



## bullsnake

*Pituophis melanoleucus*

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates  
 Class: Reptilia  
 Order: Squamata  
 Family: Colubridae

## FEATURES

The bullsnake averages 37 to 72 inches in length. It has a yellowish body with dark blotches along the back. The blotches are darkest near the head and on and near the tail. The belly is yellow with black spots. A dark band is found from the eye to the angle of the jaw with a band of yellow above it. The scales are keeled (ridged). The head is wider than the neck.

## BEHAVIORS

The bullsnake lives in prairies and sand prairies. This snake is terrestrial, but it will climb occasionally. It is active mainly in the day. This snake hides in vegetation, rock piles and mammal burrows, where it may also hunt. When disturbed it will hiss and vibrate its tail. It overwinters in small mammal burrows, under rock piles or in rock crevices. Mating occurs in April or May. In June or July the female deposits five to 19 eggs in rotten wood. The eggs stick to each other as they are being laid. Eggs hatch in August or September. The bullsnake eats small mammals, birds and bird eggs. It constricts the prey item to kill it.

## HABITATS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input type="checkbox"/> swamps                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan             | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marshes                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands                 |   |

## ILLINOIS STATUS

- |  |                                     |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic     |                                     |

## ILLINOIS RANGE

Illinois River border counties

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2006.  
*Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.