

Shelby Training Site, Perry County, Mississippi, USA. When first discovered, the rattlesnake was already one-third ingested, and after 10 minutes, it was half ingested. At this point an attempt was made to capture the *M. flagellum*; however, it quickly moved into a Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) burrow. For that reason, measurements and sexes of both snakes were not recorded. The entire time the incident was observed the tail of the prey snake was rattling. While traveling to the burrow, the *M. flagellum* had its head elevated with the rattlesnake hanging out of its mouth.

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MASTICOPHIS LATERALIS EURYXANTHUS (Alameda Whipsnake). **HABITAT.** *Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus* have been reported to be associated with a narrowly defined set of habitat characteristics; specifically chaparral and scrub plant communities on northeast, east, southeast, south, and southwest facing slopes (Swaim 1994. Unpubl. Masters Thesis, California State University, Hayward, CA. 140 pp.; United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 1997. Federal Register 62:64306–64320; USFWS 2002. Draft recovery plan for chaparral and scrub community species east of the San Francisco Bay, California, Portland, Oregon 306 pp.). However, the USFWS reported that the habitat description for this subspecies “may have been biased” by focused trapping efforts (USFWS 2000. Federal Register 65:58933–58962). Swaim and McGinnis (1992. Trans. West. Sect. Wildl. Soc. 28:107–111) reported finding no *M. l. euryxanthus* on west-facing slopes and suggested a possible relationship to a lack of morning sun. However, Alvarez et al. (ms. in review, Trans. West. Sect. Wildl. Soc.) report that 32% of documented observations place *M. l. euryxanthus* in plant communities other than those described above. Herein, I present evidence that *M. l. euryxanthus* are found on a variety of slope aspects.

One hundred and twenty-seven records of free-ranging *M. l. euryxanthus* (and possible intergrades with *M. l. lateralis*) in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (California) were reviewed by Alvarez et al. (*op. cit.*). These included specimens in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (MVZ) and California Academy of Sciences (CAS), reports from the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), publicly accessible consulting reports from survey efforts, and personal communications from knowledgeable individuals (including my own observations). Slope aspect could be reliably determined for 82 of these observations. Data collected were transposed onto a commercial mapping program. Observations were deemed ambiguous (and not usable) if an error polygon associated with the observation placed the animal on multiple slope aspects. I visited every locality in 2004 to determine habitat type and confirm slope aspect. Seventeen of 82 observations (21%) were associated with west, north, and northwest slope aspects. These include three museum specimens (MVZ 128223, CAS 227730, CAS 201051); eight reported in the CNDDDB, 13 reported by McGinnis (1990. Survey for the Alameda Whipsnake on the north-facing slope of the Kellogg Creek watershed west of Vasco Road, Contra Costa County, California, Unpubl. ms. 16 pp.), and two of my own observations. In addition to these documented

records, two biologists report capturing more than 50 *M. l. euryxanthus* (collectively) on west and north-facing slopes (J. Sheppard and A. Murphy, pers. comm.).

The majority of *M. l. euryxanthus* observations reported in publicly accessible documents, databases, and collections do coincide with slope aspects reported by Swaim and McGinnis (1992, *op. cit.*) and Swaim (1994, *op. cit.*). However, observations presented here indicate that *M. l. euryxanthus* uses virtually all slope aspects available, and data presented in Alvarez et al. (*op. cit.*) demonstrate that oak woodlands and annual grasslands are also occupied by these snakes. This information should be incorporated in conservation planning for this federally threatened snake (USFWS 1997. Federal Register 62:64306–64320). Specifically, chaparral, scrub, oak woodland, and grassland plant communities that occur within the range of *M. l. euryxanthus* should be recognized as potentially occupied habitat, irrespective of slope aspect.

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NERODIA FASCIATA (Southern Watersnake). **DIET.** Gibbons and Dorcas (2004. North American Watersnakes: A Natural History. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. 438 pp.) summarized the literature on dietary records of *Nerodia fasciata*. The primary prey of this species are fish (e.g., *Gambusia affinis*) and amphibians (primarily frogs) (Gibbons and Dorcas, *op. cit.*, Dundee and Rossman 1989. The Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. 300 pp.). Several aquatic salamanders are recorded in the diet of *N. fasciata*, however, of the family Sirenidae, only *Siren lacertina* have been documented in the diet of this species (Gibbons and Dorcas, *op. cit.*). This is especially noteworthy because the ranges of sirens and *N. fasciata* overlap extensively (Conant and Collins 1991. A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern/ Central North America. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts. 608 pp.).

On 14 March 2002 at 2056 h, an adult female *N. fasciata* (SVL 570 mm, TL 162 mm, 197 g without prey item) was found foraging in floating marsh habitat at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Barataria Unit, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, USA. The snake had an obvious bulge in its stomach and was retained until the following morning for measurements and determination of stomach contents. The stomach contents were obtained by forced regurgitation. A partially digested *Siren intermedia* (total length 225 mm, 19 g) was found swallowed tail-first. To our knowledge, this observation represents the first documentation of *N. fasciata* predation upon the commonly syntopic prey species, *S. intermedia*.

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