**Corn Snake**

***Elaphe guttata***

Photo by Chris Harrison, <http://www.birdsandherps.com/bvsnakes/eguttata.html>

DESCRIPTION

* Texas corn snakes are tan, grayish-tan, or orangish-tan
* Large brown to reddish-brown dark-edged blotches down the center of the back, below which is another row of smaller alternating blotches, followed by a third series of even smaller dots at the belly line
* black and white underbelly
* Adults grow to 3 to 4 feet.

LIFE CYCLE

* Breed after the first winter cooling.
* Egg-laying occurs slightly more than a month after mating, with 12–24 eggs deposited into a warm, moist, hidden location.
* Mother snake abandons the eggs and does not return to them.
* Approximately 10 weeks after laying, the young snakes use a specialized scale called an [egg tooth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg_tooth) to slice slits in the egg shell, from which they emerge at about 5 inches in length.
* Live 6-8 years in the wild.

BEHAVIOR

* Subdues its small prey by constriction.
* The name “corn snake” refers to the days when southern farmers stored harvested corn in a wooden crib. Rats and mice came to the crib to feed on the corn and the snakes came to feed on the rodents.

HABITAT

* Overgrown fields, forest openings, trees, abandoned buildings.
* Do not usually inhabit wet bottomlands.
* Usually remain on the ground, but can climb trees and cliffs.

FOOD

* Rats and mice.

SOURCES

* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corn_snake>
* <http://www.birdsandherps.com/bvsnakes/>
* *Texas Snakes; a Field Guide*, James R. Dixon and John E. Werler, UT Press, Austin, 2005, pp. 134-137.