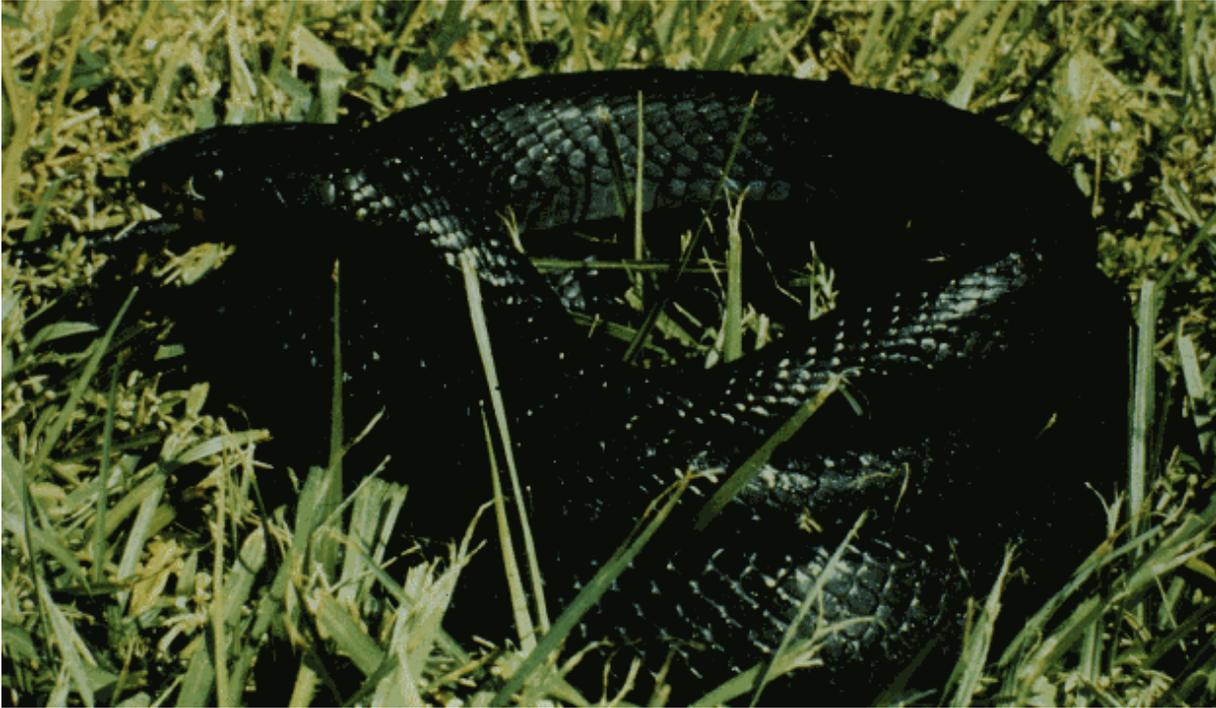


WATCH OUT FOR THE EASTERN INDIGO SNAKE



The Eastern Indigo Snake is the largest nonpoisonous snake in North America, growing up to 2.4 meters (8 feet) in length. The color of both adults and young is shiny bluish-black with some red or cream coloring on the chin or sides of the head. The indigo snake is usually found in high, dry, well-drained sandy soils, in the same habitat preferred by the gopher tortoise. Indigo snakes may also be found in hammocks, swamps, and flatwoods habitats in south Florida. Gopher tortoise burrows are used by many prey animals that are easily captured by the indigo snake in the burrow. Indigo snakes also use the burrows as dens for cover, and laying eggs. Other potential dens are stumps of trees, cavities in the soil, and under piles of debris.

The decline in the population of indigo snakes is attributed to habitat loss due to development and overcollecting for the pet trade. Fragmentation of habitat by roads results in many indigo snakes killed by vehicle traffic.

Every effort should be undertaken to avoid harming any snake observed during work on this construction site. Any indigo snakes encountered during construction activity should be allowed to crawl off before continuing activities. If it appears that the construction activities will cause harm to the snake, construction must be stopped until the proper action can be determined.

These rare snakes are protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 makes it a violation to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, capture, or collect endangered or threatened species.” Violations can result in fines of up to \$20,000 and/or up to one year in prison. Only permitted personnel are allowed to handle the snakes.

Contact the following agencies if indigo snakes are observed:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 772-562-3909
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
800-282-8002