

ring-necked snake *Diadophis punctatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Dipsadidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The ring-necked snake averages 10 to 15 inches in length. It is a slender snake with a dark back and a yellow belly. A light ring is present around the neck. Scales are smooth.

BEHAVIORS

The ring-necked snake may be found in southeastern Illinois, the bluffs along the lower Illinois River and along the Mississippi River. This snake lives in woodlands or hilly prairie areas with rocks, logs or rotting trees. The ring-necked snake is secretive, most often found under rocks, bark or logs. It is active at night. The ring-necked snake overwinters in rock crevices or in the soil. It may secrete a foul smell when captured. Its tail curls into a corkscrew when threatened. Mating may occur in either spring or fall. Three or four eggs are deposited by the female in June among rocks or rotting logs. Hatching occurs in August or September. The ring-necked snake eats small salamanders and snakes, insects, earthworms, slugs and frogs.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

hill prairie