

USACE Natural Resource Management Reptiles & Amphibians



Eastern Indigo Snake

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR LISTING STATUS: This snake was listed under the ESA by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1978. The snake was listed as Threatened.

The species' listing stemmed from a combination of threats including habitat modification, collection for the pet trade, and gassing while in gopher tortoise burrows. (USFWS)

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: In addition to being federally listed Threatened, this species is also state listed as Threatened in Georgia and Florida and as Endangered in Alabama and Mississippi. The first recovery plan was published by USFWS in 1982 and a new revision of that plan was published in 2019.

The recovery strategy works to ensure the long-term viability of this species by maintaining and enhancing existing populations through habitat conservation, restoration, and management.

Additional goals include the monitoring of known populations, identifying and securing additional populations and habitats, and repatriating populations via translocations and reintroductions. Ensuring that populations are genetically-connected is imperative to promoting the stability and growth of multiple populations across the species' range. (USFWS)

HABITAT NEEDS: This snake utilizes a wide range of upland and lowland habitats.

- Upland habitats, particularly for northern populations, include xeric longleaf pine sandhills and scrub habitats which also support gopher tortoises.
- In the northern portion of its range, this snake depends on gopher tortoises for winter shelter. (USFWS)
- Occupied sites are typically near wetlands.
- Relatively large tracts of suitable habitat are needed in order to support viable populations. (NatureServe)

Description: This is a large, thick-bodied snake. Average adult size ranges from 60-74 inches in length. The body is a glossy black color with iridescent blue highlights in sunlight. The throat and chin is a reddish white color which may extend down the body. The snake's belly is blue-gray and orangeish. The back scales are generally smooth, but some individuals may have partially keeled scales. (USFWS)

Photos: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

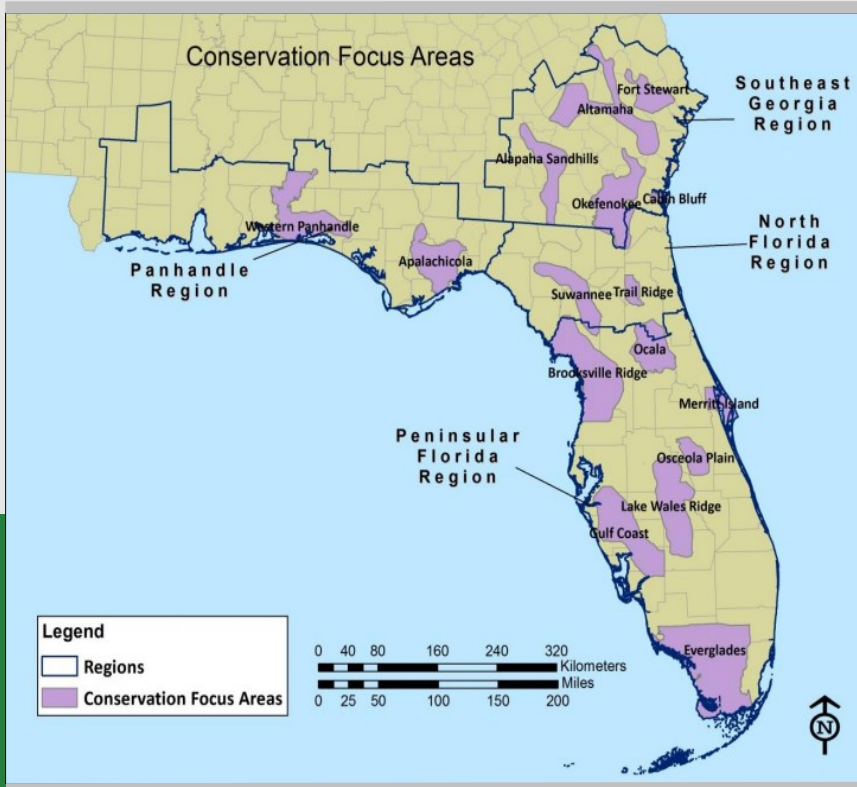
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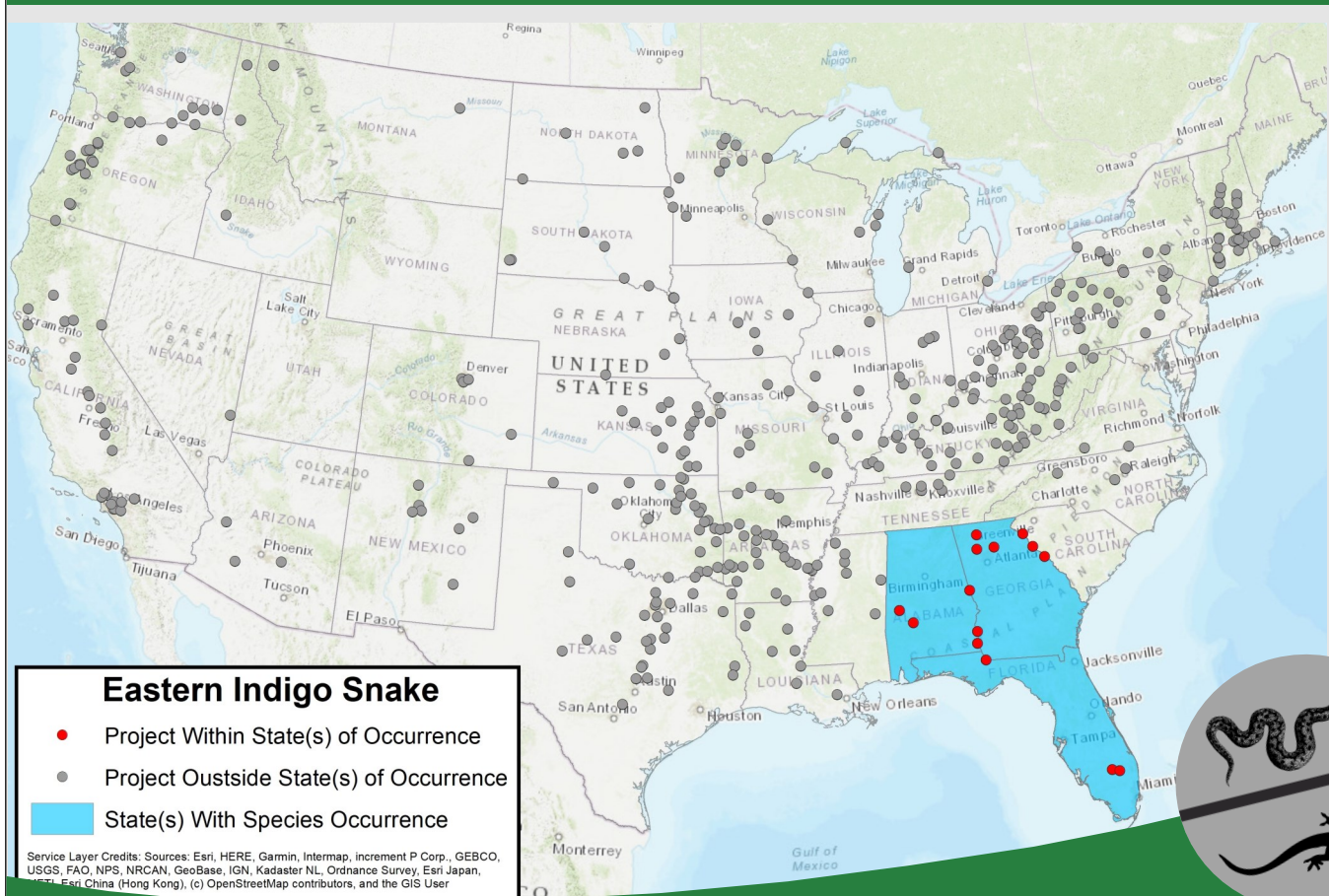
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USACE ROLE: According to the USACE Threatened and Endangered Species Costs database, the USACE has expended nearly \$2 million since 2005 on efforts related to the eastern indigo snake. These funds have come from multiple business lines including Environmental Stewardship, Regulatory, and Planning and Program Management. Of the \$2 million dollar sum, \$98,000 has been spent on inventorying, surveying, and/or monitoring efforts.

WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING: The USACE operates several projects within the range of the eastern indigo snake. According to the 2019 NRM assessment data, there are several projects with the potential for this species to occur on project lands. These projects include Jim Woodruff Lock & Dam, Lake Seminole, and Lake Okeechobee. As such, the USACE works closely with resource agencies to ensure that all current and proposed work will not negatively impact the eastern indigo snake or its habitat.



Map Above: Depiction of Conservation Focus Areas as outlined in USFWS's recovery plan for the eastern indigo snake.



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

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