



Lined Snake (*Tropidoclonion lineatum*)

Tro-pid-o-clone-eon lin-e-ate-um



Harmless/Nonvenomous

Description: 8 to 16 inches. A small, fairly slender bodied snake, the lined snake superficially resembles a drab appearing garter snake (genus *Thamnophis*). Ground color can range from brownish to grayish, and there are 3 longitudinal stripes present. The dorsal stripe may be light brownish, whitish, or cream colored, while lateral stripes are usually brownish. The belly or ventral surface is white or cream colored with two rows of dark half-moon flecks. The head is fairly narrow and pointed with pale colored labial scales.

Scales: Keeled

Anal Plate: Undivided

Taxonomy and Classification:

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

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Domain: Eukaryota
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata
Class: Reptilia
Order: Squamata
Suborder: Serpentes
Infraorder: Alethinophidia
Family: Colubridae
Subfamily: Natricinae
Genus: Tropidoclonion
Species: *Tropidoclonion lineatum**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Similar/Confusing Species: Garter and ribbon snakes (*Thamnophis sp.*) lack a linear row of dark pencil point spots on the ventral surface.

Etymology: Tropidoclonion- Tropis (keel) klon (twig). lineatum-lineatus (of a line).

Subspecies: None.

Range & Habitat: Currently known from only one county in southwestern Wisconsin, but may be present in additional counties with similar habitat. In Wisconsin, the habitat they have been recorded from consists of open to semi open rocky prairies and open woodland.

Habits & Natural History: The lined snake is a small species of snake that has only recently been documented in Wisconsin. As such, little is currently known about their habits and full distribution in the state. Lined snakes are small, secretive snakes that typically are found underneath rocks, logs, and other natural or manmade debris, where they feed on earthworms, insects, and other soft bodied invertebrates. A harmless and inoffensive species, lined snakes seldom bite when captured, but may emit a foul smelling musk when first handled. Lined snakes are viviparous, or live-bearing.

Phenology: Relatively little is still known about the natural history of lined snakes in Wisconsin, but they probably emerge from overwintering as early as mid to late April or May, and remain active throughout the year through late September or October (or even later into the year if warmer temperatures persist or otherwise permit) as with many other snake species.

Conservation Status: WI Special Concern. Regulated by the WI DNR. IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this species, group of species, or this informational sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

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