

## Amphibian & Reptile Summary for CFLR WL Team Species Matrix – April 2013

*Elevational Relationship of Colorado Amphibians & Reptiles:* About 70% of amphibian species in Colorado do not range above 8000 feet. Over 50% of reptile species do not occur above 6,000 feet and more than 80% are not found above 8,000 feet. Amphibians and reptiles that range across the latitudinal breadth of Colorado reach distinctly higher elevations in the southern part of the state. North-south differences in the upper elevational limits may be 2,000-3,000 feet or more. Hammerson 1986.

**Bullfrog:** Invasive species in Colorado. Inhabits permanent ponds, quiet stream pools, and flowing streams to 9,000'. Rarely far from water. Breeding pools require rooted aquatic vegetation; embryos develop best at water temperatures between 75 and 86 °F. Active March – October. Classified as sport amphibian by CPW. Feed on most anything including each other. Prey for herons, hawks, and predatory fish. Ecologically informative as a predator/prey species, invasive, widespread but occupies a specific habitat (aquatic).

**Bull snake:** Native to Colorado. Inhabits wide range of habitats including riparian and open ponderosa pine/montane woodlands to 8,500'. Emerges from underground hibernation in April/May and active until October. When active, burrows into holes, under rocks, and climbs high into trees. Lays eggs May-June in underground cavities and hatch July-August. Feeds on small mammals and rodents and is prey to hawks, rodents and mammals, and other snakes. Threats include roads, agriculture, development, humans. Ecologically informative as a predator/prey species, creates/uses burrows.

**Smooth Green Snake:** Lush riparian among conifers and aspen to 9,000. Most activity at or underground but does climb shrubs. Active from late April to late October. Eggs are laid in rotten logs, under rocks, and in open fields under clumps of vegetation. Diet includes insects, snails, slugs, and worms. Prey for hawks and other snakes. In Colorado, protected by state law from commercial collection and limited collection to individual use. Threats include pesticide use, roads, climate change, impoundments, heavy equipment use, water pollution, cheat grass, and cattle grazing. (2006) SCA available. Ecologically informative as predator/prey, occupies a specific habitat (riparian) within montane.

**Collared Lizard:** Rocky areas of sparse vegetation to 8,000'. Active from March/April through October; hibernate underground. Eggs laid under rocks May and hatch July. Rocks, cliffs, and ledges used for perching, courtship, and sunning. Feed on arthropods, small lizards, and insects. Prey for other lizards, raptors, and snakes. Threats include urbanization, agricultural development, climate change, and human impacts. Ecologically informative as predator/prey, occupies a specific habitat (rocks) within montane.

**Eastern Fence Lizard:** Inhabits rocky areas within coniferous forests and shrublands to 9,200". Active March through September and spend days between sunny and shady surfaces of rocks. Eggs are laid May-July and hatchlings appear August. Feeds on arthropods and insects; preyed upon by raptors, snakes, and other lizards. Threats include urbanization, climate change, human impacts, and events that allow tall grasses to establish (fire, cessation of grazing). Ecologically informative as predator/prey, occupies a specific habitat (rocks).

**Short-horned Lizard:** Occurs at ground level in sparse areas of coniferous forests to 8,000'. Perches and hunts from rocks. Active April to October. *Eggs develop inside the female during spring and summer and she then gives birth to young in July or August.* Insects are the primary prey and striped whipsnakes are known to feed on short-

horned lizards. Ecologically informative as predator of insects /known prey for one species; occupies a specific habitat (rocks) within montane.

**Many lined skink:** Under boulders in coniferous forests to 8,500', rarely away from cover. Active from April to October. Eggs are laid in late May and hatchlings emerge around August. Feeds on small invertebrates; predation is little known but one incident of a kestrel taking a many-lined skink is known. Threats include climate change, urbanization, and intensive cultivation. Ecologically informative as predator/prey, occupies a specific habitat (rocks) within montane.

\*Above information taken from Hammerson 1986 and 1999, NatureServe, and Redder, A.J., B.E. Smith, and D.A. Keinath. (2006, November 27). Smooth Green Snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*): a technical conservation assessment. [Online]. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region.