
 1. Yellow lines on face; yellow spot behind eye
 2. Smooth scutes on carapace
 3. Bright red scutes around rim of shell
 4. Baskers
 5. Lotic habitats



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Pond Slider (*Trachemys scripta*)
 Family - Emydidae
 1. Yellow lines on face
 2. Black blotches on plastron scutes
 3. Carapace with large yellow circles
 4. Red "ear" behind eye with some subspecies
 5. Red-eared slider exotic in TN



River Cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*)

Family - Emydidae

1. Yellow lines on face
2. Concentric circles on carapace scutes
3. Smaller donut-shaped circles on marginals
4. Females sexually dimorphic
5. More riverine than lentic



Eastern Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon subrubrum*)

Family - Kinosternidae

1. Smooth drab shell
2. Dome-shape to shell
3. Hinged shell (2 hinges)
4. Yellow streaking on head
5. Lentic water sources with vegetation



Eastern Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*)

Family - Kinosternidae

1. Smooth drab shell
2. Dome-shape to shell
3. Hinged shell (one hinge)
4. Chin "barbules"
5. Light stripes on side of head
6. Variety of aquatic habitats



Loggerhead Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus minor*)
Family - Kinosternidae

1. Center keel on carapace
2. Overall dome shape to shell
3. Light brown head with dark spots
4. Chin "barbules"
5. Light stripes on side of head
6. Variety of aquatic habitats
7. One hinge on shell



Smooth Softshell Turtle (*Apalone mutica*)
Family - Trionychidae

1. Leathery/rubbery circular shell
2. Complete carapace, non-complete plastron
3. Pancake appearance
4. No ridged septum in nose
5. Long neck and snorkel-like nose
6. Primarily aquatic
7. Can be surprisingly defensive



Spiny Softshell Turtle (*Apalone spinifer*)
Family - Trionychidae

1. Leathery/rubbery circular shell
2. Complete carapace, non-complete plastron
3. Pancake appearance
4. Ridge in septum of nose
5. Long neck and snorkel-like nose
6. Primarily aquatic
7. Can be surprisingly defensive
8. Dark dots on carapace


