

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ARADB19026

Data Sensitivity: Yes

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Lampropeltis getula nigrita*

COMMON NAME: Western Black Kingsnake, Black Desert Kingsnake, Mexican Kingsnake;

SYNONYMS: *Lampropeltis getula nigritus*

FAMILY: Columbridae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: R.G. Zweifel and K.S. Norris, 1955. Am. Midl. Nat., 54(1): 238.

TYPE LOCALITY: 30.6 road miles south of Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.

TYPE SPECIMEN: Holotype: MVZ 50814 (adult male). K.S. Norris #1028, 3 Aug 1950.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: The species *getula* is 1 of 36 in the genus *Lampropeltis*, while the subspecies *nigrita* is 1 of 9 in the species *getula*. *Lampropeltis getula nigrita* is one of three subspecies in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: *Lampropeltis getula nigrita* can be described as black, coal black, or shiny black as an adult. Some individuals will have a yellow or white spot. Juveniles will sometimes display light yellow or white spotting that should disappear with age. Adults average 36-45 inches (91-114 cm) in length and hatchlings average 7-8 inches (17-20 cm) in length. Their scalation is as follows: dorsal 23-25 rows, ventral 213-225, sub-caudal 47-56, infralabial 9-10, supralabial 7-8, analplate single.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: The distinct coloration of being either completely black or black with a yellow or white spot should separate this species from any others.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color drawing of species (Stebbins, 1985: pl. 37).
Color photo of species (Degenhardt et al., 1996: pl. 89).
Color photo (Davenport in <http://www.kingsnake.com/arb/kings/mblk1.jpg>).
Color photo (In http://www.pitt.edu/~mcs2/herp/Lg_negrita.html)

TOTAL RANGE: Western Sonora and extreme northwestern Sinaloa, Mexico into southeastern Arizona.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Southeastern Arizona.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: At times when agitated or threatened this species will rattle its' tail, hiss, and strike. When attacked it will roll into a ball with its' head in the center, smearing its' attackers with musk and feces. The species *Lampropeltis getula* locates and identifies rattlesnakes at night with its' sense of smell. It immediately bites and surrounds its' victim with suffocating coils, as a Boa Constrictor would do. Since it is immune to the poison of venomous snakes the Kingsnake is little concerned with being bitten. When the rattlesnake is well exhausted, the Kingsnake simply swallows it whole, while still alive.

REPRODUCTION: For the species of *Lampropeltis getula* the clutch size is between 2-24 eggs. The breeding season is May to August and the eggs hatch in 8 to 12 weeks.

FOOD HABITS: The species *Lampropeltis getula* eats snakes, lizards, small turtles, reptile eggs, frogs, birds and their eggs and small mammals.

HABITAT: This species is often found in rock outcrops, rodent burrows, under vegetative cover or under surface cover in low elevation desert areas.

ELEVATION:

PLANT COMMUNITY: Semi desert grassland.

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:	None
STATE STATUS:	None
OTHER STATUS:	Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 1999) Full species Determined Threatened (Secretaría de Medio ambiente 2000)

MANAGEMENT FACTORS:

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS:

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**REFERENCES:**

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- Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA. P. 191, pl. 37.
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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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