



EduPic Fact File

Eastern Hognose Snake - *Heterodon platirhinos*



The upturned nose of the eastern hognose snake helps it dig for toads, its favorite prey.

Description: The eastern hognose snake gets its name from its upturned nose that helps it find its favorite food, toads. It is shorter and smaller than many snakes and fairly stout. Most of these snakes have an irregular pattern with either a brown or reddish brown patches. Some individuals can appear entirely gray or black. The hognose snake has the ability to flatten out its head and upper neck to make it appear more menacing like its African cousin, the cobra.

Habitat: The eastern hognose snake ranges throughout eastern United States from Maine to Florida. They are at home in woodland and coastal areas with sandy soil and open farmland. This snake is common in the Carolinas and Georgia.

Diet: Toads are the favorite prey of the hognose snake but it will feed on salamanders, small birds and mammals, and invertebrates. This is usually only when preferred meal is not to be found. One of this snake's adaptations are large "rear fangs" that puncture and deflate puffed-up toads so they can be swallowed. The snake is diurnal, meaning that it hunts its prey during the day.

Fun Facts: If inflating its head and neck does not remove the hognose from a threatening situation, this snake has a backup plan, a behavioral adaptation. It will roll over and play dead with its mouth open and tongue out.

Photo Log: The specimen above was found stretched out across an old and unused jeep trail in the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Currituck County, North Carolina. It was early afternoon on an unseasonably cool day in late May. It did not see this photographer as enough of a threat to play dead but it did pretend to be a pit viper by widening its head.

References: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, The University of Georgia. Amphibians and Reptiles of North Carolina, Davidson College.