

# FOCUS ON CONSERVATION

## Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis pyromelana*)



POLLY CONRAD

The Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis pyromelana*) inhabits rocky montane habitats from 850 m to almost 2800 m (2800–9100 ft) in the western United States and adjacent regions in Mexico. In Nevada, the documented distribution of the species is limited to isolated populations in mountain ranges along the state's eastern border. However, due to the remoteness of this area and the secretive habits and low densities of the species, the distribution of the Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake is unknown. Data on distribution, population trends, and genetics of Nevada populations are needed to properly manage the species.

Sonoran Mountain Kingsnakes are protected in Nevada and also are listed as a "Species of Conservation Priority" in the state's Wildlife Action Plan ([www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org)). The Nevada Department of Wildlife and Great Basin National Park have formed a partnership to conduct surveys to determine the species' distribution, abundance, and habitat preferences. Genetic samples are collected for comparisons with other populations to determine what relationships exist between Nevada kingsnakes and the closest metapopulations. The results of these surveys and genetic analyses will aid greatly in the management of this protected reptile. In addition to the local conservation efforts, the Southwest Chapter of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) is addressing the conservation of the Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake on a regional — or range-wide — level. Partners from a wide range of organizations representing management, education, research, non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations, Native American tribes, the pet trade, zoos, and hobbyists are working together to identify and implement the conservation needs of this species throughout its range.



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