**Diamond-backed Watersnake**

***Nerodia rhombifer***

Photo by Jim Conrad, backyardnature.net

DESCRIPTION

* Light brown, yellowish or olive.
* Short dark crossbars down the middle of the back alternate with vertical lateral bars.
* Heavy-bodied.
* Head is wide, somewhat flattened and clearly wider than neck.
* Adult averages 4-6 feet.
* Non-venomous.

LIFE CYCLE

Ovoviviparous; give birth to live snakes.

Breed in spring; give birth in late summer or early fall

BEHAVIOR

* Very shy and will try to flee if startled or approached.
* Water is their preferred escape route and sanctuary.
* Will emit a foul smelling musk odor if caught.

HABITAT

* Close to or in water; prefers slow-moving water.
* Will take up residence in backyard fish ponds.

FOOD

* Fish
* Frogs, toads and other small amphibians

SOURCES

* <http://www.austinreptileservice.net/diamonds.html>
* <http://www.birdsandherps.com/bvsnakes/>
* *Texas Snakes; a Field Guide*, James R. Dixon and John E. Werler, UT Press, Austin, 2005, pp. 215-216.
* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nerodia_rhombifer>
* <http://www.backyardnature.net/n/a/nerodia2.htm>

Source: Wikipedia