

Mole Kingsnake

Scientific Name: *Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata*



Did You Know?

- This species is also known as the Brown Kingsnake, Blotched Kingsnake, Mole Catcher, House Snake, ground Snake, or mole Snake
- They are secretive and spend a lot of time underground. Mole Kingsnakes are most commonly found crossing roads at night.
- It can easily be confused with the common brown Snake when seen in the field. However, the Mole Kingsnake is usually copper colored or reddish or olive brown and its head is larger than that of the common brown Snake. The ventral surface is yellowish with orange blotches.
- The "Kingsnake" name refers to the fact that other snakes, including venomous species, are a principle food source. They also eat rodents, lizards, insects, worms, and slugs.
- The genus *Lampropeltis* is derived from the Greek *lampros* meaning "radiant" and from the Latin *pelta* meaning "small shield," describing the shiny, small-scaled kingsnakes. The specific name *calligaster* is derived from the Greek *kallos* meaning "beautiful" and *gaster* meaning "stomach," in reference to the ventral pattern in juveniles.

Chattahoochee NATURE CENTER

General Information on Mole Kingsnakes

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

The adult is yellowish or olive-brown with small reddish-brown blotches down the back, alternating with smaller blotches on the sides. Each blotch has a narrow black border. The belly is yellowish-brown with indistinct brown spots. The juvenile is similar to the adult but the blotches are dark-edged and more vivid on young Snakes, becoming much more indistinct with age.

RANGE

These Snakes inhabit the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. They are found in fields, farmland, thickets, wooded areas, and sandhills. Occasionally, they live in suburbs. Mole Kingsnakes prefer regions with dry soil. They are rarely seen.

HABITAT

They are found in areas of soft soil, including abandoned or cultivated fields. They are adept burrowers and are rarely encountered above ground except at night or after heavy rains. They don't dig holes but burrow through loose soil.

BREEDING

They mate from June to July. Females lay a cluster of 15 to 17 eggs in underground cavities.

FEEDING HABITS

This species feeds on lizards, small mammals, insects, invertebrates, and other snakes.