Animal Embassy
Corn Snake Species Profile

MARYLAND ZOO

Common name	**Corn Snake**
Scientific name	*Pantherophis guttatus*
IUCN status	Least Concern (IUCN, 2016)
Conservation threats	• Habitat loss • Persecution by humans in general
Primary conservation message/action	**Wildlife is all around us, no matter where we live. We can be good "nature neighbors" by respecting and protecting nature.**
Physical description	**Length:** 24–48 in. **Body shape:** A medium-sized snake with a slender body. The head is long and slender relative to other snakes. **Coloration:** Coloration varies considerably throughout its range. Most individuals exhibit brown and red-orange over most of the body, but some individuals display gray and/or yellow on the body as well. Typically feature brightly colored bands or splotches on the back and sides, along with a distinctive black and white "checkerboard" pattern along the underside. **Sexual dimorphism:** Males typically have a longer, thicker tail than females.
Species notable features or adaptations	• Demonstrates **Batesian** [BAYT-see-uhn] **mimicry**: imitation of a more dangerous organism. The corn snake has a similar coloration to the copperhead, which is a venomous snake found in many of the same areas. Due to this similarity, many predators may confuse the non-venomous corn snake for the venomous copperhead, and leave it alone. • While this species prefers to hunt on or below the ground, it is also adept at climbing trees. Young snakes in particular will climb trees in an attempt to find lizards or

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	tree frogs. • There are multiple theories regarding the origin of this animal's common name. One of the most popular is that the snake's coloration and unusual "checkerboard" pattern on the underside is reminiscent of Indian corn. Another popular theory is that this snake was frequently found in corn cribs and corn fields. While the snake was likely eating mice in these places, the association stuck.
Native habitat & range	**Habitat** • Relatively dry forests and meadows. Is also fairly tolerant of human activity, and can be found in farmlands, suburban areas, and rarely-used buildings. • As burrowing animal, it prefers places that include loose, dry soil or pre-established burrows. **Range** • Mid- Atlantic and southern U.S.
Natural diet & feeding behavior	Carnivore • Mostly eats small rodents, birds, and bats • Juveniles consume large numbers of lizards and frogs.
Activity	Crepuscular: Active both day and night, though they spend most of their time underground or hidden under objects/debris. • Primarily nocturnal during warmest summer months
Ecological relationships	**Their predators:** Birds of prey, carnivorous mammals such as foxes, and large snakes, including black racers and eastern kingsnakes
Mating & reproduction	**Mating and Egg-laying** • Breeding season: Typically lasts from March to May, eggs hatch between July and September • Like most snakes, males and females are only social during copulation and are solitary for the rest of the year. • Females deposit their eggs in decaying vegetation, rotting stumps, or other areas that have sufficient heat and humidity for the eggs. • Females produce a single clutch of 10 to 20 eggs.

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	Young • Eggs hatch after 2 months. • Hatchlings are 10–15 in. long at birth, and are immediately independent—they receive no parental care. • Become sexually mature between the age of 1.5 to 3 years
Average lifespan	10–15 years

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