

Black RaT Snake

Elaphe obsoleta

The Black rat snake is one of the biggest snakes in the U.S. with some exceeding eight feet in length. Adult Black rat snakes are uniformly black with a whitish belly.

These snakes are powerful constrictors, suffocating rats, birds, squirrels and even small rabbits and then swallowing them whole.

They also seem particularly fond of birds and bird eggs.

Photo by David Scott



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They are equally at home in the trees or on the ground. Rat snakes are usually associated with wetlands and are often seen swimming in the Savannah River.

Baby rat snakes are boldly patterned at hatching, but lose these markings as they grow. Although they grow to impressive sizes, these snakes are nonvenomous and pose no threat to people.

*This information is provided as a public service by the **Savannah River Ecology Laboratory Outreach Office.***