**Coachwhip**

***Masticophis flagellum ssp.***



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**DESCRIPTION**

* Color ranges from solid brown to solid tan, to wide brown and tan bands.
* Thin-bodied, small heads, large eyes with round pupils.
* 4 – 6 feet in length.
* Non-venomous.

**LIFE CYCLE**

* Mate in the spring
* Females lay up to 24 eggs in early summer.
* Eggs hatch in the late summer or early fall.
* Predators include hawks, coyotes, and raccoons.

**BEHAVIOR**

* Diurnal (active in daytime).
* Very heat tolerant – often seen in the hottest months when other snakes are inactive.
* Very fast.
* When cornered, they can raise the front third of their bodies off the ground.
* They will bite.
* Sometimes “play dead” by hiding their head under their coils or under the ground.
* In tall grass, they often hold their head up high for observation.
* Able to climb small trees and brush.

**HABITAT**

* Open areas with sandy soil
* Post oak savanna
* Open pine forests
* Old fields
* Prairies

**FOOD**

* Reptiles
* Rodents
* Birds

**SOURCES**

* <http://www.austinreptileservice.net/bands.html>
* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masticophis_flagellum>
* <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja_johnson026.pdf> (“Spatial Ecology of the Coachwhip, *Masticophis flagellum* (Squamata: Colubridae), in Eastern Texas,” in Southern Naturalist 6(1):111–124 2007, by Richard W. Johnson, Robert R. Fleet, Michael B. Keck, and D. Craig Rudolph.)
* <http://srelherp.uga.edu/snakes/masfla.htm>