

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

SOUTHERN RUBBER BOA
Family: BOIDAE
R095

Charina umbratica
Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

Written by: CWHR Program Staff

DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The southern rubber boa is extremely uncommon, apparently restricted to the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mts. (Erwin 1974). Formerly a subspecies of *C. bottae*, this geographically isolated race was recently updated to full species status (Rodríguez-Robles et al. 2001). It is threatened by development and increased recreational use in forested areas where it occurs.

The description below is based on the northern rubber boa, *C. bottae*.

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).

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.

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. *California's Wildlife*. Vol. I-III. California Depart. of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.