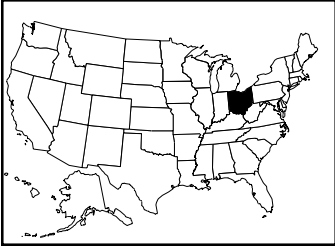
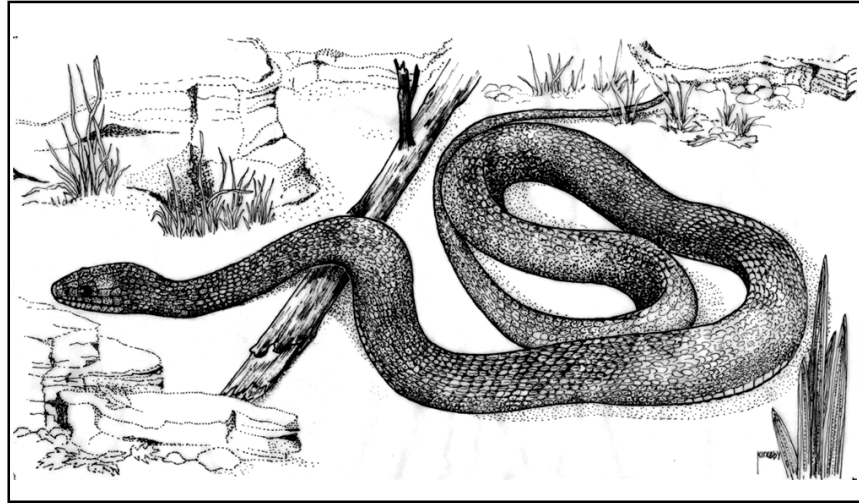




## Endangered Species Facts



The Lake Erie water snake is found on several small Lake Erie islands in Ohio and Canada.



# Lake Erie Water Snake

The Lake Erie water snake is federally listed as a *threatened species*. Threatened species are animals and plants that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. *Endangered species* are animals and plants that are in danger of becoming extinct. Identifying, protecting, and restoring endangered and threatened species is the primary objective of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program.

### What is the Lake Erie Water Snake?

Lake Erie water snakes are not poisonous. But they will protect themselves and may bite if cornered. Treat them with respect, like any wild animal. Island residents can carefully remove the water snakes from yards, boats, and buildings provided they do not hurt the snakes.

- **Scientific Name** - *Nerodia sipedon insularum*
- **Appearance** - Adult Lake Erie water snakes are uniform gray in color or have incomplete band patterns. They resemble the closely related northern water snake (*Nerodia sipedon sipedon*), but often lack the body markings, or have only a pale version of those patterns. Lake Erie water snakes grow to 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 feet in length. They are not poisonous.
- **Habitat** - The snakes live on the cliffs and rocky shorelines of limestone islands.
- **Reproduction** - Young snakes are born mid-August through September. The average litter size is 23 young.
- **Feeding Habits** - The snakes feed on fish and amphibians.
- **Range** - Lake Erie water snakes live on a group of limestone islands in western Lake Erie that are located more than one mile from the Ohio and Canada mainlands. All Lake Erie water snakes found on those islands are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Water snakes on the Ohio mainland, Mouse Island, and Johnson's Island **are not** protected under the Endangered Species Act.

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## Why is the Lake Erie Water Snake Proposed to be Listed as Threatened?

- **Eradication** - The snakes are often killed by humans.
- **Habitat Loss or Degradation** - Lake Erie water snakes have also declined because of destruction of their shoreline habitat by development and other shoreline alterations.

## What Is Being Done to Prevent Extinction of the Lake Erie Water Snake?

- **Listing** - The Lake Erie water snake was added to the U.S. List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants and receives the protections provided by the Endangered Species Act.
- **Recovery Plan** - As a threatened species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must develop a recovery plan that describes actions needed to help the snake survive.
- **Research** - Researchers are studying the Lake Erie water snake to find the best way to manage for the snake and its habitat.
- **Habitat Protection** - Where possible, the snake's habitat will be protected and improved.
- **Community Involvement** - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel are working with local communities to develop programs that benefit both the community and the snake.
- **Public Education** - Public education programs are being conducted to raise awareness of the snake's plight.

## What Can I Do to Help Prevent the Extinction of Species?

- **Learn** - Learn more about the Lake Erie water snake and other endangered and threatened species. Understand how the destruction of habitat leads to loss of endangered and threatened species and our nation's plant and animal diversity. Tell others about what you have learned.
- **Write** - Write to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or your state fish and game agency to learn more about endangered and threatened species.
- **Join** - Join a conservation group; many have local chapters.

## How Can I Get More Information?

- **Call or write to:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Division of Endangered Species  
1 Federal Drive  
Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056  
(612) 713-5337  
<http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/>

**In Ohio:**  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
6950-H Americana Parkway  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068  
(614) 469-6923