

ENDANGERED

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes

It's unlawful to harm, harass, collect, or possess these rattlesnakes. This species is protected in Pennsylvania.



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

www.penndot.gov

PUB 546B (10-19)

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes

The Eastern Massasauga, a rattlesnake, is both a federally Threatened and a Pennsylvania state Endangered species. This species, sometimes called the swamp rattlesnake, may be found in, or near your work location if you are in Districts 1-0, 10-0 or 11-0. This snake is venomous, but rarely strikes unless handled. The rattle of an adult is similar to the buzz of an insect and barely audible at a distance greater than 5 feet. Eastern Massasauga average 20 to 30 inches in length.

Habitats utilized by Eastern Massasauga are poorly drained (wet) open areas in fall, winter and spring. In winter crayfish and rodent burrows are utilized for hibernation. In late spring and summer this species is found in drier upland old field, prairie or meadow habitat.

If an Eastern Massasauga is seen within the construction or maintenance work area, then all work activities will cease immediately. Contact the PennDOT construction manager or environmental manager immediately. It is a violation of federal and state law to harm or to possess an Eastern Massasauga. The penalties for violations of these laws include criminal prosecution and civil litigation. Permits issued are dependent upon the protection of this species and implementation of special permit conditions.



Eastern Massasuga Rattlesnakes - Photo by: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Cover Photo Credit: Gary Stolz, USFWS

Standard Avoidance & Minimization Measures

The following must be implemented for all activities and projects that may affect the Eastern Massasauga. Some activities and projects will require implementation of additional avoidance measures that may include seasonal restrictions, pre-construction exclusion surveys and/or installation of exclusion fencing. Refer to the PA DEP permit and contact the district environmental manager to determine if additional measures are required.

1 Complete a Final PNDI ER* during annual planning. If there is a conflict with identified seasonal and/or time of day conservation measures, confirm that these measures can be implemented and sign the PNDI receipt acknowledgement. Schedule the work activity in accordance with any seasonal or time of day work restrictions required. Re-confirm that the schedule complies with any restrictions during intermediate and weekly planning. Ensure that all persons working in areas of known, or assumed occupied Eastern Massasauga habitat are aware and familiar with PennDOT briefing materials about this species prior to starting the action.

2 Complete activities in accordance with PNDI specified seasonal restrictions in all counties. In addition, complete activities that occur within streams and/or wetlands in Butler, Mercer and Venango Counties only during the period of June 1— August 31 when Eastern Massasauga have typically moved to drier upland habitats.

* Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory Environmental Review

3 Avoid or minimize impacts to the fullest extent possible in wetland and riparian areas. Install high visibility orange construction fencing at the perimeter of all wetland areas to create a visual and physical barrier to exclude equipment and personnel from working in these wetland areas. Locate project storage and staging areas only in upland areas located as far away as possible from wetland/watercourse habitat areas. This shall include all areas required for stockpiles, equipment storage, and parking.

4 Do not use plastic mesh netting Erosion Control Matting due to potential entrapment of snakes within this material. Use loosely woven natural fiber matting or apply seed and straw mulch for stabilization.

5 Conduct all work associated with the action in accordance with the approved Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plan. Implement erosion and sediment control best management practices before, during and after all land disturbance to prevent accidental sedimentation and filling of adjacent wetland habitats they depend on. Monitor the project site daily to ensure the erosion and sedimentation control practices are implemented and properly maintained.

6 Store and dispense vehicular fuels and fluids at least 300 feet from the action's limit of disturbance and any aquatic habitats present. Develop and implement a hazardous material construction Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCC Plan) during the transportation action. Monitor the project site daily to ensure spill avoidance/remediation practices are implemented. The project foreman, on-site inspector, or environmental monitor may complete the daily inspections.

7 Notify all public utilities potentially associated with the action of the potential presence of the species and their need to consult with the USFWS/PFBC on their respective relocation activities.

8 Avoid the introduction and spread of invasive species into supporting habitats, minimize the duration of exposed soils, utilize erosion control blankets on disturbed areas immediately after project completion to minimize sedimentation, and promptly revegetate areas of temporary disturbance with native wetland or upland seed mixes dependent on the location of the disturbance. Thoroughly wash/disinfect construction equipment and vehicles offsite, especially the undercarriage and wheels, before use within 300 feet of supporting habitat. Thoroughly wash/disinfect temporary crossing measures such as composite matting or timber matting before use within 300 feet of supporting habitat.

9 STOP all work activities immediately if an Eastern Massasauga is encountered. Inform the District Project Manager or District Environmental Manager immediately of the encounter.



Activities with Potential to Impact Eastern Massasuga Rattlesnakes

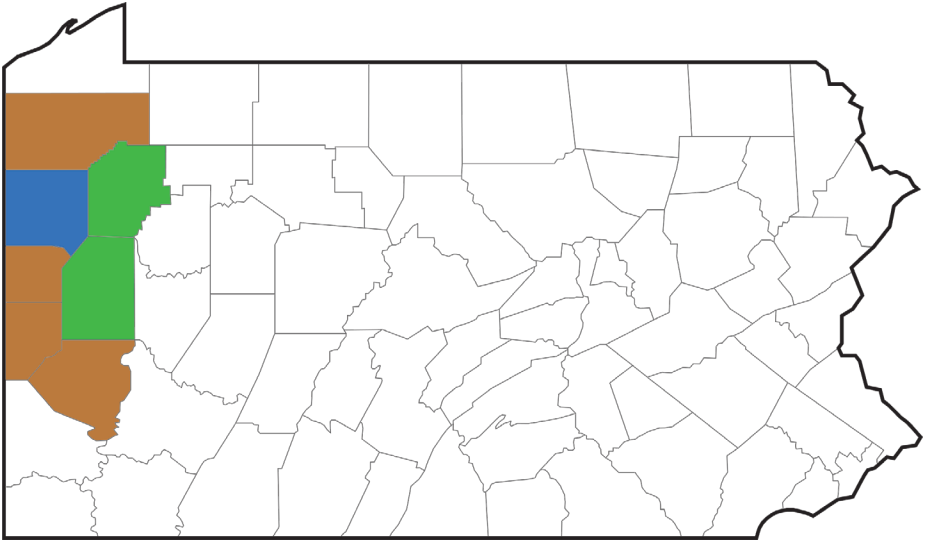
- Shaping
- Restabilization
- Pavement Widening
- Shoulder Cutting
- Drainage Cleaning
- Drainage Replacement
- Drainage Installation
- Bridge/Culvert/Pipe Replacements
- Pipe/Culvert Extensions
- Bridge Maintenance
- Sink Hole/Slide Repairs
- Repair/Install Gabions
- Repair/Install Retaining Walls



Eastern Massasuga Rattlesnake - Photo by: USFWS

Eastern Massasauga Range

● Verified by PAHERP ● Verified before 2020 ● Historic in County ○ No Record



Maintenance assemblies and construction activities proposed within the counties of Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Lawrence, Mercer, or Venango must avoid adverse impacts to the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake.



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To report issues or if you have questions related to the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake contact the office in your area and request the environmental manager.

- **District 1:** Erie | Warren | Crawford | Forrest | Venango | Mercer | 814-678-7393
- **District 10:** Armstrong | Butler | Clarion | Indiana | Jefferson | 724-357-2982
- **District 11:** Allegheny | Beaver | Lawrence | 412-429-4858