

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

NORTHERN RUBBER BOA
Family: BOIDAE
R046a

Charina bottae bottae
Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The northern rubber boa is uncommon to common in suitable habitats. Occurs throughout the Sierra from Ventura Co. north, across the northern part of the state and in the Coast Ranges south nearly to Point Conception. Elevational range is from sea level to 2740 m (9040 ft). Found in a variety of montane forest habitats including red fir, ponderosa pine, hardwood, hardwood-conifer, Douglas fir, redwood, mixed conifer and riparian. Also found in montane chaparral and wet meadow habitats, usually, in the vicinity of streams. A geographically isolated race, once included in this species, was recently updated to the new species *C. umbratica* (Rodríguez-Robles et al. 2001). It appears to be extremely uncommon and is apparently restricted to the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mts. (Erwin 1974).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Food consists primarily of small mammals and lizards (Stebbins 1954, though, it may occasionally take smaller snakes (Linder 1963) and *Ensatina* (Macey 1983).

Cover: The rubber boa is an extremely secretive snake seeking cover in rotting logs, pieces of bark, boards, rocks, and other surface debris. Burrows through loose soil or decaying vegetation. Occasionally climbs.

Reproduction: Young are born in loose, well aerated soil, under surface objects, or within rotting logs.

Water: No additional information on water requirements.

Pattern: Usually found in the vicinity of streams or wet meadows or within or under surface objects with good moisture-retaining properties such as rotting logs.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Mainly crepuscular during warmer periods of spring, summer, and fall but some nocturnal and diurnal activity. Inactive during cooler periods.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: No information. Probably little seasonal movement but may migrate short distances to and from suitable hibernacula at higher elevations.

Home Range: No information.

Territory: Has not been observed to aggressively defend resources in the wild.

Reproduction: Breeding occurs from April to June. Young are born alive from late summer (Erwin 1964) to late November (Hudson 1957). Number of young 2 to 8 (Stebbins 1972).

Niche: Because of its secretive behavior this snake is probably not subject to heavy predation. Adults and young may occasionally be taken by hawks and owls or by predatory mammals such as skunks and raccoons. Potentially competes for food resources with the California mountain kingsnake where their ranges overlap.

General Comments: The threatened subspecies *C. b. umbratica* is known only from a few individuals from a very small number of localities. This race is threatened by development and increased recreational use in forested areas where it occurs.

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R046a

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