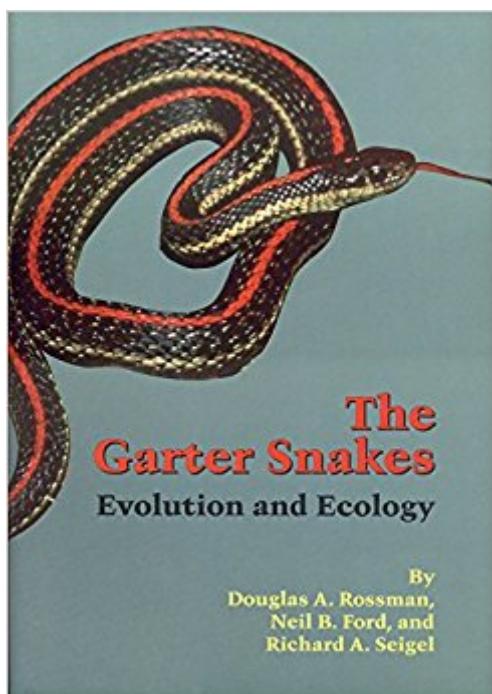


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The Garter Snakes: Evolution And Ecology (Animal Natural History Series)



Synopsis

The Garter Snakes: Evolution and Ecology includes color plates of all species (many never previously figured in color); extensive discussion of ecology, behavior, and captive care; and a modern key to all species-as well as species-by-species summaries of the systematics and natural history of the thirty different garter snakes now recognized. Of particular interest are the descriptions of lesser-known species in Mexico. Because interest in reptiles has grown dramatically in recent years, this comprehensive guide is designed to appeal to as wide an audience as possible-to both the professional herpetologist interested in the biology of *Thamnophis* and the hobbyist who wants to know more about these diverse and widespread snakes, both in the home aquarium and in the wild.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Garter Snakes: Evolution And Ecology is a comprehensive survey of the genus *Thamnophis*, or common garter snake. The Garter Snakes includes color plates of all species (many never previously figured in color); an extensive discussion of ecology, behavior, and captive care; and a modern key to all species; as well as species-by-species summaries of the systematics and natural history of the thirty different garter snakes now recognized. The Garter Snakes is an up-to-date, appealing book, written by world authorities, and essential reading for herpetologists, conservationists, ecologists, pet owners, and non-specialist general readers interested in natural

history. Highly recommended! -- Midwest Book Review

The Garter Snakes: Evolution and Ecology is the first comprehensive review of the genus *Thamnophis* in nearly ninety years. The book includes color plates of all species (many never previously figured in color); extensive discussion of ecology, behavior, and captive care; and a modern key to all species - as well as species-by-species summaries of the systematics and natural history of the thirty different garter snakes now recognized. Of particular interest are the descriptions of lesser-known species in Mexico. Because interest in reptiles has grown dramatically in recent years, this comprehensive guide is designed to appeal to as wide an audience as possible - to both the professional herpetologist interested in the biology of *Thamnophis* and the hobbyist who wants to know more about these diverse and widespread snakes, both in the home aquarium and in the wild. This up-to-date, appealing book, written by the world's leading authorities, will be extremely useful not only to herpetologists but also to conservationists, ecologists, pet owners, and other readers generally interested in natural history.

While this book has slowly become slightly out of date over the last fifteen years of its existence, it still contains very valuable information. Not only are life history traits and measurements given in adequate detail, but taxonomic history is presented in a very accessible manner. The reference section is well put together, as are the detailed range maps. It is clear that the authors put a lot of time into constructing a thoughtful, well organized book that would stand the test of time. The more I reference this book the more I notice oddities. The bottom margin on the book is huge! Almost a third of each page is unused.

There is far too much information in this book to be summarized in a review. Suffice it to say that the book is fascinating: the writing is clear, the conclusions sound, and the research extensive. For most other varieties of snake--other colubrids, boidae, vipers, even elapids--there is no shortage of books, and books covering even individual species are plentiful (think how many books are devoted exclusively to *Boa constrictor* ssp., for example). And while most of these books are worth reading once, the majority say little that all the others don't say, too. Garter snakes, however, seldom rate more than a paragraph or two in any snake book, and there are very few books devoted exclusively to garters (I can think of only one, offhand). This book, however, gives garters the attention--and gives the reader the information--that the species deserves. If one is a ratsnake enthusiast, or a python person, or mad about milksnakes, there are plenty of books worth reading, but few that are

indispensable. If one is a breeder, researcher, or simply an interested layperson regarding garter snakes, however, this book is one that simply cannot be done without.

For anyone interested in garter snakes, this book is the Holy Grail. Its chapters summarize a tremendous amount of work done on the genus, and make this book the one reference to consult first when doing any research on garters. It covers all thirty species, including many from Mexico and Central America for which data is limited and that I had never heard of before. I'm very pleased with it, and refer to it often. But bear in mind that this is a scientific monograph. As monographs go it is surprisingly accessible, but it does not pull any scholarly punches, and some parts of it will be beyond some readers, particularly children. The species key, for example, refers to measurements that no amateur or casual observer would be able to make, but it does so in order to be correct rather than easy. That garter snake researchers need to own a copy of it goes without saying; amateurs with a serious interest in garters ought to buy it as well.

This wonderful compendium of gartersnake information is a treasure for lovers of *Thamnophis*. The color plates are wonderful, and the biological information is fascinating. Who would have guessed that some garters actually brumate (hibernate) in water? A great gift for any gartersnake keeper.

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