

REPTILES

Members of this class of vertebrates include turtles, snakes, and lizards. The reptile body is typically covered with dry scales for protection. Because they are largely dependent on the external environment for body heat, they do not live in regions where the daytime temperatures remain low.

ALAMEDA WHIPSNAKE (*MASTICOPHIS LATERALIS EURYXANTHUS*)

Federal/California status: Threatened/Threatened



Description

The Alameda whipsnake is a slim, fast snake with a large head and large eyes, and a slender neck. It grows to a length of 3 to 4 feet (91-122 cm). Body coloration is blackish with a bright yellowish-orange stripe along each

of the sides. Belly coloration is orange-red, pinkish, and cream colored.

Habitat/Range

These snakes are found in the Coast Range from north of San Francisco south to near Monterey. Critical habitat was recently designated which includes the area of western San Joaquin and eastern Contra Costa counties. They prey mainly upon fence lizards, frogs, nestling birds, and small mammals. These snakes are active during the day from a period of about March to November.

The Alameda whipsnake is listed as Federal and State threatened, and has been found in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

Photo: © Sheila Larsen from URL:

http://sacramento.fws.gov/es/animal_spp_acct/alameda_whipsnake.htm.

References

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Fish and Wildlife Service. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Determination of Critical Habitat for the Alameda Whipsnake (*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*) Federal Register: October 3, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 192) Pages 58933-58962. Retrieved from the world wide web on 14 June 2002 URL: <http://www.wais.access.gpo.gov>