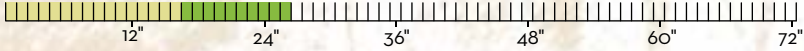
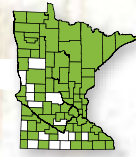


# COMMON GARTERSNAKE

(*Thamnophis sirtalis*)



- Status:** Not listed
- Size:** 16 – 26 inches
- Active season:** Early April through November
- Scales:** Keeled, single anal plate
- Description:** Slender black or dark snake with three dorsal yellowish stripes. The lateral dorsal stripes occur only on the second and third scale rows. The belly is pale yellow, but may also be pale blue or green. Dark spots may be present on the outer edges of the belly scales. The light yellow or pale green upper lip is typically unmarked.
- Diet:** Frogs, toads, salamanders, earthworms, insects and fish
- Habitat:** This species is a habitat generalist, occurring in most Minnesota habitats. It prefers forest and woodland edges, and has a strong affiliation for water and wet areas. They overwinter below the frost line in open canopy wetlands, mammal burrows, building foundations, cisterns, rock crevices and quarries. Gartersnakes den communally in very large numbers.
- Hunting:** Active forager
- Reproduction:** Livebearer, average litter is 27 young, but can vary greatly
- Other name(s):** Grass Snake, Garden Snake
- Notes:** Most commonly encountered snake in Minnesota. Females are slightly longer and much heavier than males. Minnesota has two subspecies of Gartersnakes, the Red-sided Gartersnake (*T.s. parietalis*) and the Eastern Gartersnake (*T.s. sirtalis*).



Barney Oldfield

Common Gartersnake.



Barney Oldfield

Red-sided Gartersnake.

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2010. [Snakes and Lizards of Minnesota](#).  
Nongame Wildlife Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, Minnesota. 67 pp.