Quick Reference Guide: Native Snakes Easily Mistaken for Introduced Constrictors in Florida¹

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Three non-native species of large constrictor snakes are now breeding in Florida, and several others have been encountered but have not yet established wild populations. This fact sheet, best viewed as a pdf (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW35000.pdf), is a quick reference guide to identification of the native snakes you might easily mistake for introduced constrictors in Florida. Like the introduced constrictors, these similar native snakes are large, aquatic, or have blotched markings. It is important to learn to recognize these native snakes so that you do not report them via the EDDMapS Florida invasive species reporting portal online at http://www.IveGot1.org. Learn more about how to scan for, recognize, and report introduced constrictors by completing the Introduced Reptile Early Detection and Documentation training course. Visit http://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/reddy.shtml to learn more and get REDDy!

Large Native Snakes

Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*)

Status: rarely encountered

Size: up to 8 feet

Head: reddish marks on chin

Body: iridescent blue-black with no markings

Figure 1. Eastern indigo snake. 
Credits: Monica E. McGarrity, UF


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**Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus adamanteus*)

**Status**: venomous, occasionally encountered throughout Florida

**Size**: up to 6–8 feet

**Head**: blocky, dark eyestripe with cream borders, vertical pupil

**Body**: dark diamonds with cream borders

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**Aquatic Native Snakes**

**Cottonmouth or Water Moccasin** (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*)

**Status**: venomous, common throughout Florida

**Size**: usually 2–4 feet

**Head**: blocky, dark eyestripe, vertical pupil

**Body**: blotched bands, older individuals may be solid black

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**Brown Watersnake** (*Nerodia taxispilota*)

**Status**: common throughout Florida

**Size**: usually 2–4 feet

**Head**: top unmarked, yellow flecks on chin

**Body**: squarish dark blotches in a “checkerboard” pattern

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Figure 2. Eastern diamondback rattlesnake.
Credits: Monica E. McGarrity, UF

Figure 3. Cottonmouth or water moccasin.
Credits: Monica E. McGarrity, UF

Figure 4. Brown watersnake.
Credits: Monica E. McGarrity, UF
Blotched Native Snakes
Cornsnake or Red Ratsnake (*Pantherophis guttatus*)

**Status:** common throughout Florida

**Size:** usually 2–3 feet

**Head:** reddish arrowhead

**Body:** reddish blotches with dark outlines, checkerboard pattern on belly

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Figure 5. Cornsnake or red ratsnake.
Credits: Monica E. McGarrity, UF