

endangered

Have You Seen Me?



The Rough Green Snake is one of the rarest serpents found in Pennsylvania. This beautiful, docile reptile is historically known to occur in only two counties within the state; Greene and Chester. The Chester county site in southeast PA, appears to still be viable but no specimens have been documented from Greene county, in southwest PA, since 1924.

Rough green snakes are slender, almost vine-like, and are typically between twenty-two and thirty-two inches in length. They are light green above and creamy white or yellowish below; coloration which provides excellent camouflage in their natural habitat. The rough green snake could be confused with the smooth green snake, but the smooth green, as the name implies, has very smooth dorsal (back) scales, and the rough green has a keel (a horizontal ridge) running down the center of each dorsal scale. The head of the rough green is also very distinct from the neck, the body is much more slender, and the tail is much longer than that of the smooth green snake.

Rough green snakes are excellent climbers and swimmers, spending the daylight hours foraging for prey (caterpillars, spiders, crickets) amid dense shrubs and small trees overhanging small streams, rivers, lakes and other waterways. They may also utilize other densely vegetated edge-type habitats bordering pastures or fields, and can occasionally be seen crossing roads in areas of suitable habitat.

Although the rough green snake was probably never common in Pennsylvania due to its very restricted range, it's hopeful that small colonies can still persist despite continuing threats, such as urban sprawl, to vital habitat. More work needs to be done to determine the current status within PA and it's currently listed as an endangered species.

How you can help:

If you find a snake you believe may be a Rough Green Snake, photograph the animal, document the place and time, and send in your report.

Identification Help:

To find more information on how to identify a Rough Green Snake, including photographs and more characteristics, please visit <http://paherps.com>

Reports:

Please send any information, reports, and photographs to Tim Maret of the Pennsylvania Herpetological Atlas. <http://paherpatlas.org>