

## A Key to the Snakes of the Northeastern United States (from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, north)

- 1 Pit organ present between eye and nostril.....Crotalidae...2  
 1' No pit organ present.....Colubridae...4
- 2 Segmented shaker present on tail tip.....3  
 2' No shaker present on tail tip.....Agkistrodon contortrix
- 3 Series of nine large scutes on top of head.....Sistrurus catenatus  
 3' Large scales above eyes only (supraocular).....Crotalus horridus
- 4 Scales smooth.....5  
 4' Scales keeled.....11
- 5 Anal plate single.....6  
 5' Anal plate divided.....8
- 6 Belly unpatterned white.....Cemophora coccinea  
 6' Belly white with black checkered pattern.....7
- 7 Dorsal pattern of brown or red blotches edged in black.....Lampropeltis triangulum  
 7' Dorsal pattern mostly black with tracery of thin white lines defining chain-like pattern  
 .....Lampropeltis getula
- 8 Two preoculars, nasal plate divided.....9  
 8' Less than two preoculars, nasal plate single.....10
- 9 Small snakes. Preoculars subequal in size. Dorsum solid gray or black with distinct yellow nuchal ring. Belly bright orange in life with or without mid-ventral spots...Diadophis punctatus  
 9' Large snakes. Lower preocular much smaller than upper. Dorsum in adults solid black or dusky gray with no nuchal ring, belly pale gray; in young, dorsum pale gray with pattern of brown blotches.....Coluber constrictor
- 10 Usually a single preocular, upper labials 7. Dorsum bright green in life, blue-gray in preservative.....Opheodrys vernalis  
 10' No preocular present, loreal and prefrontal contact ocular. Upper labials 5. Dorsum tan or brown in color.....Carphophis amoenis
- 11 Anal plate single.....12  
 11' Anal plate divided.....15
- 12 4 prefrontal scales. 27 or more scale rows.....Pituophis melanoleucus  
 12' Two prefrontals. Scale rows 19 or fewer.....13

- 13 Seventeen scale rows. Head not distinct from neck. Lateral stripe occupies scale rows 2 and 3, but may extend onto row 4 for part of length. Interstripe blotches usually absent. Normally 6 upper labials.....Thamnophis brachystoma 14
- 13' 19 scale rows. Head distinct from neck. Normally 7 or 8 upper labials..... 14
- 14 Lateral stripe restricted to scale rows 2 and 3 on posterior part of body. Interstripe blotches usually strongly marked.....Thamnophis sirtalis
- 14' Lateral stripe restricted to scale rows 3 and 4 on posterior part of body. Interstripe blotches may be obscure.....Thamnophis sauritus
- 15 Nasal scale entire, dorsum solid bright green in life, blue-gray in preservative .....Opheodrys aestivus
- 15' Nasal scale divided, dorsum not bright green..... 16
- 16 Preocular scale absent. Loreal and prefrontal contact ocular.....Virginia valeriae
- 16' Preocular scale present..... 17
- 17 Loreal scale usually absent, with nasal contacting preocular. Seventeen or fewer scale rows ..... 18
- 17' Loreal scale present. 19 or more scale rows..... 19
- 18 Dorsum light gray or tan with a double row of small dark spots. Belly light gray or with a light pink wash. 17 scale rows... ..Storeria dekayi
- 18' Dorsum brown or gray with three tan nuchal spots. Belly bright orange or coral red. 15 scale rows.....Storeria occipitomaculata
- 19 Rostral scale upturned, keeled dorsally. Azygous scale present between internasals. Subocular scales separate ocular from supralabial scales.....Heterodon platyrhinus
- 19' Rostral scale not upturned. No azygous scale, no suboculars..... 20
- 20 Ventral scales angulate laterally. 200 or more ventral scales..... 21
- 20' Ventral scales not angulate laterally. Fewer than 200 ventral scales..... 22
- 21 Dorsal pattern of reddish or brownish blotches, outlined in black. Black stripes under tail. Nuchal stripes unite between eyes to form a spearpoint design.....Elaphe guttata
- 21' Dorsum solid black, or with black blotches faintly outlined in white. No black stripes under tail.....Elaphe obsoleta
- 22 Two preocular scales. Ventral pattern of four rows of squarish spots, two rows nearly touch on mid-venter.....Regina septemvittata
- 22' One preocular. Pattern not as above..... 23
- 23 Six upper labials, 19 scale rows. Ventral pattern of widely separated spots on each scale, with orange to buff color between rows of spots.....Clonophis kirtlandi
- 23' Eight upper labials (rarely 7 or 9). 23 to 25 scale rows. Ventral pattern with rusty red or yellow half-moons, edged in black or brown.....Nerodia sipedon