

USACE Natural Resource Management

Reptiles & Amphibians



Black Pinesnake

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR LISTING STATUS: This subspecies has declined significantly with the loss and degradation of the longleaf pine forest habitat on which this snake depends. Habitat has been lost due to fragmentation, fire suppression, conversion of natural pine forest to pine plantations, agriculture, and urban development.

The loss and degradation of habitat combined with an already small and fragmented range had many negative impacts on this snake. As a result, the black pinesnake was listed Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2015. (USFWS)

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: The USFWS recognizes that active forest management is key to maintaining suitable habitat for the black pinesnake. As such, a special rule was crafted to maximize management flexibility and reduce regulatory burden by exempting most normal forest management activities.

The Service also designated 324,679 acres spanning nine counties of Mississippi and Alabama as critical habitat for this snake. This critical habitat was finalized in 2020. (USFWS)

HABITAT NEEDS: The black pinesnake is native to longleaf pine ecosystems and exhibits considerable site fidelity, returning to the same stump holes from year to year. (USFWS)

- Sandy, well-drained soil is necessary for burrowing.
- The subspecies prefers open-canopied, longleaf pine forests with reduced shrub layers and dense vegetative ground cover.
- The black pinesnake benefits from forest management practices which protects the federally listed gopher tortoise and Red-cockaded Woodpecker (USFWS).
- The subspecies frequently inhabits hilltops, ridges, and the upper portions of slopes. It is rarely found in riparian areas, hardwood forests, or closed canopy situations (NatureServe).

Description: This non-venomous, egg-laying constrictor reaches lengths of 4-6 feet as adults. This subspecies is considered to be fairly large and stocky for a snake. This snake may be dark brown to black on the back and belly. Young black pinesnakes often have a blotched pattern which darkens with age. Blotches are still sometimes seen on the hindbody of adults. The head is small with a pointed snout to allow for burrowing. (USFWS)

Photos: USFWS, The Alabama Forest Commission, & Jim Lee of the Nature Conservancy

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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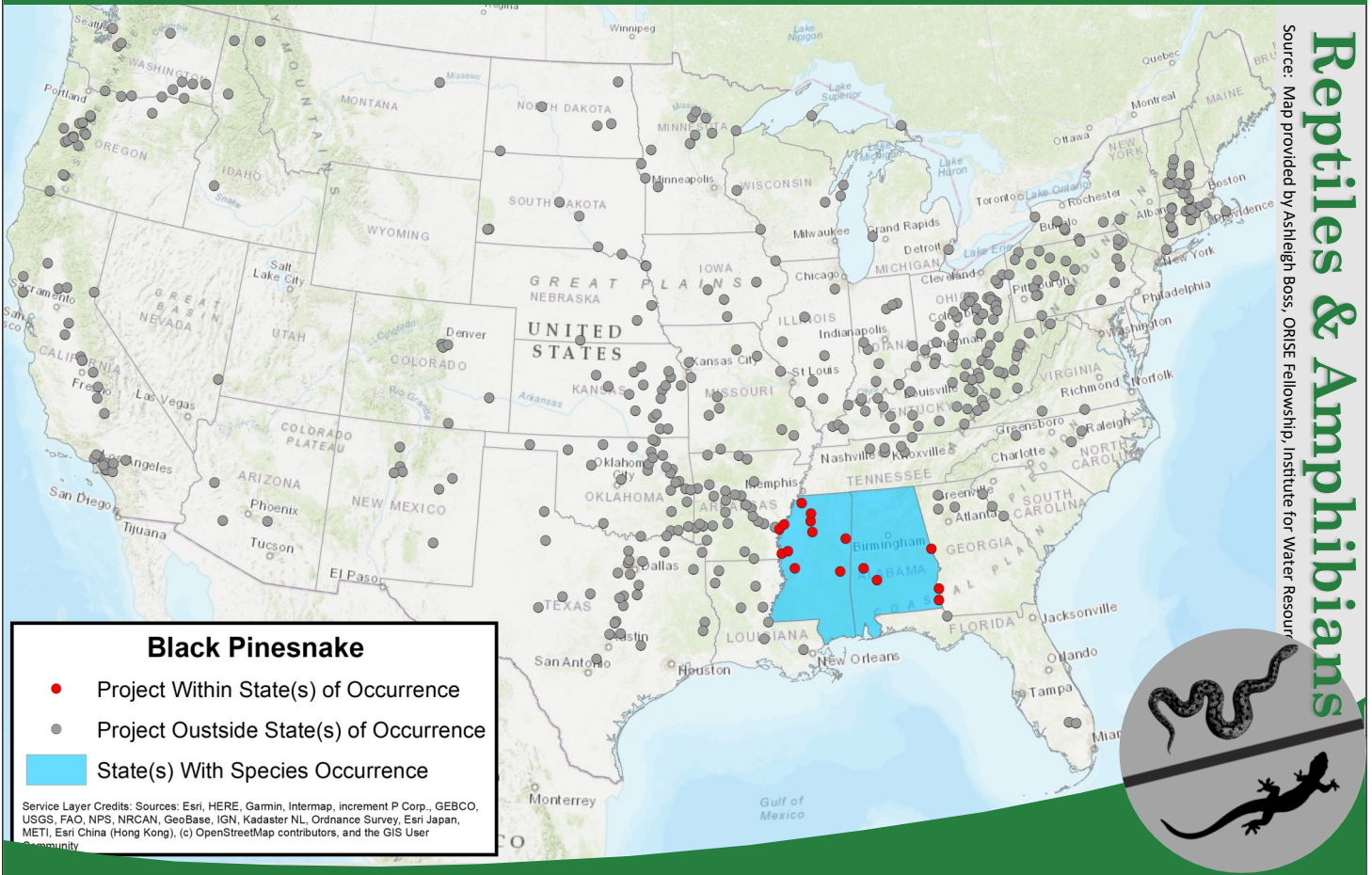
USACE ROLE: According to the Engineering Research and Development Center's Threatened and Endangered Species Team Cost Estimates, the USACE has expended over \$60,000 on efforts related to the black pinesnake. These funds were expended predominantly by the Regulatory Business Line on coordination and determination efforts.

Map, right: Species' range map for the black pinesnake provided by the USFWS Environmental Conservation Online System.



WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING:

The USACE manages several projects within the range of the black pinesnake. Because this species was only recently listed under the ESA, it has not been a target species for USACE management efforts. However, USACE works diligently to analyze project plans within the black pinesnake's range to ensure that proposed projects will not have negative impacts on this snake or its habitat. All current and future work is closely coordinated with resources agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



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 Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

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